60-1472

THE

KING'S OWN BORDERERS

MILITARY ROMANCE

BY

JAMES GRANT,

Author of "The Romance of War."

"Memories fast are thronging o'er me,
Of the grand old fields of Spain;
How he faced the charge of Junot,
And the fight where Moore was slain.
Oh, the years of weary waiting
For the glorious chance he sought,
For the slowly ripened harvest
That life's latest autumn brought."

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THE

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CHAPTER I.

LADY WINIFRED.

"Thick, thick—no sight remains the while,
From the farthest Orkney Isle,
No sight to seahorse or to seer,
But of a little pallid sail,
That seems as if 'twould struggle near,
And then as if its pinion pale
Gave up the battle to the gale."—LEIGH HUNT.

On the afternoon of a lowering day in the November of 1798, a square-rigged vessel—a brig of some three hundred and fifty tons—was seen in the offing, about twelve miles distant from the bluff, rocky headland of Rohallion, on the western coast of Carrick, beating hard against a headwind and sea, that were set dead in shore; and, as a long and treacherous reef, locally known as the Partan Craig (*Anglicé* Crab-rock), lies off the headland, many fears were loudly expressed by on-lookers, that if she failed to gain even better sea room ere nightfall, the gale, the waves, and the current might prove too much for her in the end, and the half-sunken reef would finish the catastrophe.

Over the craig the angry breakers of the Firth of Clyde were seen to boil and whiten, and the ridgy reef seemed to rise, at times, like a hungry row of shark's teeth, black, sharp, and shining.

With royal yards on deck, with topsails lowered upon the caps, her fore and main courses close-hauled, with a double reef in each, the stranger was seen to lie alternately on the port and starboard tack, and braced so close to the wind's eye as a square-rigged craft dared be; but still she made but little way to seaward.

From Rohallion there were two persons who watched her struggles with deep interest.

"The turn of the tide will strengthen the current, my lady, and bring her close to the craig, after all," said one.

"Under God's favour, John Girvan, I hope not!" was the fervent response.

"This is an eddy between the craig and the coves of Rohallion as strong as the whirlpool of Corryvreckan itself."

"Yes, John; I have seen more than one poor boat, with its crew, perish there, in the herring season."

"Look, look, my lady! There is *another* vessel—a brig, I take her to be—running right into the firth before the wind."

The speakers were Winifred Lady Rohallion and her husband's bailie or factor, who stood together at a window of the castle of Rohallion, which crowns the summit of the headland before mentioned, and from whence, as it is a hundred and fifty feet in height, and rises almost sheer from the water, a spacious view can be obtained of the noble firth of Clyde, there expanding into a vast ocean, though apparently almost landlocked by the grassy hills and dales of Cunninghame, the princely Isle of Bute (the cradle of the House of Stuart), the blue and rocky peaks of Arran, the grey ridges of Kintyre; and far away, like a blue stripe that bounds the Scottish sea, the dim and distant shores of Ireland.

A few heavy rain-drops, precursors of a torrent, plashed on the window-panes, and with a swiftness almost tropical, great masses of cloud came rolling across the darkening sky. Under their lower edges, lurid streaks between the hill-tops marked the approach of sunset, and thunder began to grumble overhead, as it came from the splintered peaks of Arran, to die away among the woody highlands of Carrick.

Aware that when the tide turned there would be a tremendous swell, with a sea that would roll far inshore, the fishermen in the little bay near the castled rock were all busily at work, drawing their brown-tarred and sharp-prowed boats far up on the beach, for there was a moaning in the sea and rising wind that foretold a tempestuous night: thus, they as well as the inhabitants of Rohallion Castle were at a loss to understand *why* the strange brig, instead of running right up the firth in search of safe anchorage under some of the high land, strove to beat to windward.

The conclusion therefore come to was, that she was French, or that her crew were ignorant of the river navigation; there were no pilots then so far down the firth, and when the fishermen spoke among themselves of running down to her assistance or guidance, they muttered of French gun-brigs, of letters of marque, and

privateers—shrugged their shoulders, and stood pipe in mouth under the lee of the little rocky pier to watch the event.

At the drawing-room windows of the more modern portion of the old stronghold of Rohallion, the lady of that name, and her bailie, stood watching the ship, by the dim light of the darkening afternoon.

Lady Winifred was a woman of a style, or rather of a school, that has passed away for ever out of Scotland.

Tall and stately, but gentle, homely, and motherly withal, her quaint formality was tempered by an old-fashioned politeness, that put all at their ease.

Now though verging on her fiftieth year, she was still very handsome, albeit where dimples once laughed, the wrinkles were appearing now. She had been an Edinburgh belle in those days when the tone of society there was very stately and aristocractic; when the city was the winter resort of the solid rank and real talent of the land; when it was a small and spirited capital instead of a huge "deserted village," abandoned to the soothing influences of the church, the law, sabbatarianism, and the east wind.

Her lofty carriage and old-fashioned courtesy reminded one of what is described of the ladies of Queen Anne's time: she possessed a singular sweetness in her smile, and every motion, even of her smooth, white hands, though perfectly natural, seemed studies of artistic grace. Her eyes where dark and keen; her features straight and noble; her complexion brilliantly fair. Though powder had been wisely discarded by her Majesty, the Queen Consort, and the six Princesses, their doing so was no rule for Lady Rohallion, who was somewhat of a potentate in Carrick, and still wore her hair in that singular half-dishevelled fashion, full and flowing, as we may see it depicted in Sir Joshua's famous portrait of her, which is to be hung on the walls of the Scottish National Gallery, when cleared of some of their local rubbish.

Thus, the white powder which she retained in profusion, formed a singular but not unpleasing contrast to her black eyebrows, black eyes, and long dark lashes—silky fringes, from which, some five-and-twenty years before, she had shot more than one perriwigged sub, who had come unscathed from the dangers of Bunker's-hill and Brandywine.

On the present occasion, her visitor, who bore the somewhat unaristocratic name of Mr. John Girvan, or, at times, Girvanmains, was a short, thickset, weatherbeaten man about sixty years of age, and in whom any one could have discerned at a glance the old soldier, by the erect way in which he carried his head. He wore an old military wig that had once been white, but was

quite unpowdered now and was bleached yellow; and he had a jolly, good-humoured face, rendered so red by exposure to the weather and by imbibing whisky-toddy, that, as he once said himself, "it might blow up a gunpowder magazine, if he came within a mile of it."

He had been the Quartermaster of Lord Rohallion's regiment, the 25th Foot, and after long service with it in America and elsewhere, had settled down on his colonel's estates in the capacity of land-steward, ground-bailie, and general factotum, and in this capacity had snug apartments assigned to him in a part of the old castle.

"While looking at yonder ship, my lady, you forget the letters I have brought you from Maybole," said he, producing a leathern pouch having the Rohallion arms stamped in brass on the outside; "the riding-postman, with the mail-bags, arrived just as I was leaving the Kirkwynd Tavern. Waes me! what a changed place that is now. Many a crown bowl of punch have poor Robbie Burns and I birled there!"

"True, John, the letters; unlock the bag, and let me see what the news is from Maybole."

This ancient burgh-of-barony was the little capital of old bailiewick of Carrick.

Opening the pouch, Girvan tumbled on the table a number of letters and newspapers, such as the Edinburgh "Courant" and "Chronicle," which then were about a quarter of the size of the journals of the present day, and were printed on very grey paper, in such very brown ink, that they had quite a mediæval aspect.

The first letter Lady Winifred opened was from her chief friend and gossip, the Countess of Eglinton, with whom she had been at school, when she was simply Winifred Maxwell, and when the Countess was Eleanora Hamilton, of Bourtreehill. Her letter was somewhat sorrowful in its tenor:—

"I wish you would visit me, my dear friend," it ran; "Eglinton Castle is so dull now, so very *triste!* My good lord the earl (whom God preserve!) has been appointed Colonel of the Argyle Fencibles, one of the many kilted regiments now being raised, lest we are invaded by the French and their vile Corsican usurper; so he hath left me. My second boy, Roger, too, hath sailed lieutenant of a man-o'-war, and sorely do I opine that never mair shall my old hand stroke his golden curls again—my own brave bairn! (Her forebodings were sadly verified when, soon after, this favourite son died of fever at Jamaica.) I send you Mrs. Anne Radcliffe's novel, 'The Mysteries of Udolpho,' in five volumes, which I am sure will enchant you. I send you also the last book of the fashions, which I received by the London mail

three weeks ago. Carriage robes are to have long sleeves, and the jockey bonnets are trimmed with green feathers; white satin mantles trimmed with swansdown, of the *exile style*, are considered the most elegant wraps for the opera. You will see by the papers that our brave Lord Nelson hath been created Duke of Bronte, but returns from Naples with the odious woman Lady Hamilton. Tell Bailie Girvan ('Quartermaster,' I think he prefers) that I thank him for the hawslock-wool* he sent to Eglinton; my girls and I are spinning it with our own hands. Also I thank your sweet self for the lace mittens you knitted for me on Hallow-e'en. Your little friend—it may soon be ward—Miss Flora Warrender, is now with us, and seems to grow lovelier and livelier every day. I have Madame Rossignal, an *emigré*, the fashionable mistress of dancing, from Fyfe's Close, Edinburgh, with me just now, teaching my girls; but for a child of eight years, the little Warrender excels them both. Her father goes abroad in command of his regiment, and her poor mother is almost brokenhearted."

"If she is lonely at Eglinton, with her daughters the Ladies Jane and Lilias, how much more must I be, whose husband is absent, and whose only son is in the army!" exclaimed Lady Winifred.

"A letter from Rohallion himself!" said the old Quartermaster in an excited tone, handing to the lady a missive which bore her husband's seal and coronet.

"From him, and I read it *last!*" said she reproachfully, as she opened it.

It was dated from White's Coffee-house, in London, whither he had gone as a representative peer, and it contained only some news of the period, such as comments on Lord Castlereagh's or Mr. Pitt's speeches about the Irish Union; ("which is to be carried by English gold and guile, like our *own*," said the Quartermaster, parenthetically;) the hopes he had of getting command of a brigade in Sir Ralph Abercrombie's proposed Egyptian expedition; he related that their son Cosmo, the master of Rohallion, then serving with the Guards, was well, and stood high in favour with the Prince of Wales.

"A doubtful compliment, if all tales be true," commented Lady Winifred.

"If Rohallion goes on service, I'll never stay at home behind him," exclaimed old Girvan; "it would ill become me."

"*All* the Highland regiments in Great Britain, second battalions as well as first, are under orders for immediate foreign service," continued his lordship's letter; "this looks like work, Winny dear, does it not?"

* The finest wool, being the locks that grow on the throat.

He added that parliament was to be prorogued in a day or two, and that he would return by sea in one of the Leith smacks, which were then large and heavy passenger cutters, of some two hundred tons or so; they were all armed with carronades, and as their crews were secured from the pressgangs, they manfully fought their own way, without convoy, with the old Scots flag at their mast-head.

"He comes home by sea," said Lady Rohallion aloud, glancing nervously at the offing, where the coast of Ireland had disappeared, and where the clouds were gathering black and rapidly.

"By sea!" repeated Girvan.

"Now, the Lord forfend, at this season of the year!"

"And when so many French and Spanish privateers infest the seas, led by fellows who, in daring, surpass even Commodore Fall or Paul Jones," exclaimed Girvan.

As if to echo or confirm their fears, a booming sound pealed from a distance over the sea.

"What noise is that?" asked Lady Rohallion, starting up, while her pale cheek grew paler still.

"A gun—a cannon shot to seaward!" exclaimed the old soldier, pricking up his ears, while his eyes sparkled on recognising the once too familiar sound.

"'Tis that vessel in distress," said Lady Rohallion, as they hurried once more to the windows which overlooked the sea. "Away to the clachan, John; get all our people together, and have the boats launched."

"That will be impossible with such a heavy sea coming rolling in, my lady—clean impossible!" replied the other, as he threw up a window and levelled a telescope at the vessel, while the wild blast against which she was struggling made the damask curtains stream like banners, and frizzed up, like a mop, the Quartermaster's old yellow wig.

"What do you see, John? Speak, Girvanmains!"

"There go her colours; but I can't make them out."

"Twenty guineas a man to all who will aid her!" exclaimed Lady Rohallion, taking a key from her gold chatelaine, and hurrying to a buhl escritoire, while gun after gun pealed from a distance over the stormy sea; but they came from *two* vessels, one of which was hidden in a bank of dusky vapour.

The lady grasped the old Quartermaster's arm, and her white hands trembled nervously as she exclaimed in a whisper—

"Oh, my God, John Girvan! what if Rohallion should be on board of *her*, with a foe on one hand and a lee shore on the other?"

CHAPTER II.

THE PARTAN CRAIG.

"Prone on the midnight surge with panting breath,
They cry for aid, and long contend with death;
High o'er their heads the rolling billows sweep,
And down they sink in everlasting sleep.
Bereft of power to help, their comrades see
The wretched victims die beneath the lee!"

FALCONER'S *Shipwreck.*

INSPIRED by fears, perhaps, similar to those of his lady, the Quartermaster made no immediate reply, but continued to watch with deep interest, and somewhat of a professional eye, the red flashes which broke from the bosom of that gloomy bank of cloud, which seemed to rest upon the surface of the water, about six miles distant.

The wind was still blowing a gale from the seaward. Through the fast-flying masses of black and torn vapour, the setting sun, for a few minutes shed a lurid glare—it almost seemed a baleful glow along the crested waves, reddening their frothy tops, and lighting up, as if with crimson flames, the wet canvas of the brig; but lo! at the same instant, there shot out of the vapour, and into the ruddy sheen of the stormy sunset, *another* square-rigged craft, a brig of larger size, whose guns were fired with man-o'-war-like precision and rapidity.

The first vessel, the same which for so many hours had been working close-hauled in long tacks to beat off the lee shore, now relinquished the attempt, and, squaring her yards, hoisting her topsails from the cap, stood straight towards Rohallion, her crew evidently expecting some military protection from the castle on the rock, or deeming it better to run bump ashore, with all its risks, than be taken by the enemy.

The fugitive was snow-rigged, a merchant brig apparently by her deep bends, bluff bows, and somewhat clumsy top and hamper; the British colours were displayed at her gaff peak. The other was a smart gun-brig or privateer with the tricolour of France floating at her gaff, and a long whiplike pennant streaming ahead of her, as she fired her bow chasers. Twice luffing round, she let fly some of her broadside guns, and once she discharged a large pivot cannon from amidships, in her efforts to cripple the fugitive. But as both vessels were plunging heavily in a tempestuous sea, the shot only passed through the fore and main courses of the merchantman, and

were seen to ricochet along the waves' tops ahead, ere they sunk amid tiny waterspouts to the bottom. Thus the violence of the gale rendered the cannonading of the Frenchman nearly futile.

Neglected, or ill-protected at times by war-ship and batteries, as the whole Scottish coast was during the war against France, such episodes as this were of frequent occurrence. There was no cruiser in the vicinity, so the flight and pursuit in the offing went on interrupted, notwithstanding the fury of the gale, which was increasing every moment.

Although our fleets successfully blockaded the great military ports of France, in the beginning of the war, her privateers infested all the broad and narrow seas, and frequently made dashes inshore. Only seventeen years before the period of our story, the *Fearnought*, of Dunkirk, cannonaded Arbroath with red-hot shot; and much about the same time, the notorious renegade Paul Jones kept all the Scottish seaboard in alarm with his fleet.

Now the wild blast that tore round the sea-beaten cliff on which the castle stood, increased in fury; the waves grew whiter as the lurid sun went down, enveloped in clouds; the sky grew darker and the guns flashed redder, as they broke through the murky atmosphere, while their reports were brought by the wind, sharply and distinctly, to the ears of those who so anxiously looked on.

"Oh, if Rohallion should be there!" exclaimed Lady Winifred, wringing her hands again and again.

"This will never do!" exclaimed the old Quartermaster, wrathfully; "a Frenchman in the very mouth o' the Clyde and dinging a Scottish ship in that fashion! I must fire a gun, and get the volunteers to man the battery."

Suddenly the sails of the merchantman were seen to shiver, and she seemed in danger of losing her masts, for a shot had carried away her rudder, and consequently she became unmanageable!

Both vessels were now so near the land, that the Frenchman probably became alarmed for his own safety; so changing his course, he braced his yards sharp up, and beating to windward, speedily disappeared into the gloom from which he had so suddenly emerged, and was seen no more; but the unfortunate victim of his hostility drifted fast away before the wind, partly broadside on, towards that lee and rocky shore.

"She will be foul o' the Partan Craig, so sure as my name is John Girvan!" exclaimed the Quartermaster.

"There is death in the air, Girvanmains," added Lady Rohallion, in a low voice that was full of deep emotion; "I

heard the moan of the sea and wind—the deep sough of coming trouble—in the coves below the house this morning, and I never knew the omen fail—oh, look there—*all is over!*" she exclaimed with a shudder, as the drifting vessel struck with a crash, they seemed to hear, on the long white ridge of the Partan Craig.

For a moment her masts were seen to sway from port to starboard, then away they went to leeward, a mass of entangled ruin, rigging, yards, and sails, as she became a complete wreck bulged upon the reef, with the roaring sea making tremendous breaches over her, washing boats, booms, bulwarks, and everything from her deck; and thus she lay, helpless and abandoned to the elemental war, within a mile of the shore.

By the naked eye, but more particularly by means of a telescope, the crew could be seen making frantic signals to those on shore, or lashing themselves to the timber heads and the stumps of the masts; and near her bows there was a man bearing in his arms a child, whom he sought to shield from the waves that every moment swept over the whole ship.

"A father and his child," exclaimed Lady Rohallion, in deep commiseration; "oh, my God, the poor things will perish! I will give a hundred guineas to have them saved."

"The national debt wouldn't do it," replied the old Quartermaster, grimly, with something in his throat between a sob and a sigh.

In those days there were no lifeboats, no rocket apparatus to succour the shipwrecked, and in such a wild night of storm and tempest—for now the chill November eve had deepened into night—the hardy fishermen, who alone could have ventured forth to aid the drowning crew, thought and spoke of their wives and little ones, whose bread depended on their exertions and on the safety of their clinker-built boats, now drawn high and dry upon the beach; and thus compelled by prudence to remain inactive, they remained with their weather-beaten faces turned stolidly seaward to watch the helpless wreck.

That those who were thereon did not despair of succour from the shore was evident, for on the stump of their mainmast the red glaring light of a tar-barrel was soon seen burning to indicate where they were, for as the darkness increased, even the snow-white foam that boiled over the Partan Craig became invisible.

Then the fishermen's wives wrung their hands, and exclaimed in chorus—

"The puir man wi' his bairn—oh, the puir man wi' his bairn! God save and sain them!"

Flaring steadily like a great torch, the light of the blazing

barrel shed a weird gloom upon the wreck, and defied for a time even the seas that swept her to extinguish it, while the heart-rending cries of the poor fellows who were lashed to the timber-heads and belaying pins, were brought to the listeners' ears, from time to time, on the stormy gusts of wind.

To add to the wildness of the scene, the sea-birds, disturbed in their eyries among the rocks by the cries, the recent firing, and the blazing barrel now came forth, and the spotted guillemot (or sea-turtle), the red-throated northern douker, the ravenous gull, and the wild screaming mews went swooping about in flocks on the blast.

A loud and despairing cry that was echoed by all on shore arose from the wreck, as the fire-barrel was extinguished by one tremendous breaker; and now local knowledge alone could indicate the place where the bulged ship was perishing amid the gloom. Soon after this, the cries for succour ceased, and as large pieces of timber, planking, bulwarks, spars, and masts were dashed upon the pier and rocks by the furious sea, it was rightly conjectured that she had gone to pieces, and that all was at an end now, with her and her crew.

Accompanied by the village dominie, Symon Skaill, a party of fishermen, farm labourers and servants from the castle, Mr. John Girvan, with a shawl tied over his hat and yellow wig, searched the whole beach around the little bay that was overshadowed and sheltered by the castle-rock, and the coves or caverns that yawned in it, hoping that some poor wretch might be cast ashore with life enough remaining to tell the story of his ship; but they searched long and vainly. Pieces of wreck, cordage, torn sails, broken spars and blocks alone were left by the reflux of the waves, and the flaring of the searchers' torches on the gusty wind, as seen from the Castle of Rohallion, made them seem like wandering spirits, or something certainly uncanny and weird to the eyes of Lady Winifred.

So the night wore on, the storm continued unabated; heavily the rain began to lash the sea-beat rocks and castle walls; louder than ever roared the wind in the caves below, and more fiercely boiled the breakers over the Partan Craig, as if the warring elements were rejoicing in their strength, and in the destruction they had achieved.

Wet, wearied, breathless, and longing particularly for a glass of that steaming whisky-toddy, which they knew awaited them in the castle, the dominie and the quartermaster, whose flam beaux were both nearly burned out, just as they were about to ascend a narrow path that wound upward from the beach, heard simultaneously a sound like a wild gasping sob—a half-stifled cry of despair and exhaustion—from the seaward. Shouting

lustily for assistance, they gathered some of the stragglers, and by the united glare of their torches, upheld at arm's length, they beheld a sight that roused their tenderest sympathies.

Struggling with that wild sea, whose waves were still rolling inshore, about twenty feet from where the spectators stood, a man's head could be seen amid the white surf, bobbing like a fisher's float, as he swam, combating nobly with the waves, but with one hand and arm only; the other hand and arm sustained *a child*, who seemed already dead or partially drowned.

"Oh, weelawa, it was na for nocht that the sealghs were yowling on the Partan Craig yestreen!" cried Elsie Irvine, a stout and comely matron; but from that haunt the seals have long since been scared by the river steamers.

"Oh, the bairn—save the bairn—the puir wee lammie—the puir wee doo!" chorussed the women, whose maternal instincts were keenly excited, and led by Elsie's husband, several men rushed into the water, grasping each other hand-in-hand to stem alike the flow and backwash of the waves; but paralysed now by past exhaustion and by the extreme cold of the sea and atmosphere, the poor man, who was clad in a light green frock, laced with gold, could do no more to save either himself or his burden; and thus lay floating passively on the surface, drawn deep into the black trough one moment, and tossed upon the white froth of a wave-summit the next, but always far beyond the reach of those who sought to rescue him and his boy, and wild and ghastly seemed his face, when, at times, it could be seen by the light of the upheld torches.

Uttering a short, sharp cry of exhaustion and despair, he suddenly seemed to stand, or rise erect in the water; then he cast the child towards the beach, threw up his hands as if human nature could endure no more, and sank—sank within twenty feet of where the spectators stood.

Irvine, the fisherman, cleverly caught hold of the child, which a wave fortunately threw towards him, and the little fellow, senseless, cold and breathless, was borne away in the plump, sturdy arms of his wife, to be stripped, put in a warm bed, and restored, if possible, to heat and animation.

Great exertions were meanwhile made, but made in vain, to rescue the body of his father, for it was never doubted that such was his relationship by those who witnessed his severe struggles, his love, and his despair.

The storm was passing away; wet, weary, and very much "out of sorts" by their unwonted exertions, the quartermaster and the village dominie, a thickset, sturdy old fellow, clad in rusty black, with a tie perriwig and square buckled shoes, a

very wrinkled and somewhat careworn face, arrived at the Castle to make their report to Lady Rohallion, who had anxiously awaited the events of the night.

With that love of the marvellous and the morbid peculiar to their class, her servants had every few minutes brought intelligence of the number of corpses, gashed and mangled, which strewed the beach; of treasures and rich stuffs which came ashore from the wreck, and so forth; but, by reading her letters and other occupations, she had striven to wean herself from thinking too much of the terrors that reigned without, though every gust of wind that howled round the old tower brought to mind the bulged ship, and made her sigh for the absence of her husband and son, both far away from her; and now starting up, she listened to the narrative of Dominie Skaill and his gossip, Mr. Girvan.

"Ugh!" concluded the latter; "I've never had such a soaking since I tumbled into the Weser, in heavy marching order, the night before Minden; and drowned I should have been, but for the ready hand of Rohallion."

"But this child you speak of—where is it?" asked Lady *Wimfred.*

"Wi' auld Elsie Irvine, down by the coves, my lady," replied the dominie, with one of his most respectful bows.

"The poor little think is alive, then?"

"Yes—alive, warm, and sleeping cosily in Elsie's breast by this time—cosily as ever bairn o' her ain did."

"Bring this child to me in the morning, dominie—you will see to it?"

"Yes, my lady."

"A boy, you say it is?"

"Yes."

"And what is he like, John Girvan?"

"Just like other bairns, my lady."

"How?"

"With yellow hair and a nose above his chin," replied the quartermaster, wiping the water out of his neck and wig.

"A bonnie golden-haired bairnie as ever you saw, Lady Rohallion," replied the dominie, with a glistening eye, for he had a kinder heart for children than the old bachelor Girvan; "and he minded me much of your ladyship's son, the master, when about the same size or age."

"And this poor child is the sole survivor of the wreck?"

"So far as we can learn, the sole—the only one!"

"Heaven help us! this is very sad!" exclaimed the lady, while her eyes filled with tears. "Many a mother will have a

sore heart after this storm, and more than one widow may weep for a husband drowned."

"Ay, madam, in warring wi' the elements, we feel ourselves what the Epicureans of old dreamed they were—scarcely the creation of a benevolent Being, so helpless and infirm is man when opposed to them."

"Bother the Epicureans, whoever they were; wring the water out of your wig, dominie," said the quartermaster.

"Any bodies that come ashore must be noted, examined, and buried with due reverence."

"Yes, my lady," replied the dominie; "we'll have to see the minister and the sheriff anent this matter."

"Dominie, the butler will attend to you and Mr. Girvan. You are quite wet, so lose no time in getting your clothes changed; and bring me in the morning this little waif of the ocean, whom I quite long to see. Until we discover his parentage, he shall be my peculiar care."

"That shall I do, my lady, joyfully," replied the dominie, bowing very low; "and that you will be unto him all that the daughter of Pharaoh was to the little waif she found in the ark of bulrushes, I doubt not."

"Now, dominie," said the quartermaster, testily, "grog first—Exodus after."

"I have the honour to wish your ladyship a very good night; and we shall drink to your health a glass for every letter of your name, like the Romans of old, as we find in Tibullus and Martial," said the solemn dominie, retiring and making three profound bows in reply to Lady Rohallion's stately courtesy.

"Good night, dominie. You, Girvanmains, will tell me the last news in the morning."

The old quartermaster made his most respectful military obeisance as he withdrew, on receiving this patronymic; for though he had begun life in the ranks of the 25th, or old Edinburgh regiment, like every Scot he had a pedigree, and claimed descent from the Girvans of Girvanmains and Dalmorton, an old Ayrshire stock, who were always adherents of the Crawfords of Rohallion, either for good or for evil, especially in their feuds with the Kennedies of Colzean; and thus he was disposed to be more than usually suave, when the lady addressed him as "Girvanmains," or more kindly and simple as "John Girvan," a familiarity which won entirely the heart of the worthy old soldier, for he had followed her husband to many a battle and siege, and, under his eye and orders, had expended many a thousand round of John Bull's ball ammunition in the Seven Years' War and in the fruitless strife with our colonists in America.

CHAPTER III.

THE CASTLE OF ROHALLION.

"Hast thou seen that lordly castle,
That castle by the sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.
And fain it would swoop downward
To the mirrored wave below;
And fain it would soar upward
In the evening's crimson glow."—LONGFELLOW.

THE baronial fortalice in which our story has opened stands, as we have stated, upon a cliff, at least one hundred and fifty feet in height above the ocean, or where the estuary of the Clyde widens thereunto, on the Carrick shore; but since 1798 it has undergone many alterations, not perhaps for the better.

In that year it consisted of the old Scottish Keep, built in the reign of James I. by Sir Ranulph Crawford, of Rohallion, his ambassador, first to Henry VI. of England, and afterwards to Charles VII. of France, for which services he was created Keeper of the Royal Palace of Carrick. Adjoining this grim tower, with its grated windows, machicolated ramparts, and corner tourelles, was the more modern mansion built in the time of James VI., by Hugh, third Lord Rohallion, who slew the gipsy king in single combat at the Cairns of Blackhinney. It had crowstepped gables, dormer windows, gableted and carved with dates, crests, and quaint monograms, and many a huge chimney, conical turret, and creaking vane, added to its picturesque appearance. To this was added a wing in the time of Queen Anne, somewhat unsightly in its details, yet the general aspect of the whole edifice was bold and pleasing, chastened or toned down as it was by time and the elements.

On one side it overlooked the firth, then opening to a stormy sea, with the ruins of Turnberry in the distance—the crumbling walls wherein the conqueror of the proud Plantagenet first saw the light, and learned "to shake his Carrick spear." On the other, its windows opened to the most fertile portion of the bailiewick—wooded heights that looked on the banks and braes of the Doon, where the scenery wakened a flood of historical or legendary memories; where every broomy knowe and grassy hill, every coppice and rushy glen, grey lichened rock and stony corrie, were consecrated by some old song or stirring tale of love or local war—the fierce old feudal wars of the Kennedies,

the Crawfords, and the grim iron Barons of Auchindrane; and, more than all, it was the birthplace, the home of Robert Bruce and of Robert Burns—the one the warrior, and the other the bard of the people. From the windows of Rohallion could be seen the very uplands, where, but a few years before, the latter had ploughed and sown, and where, as he tells us in his filial love of his native soil, when he saw

"The rough burr-thistle spreading wide,
Among the bearded bear;
I turned the weeding-hook aside,
And spread the emblem dear!"

The scenery from whence he drew his inspiration looked down on the old tower of Rohallion, which contained on its first floor the stone-paved hall, that had witnessed many a bridal feast and Christmas festival, held in the rough old joyous times, when Scotland was true to herself, and ere sour Judaical sabbatarianism came upon her, to make religion a curse and a cloak for the deepest hypocrisy; and ere her preachers sought "to merit heaven, by making earth a hell."

It presented the unusual feature (in a baronial edifice) of a groined roof, having at least six elaborately carved Gothic bosses, where the ribs that sprang from beautiful corbels placed between the windows intersected each other. On the frieze of the high-arched fireplace was a shield *gules*, with a fess *ermine*, the old arms of the Crawfords, Lords of Crawford, in Clydesdale (a family ancient as the days of William the Lyon), from whom the peers of Rohallion—whose patent was signed by James IV. on the night before Flodden—took their bearings and motto, *Endure Furth!* Though, certainly, it was but little they were ever disposed to endure with patience, if displeased with either king or commoner.

Stags' skulls, antlers, a few old barred helmets, dinted corslets, rusty swords and pikes, decorated this great stone apartment. Its furniture was massive and ancient, but seldom used now, so there the busy spiders spun their webs all undisturbed, across the grated windows, and the moss grew in winter on the carved jambs of the great fireplace, within which, according to tradition, for ages before these days of unbelief, the little red brownie of Rohallion was wont to come o' nights when all were abed, and warm himself by the smouldering *grieshoch*.

Lady Rohallion preferred the more modern rooms of Queen Anne's reign, where the buhl and marqueterie furniture was more to her taste.

There, the double drawing-room with its yellow damask curtains, high-backed chairs and couches, its old bandy-legged

tabourettes, slender guéridon work-tables; its old-fashioned piano, with perhaps "H.R.H. the Duke of York's Grand March" on the music-frame; its Delft-lined fireplace and basket-grate set on a square block of stone, a spinning-wheel on one side, and cosy elbow-chair, brilliant with brass nails, on the other, was the beau-ideal of comfort, especially on a tempestuous night, such as the last we have described; nor was it destitute of splendour, for its lofty panelled walls exhibited some fine pictures. There were some gems by Greuze, of golden-haired boys and fair full-bosomed women in brilliant colours; one or two ruddily-tinted saints by Murillo; one or two dark Titians, and darker Vandykes representing Italian nobles of cut-throat aspect, in gilt armour, with trunk breeches and high ruffs. Then there were also some of the Scottish school; the Lord Rohallion (who opposed the surrender of Charles I. to the English) by Jameson; his son, a vehement opposer of the Union, attired in a huge wig and collarless red coat, by Aikman; and the father of the present lord, by Allen Ramsay, son of the poet.

This lord in 1708, left his country in disgust, swearing that "she was only fit for the Presbyterian slaves who sold her;" and for several years he solaced himself at the head of a Muscovite regiment against the Turks on the banks of the Danube—as the Scots whigs had it, "learning to eat raw horse and forget God's kirk, among barbarians in red breeks."

Near the castle, and forming indeed a portion of it, was a platform, facing the little sandy bay, where the fishing boats were beached, and thereon were mounted twelve iron twenty-four pounders, part of the spoil of *La Bonne Citoyenne*, a French privateer, which was cast away on the Partan Craig; and there, as the old lord and representative peer (whose wife is awaiting him) still retained his military instincts, being a retired general officer, he had all the able-bodied men of his tenantry drilled to the use of sponge and rammer as artillerymen, for rumours of invasion were rife; gunboats were being built at Boulogne, and those who then looked across the Straits of Dover, could see the white tents of the Armée d'Angleterre, under the Irish soldier of fortune, Kilmaine, covering all the hostile shore of France. So all Britain was bristling with bayonets; from Cape Wrath to the Land's End in Cornwall, every man that could handle a musket was a volunteer, if not otherwise enrolled in the line, militia, or Fencibles.

On this battery the flag was hoisted and a salute loyally and joyously fired every 4th of June, in honour of his Majesty George III., by the Rohallion volunteers; and there with loud hurrahs they drank confusion to France and to his enemies, Tom

Paine, the Pope, and the Devil, and very frequently in the best French brandy, which somehow found its way quite as often as our good Farintosh or Campbelton whisky, duty free, into the sea coves beneath the castle rock.

These twelve twenty-four pounders protected the approach to the bay on one side, and to the gate of the castle on the other—the haunted gate of Rohallion, as it was named, from the circumstance that there the old village dominie, Symon Skaill, when going home one morning (night he affirmed it to be) in midsummer, after topering with Mr. John Girvan, saw a very startling sight. Clearly defined in the calm, still twilight of the morning, there stood by the gate the tall and handsome figure of John, Master of Rohallion, who was known to be then serving with the Foot Guards under Cornwallis, in America. He wore his scarlet regimentals, his brigadier wig, his long, straight sword, and little three-cocked hat; but his face was pale, distorted by agony, and blood was flowing from a wound in his left temple.

Ere the affrighted dominie could speak, the figure—the *wraith*—melted into the twilight, and not a trace of it remained by the arched gate, where the birds were twittering about in the early morning. A note was made of this singular vision, and it was found that at that hour, the Master of Rohallion had been shot through the head, when leading on his company of the Guards at the attack on Long Island.

Such, in 1798, was the old Scottish mansion of Rohallion, the residence of Reynold, sixth lord of that ilk, which, by the events of the last night's storm, has become the starting-place, or, as the quartermaster might phrase it, the *point d'appui*, of our story.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHILD OF THE SEA.

"'Tis gone—the storm has past,
'Twas but a bitter hail shower, and the sun
Laughs out again within the tranquil blue.
Henceforth, Firmilian, thou art safe with me."—AYTOUN.

To the eyes of those who surveyed the beach beneath the castle walls next morning, a lamentable spectacle was displayed. The wreck upon the Partan Craig had been completely torn to pieces by the fury of the waves, and now shattered masts and yards, blocks and rigging, casks, bales, planks and other pieces of worn and frayed timber were left high and dry among the shells and

shingle by the receding tide, or were dashed into smaller fragments by the surf that beat against the castle rock.

Several dead bodies were also cast ashore, sodden with the brine, and partly covered with sand; and, though all had been but a short time in the water, some were sadly mutilated by having been dashed repeatedly against the sharp and abutting rocks of Rohallion, by the furious sea last night.

All looked placid and calm, and by the position of their limbs, nearly all seemed to have been drowned in the act of swimming. By a portion of the sternboard that came on shore, the vessel's name appeared to have been the *Louise;* but of what port, or from where, remained unknown, for, save the little child, there remained no tongue or record to tell the story of that doomed ship, or the dreadful secrets of that eventful night.

The mutterings of the fishermen and the lamentations of the women of the little hamlet, were loud and impressive as they rambled along the beach, drawing the dead aside to remain in a boat-shed till that great local authority, the parish minister, arrived. Everything that came drifting ashore from the wreck was drawn far up the sand, lest the returning tide should wash it off again.

There were no Lloyds' agents or other officials in the neighbourhood of Rohallion, so each man made a lawful prize of whatever he could lay hands upon and convey to his cottage. The people at work close by relinquished plough and harrow, and harnessed their horses to the masts and booms for conveyance through the fields. Others brought carts to carry off the plunder; and thus, long before mid-day, not a trace remained of the shattered ship, save the pale dead men, who lay side by side under an old sail in the boat-shed; but for many a night after this, Elsie Irvine and others averred that they could see the pale blue *corpse-lichts* dancing on the sea about the Partan Craig, to indicate where other men lay drowned, uncoffined, and unprayed for.

Among other bodies discovered on the beach next morning was that of a man in whom, by his costume—a light green frock, laced with gold—all recognised the father, or supposed father, of the little boy he had striven so bravely to save, and whom all had seen perish by the light of their torches.

The poor man was lying among the seaweed, stark and stiff, and half covered with sand, within a few yards of the cottage where his little boy, all unconscious of his loss, of the past and of the future, lay peacefully asleep in Elsie Irvine's bed.

And now the quartermaster and Dominie Skaill, who had given his schoolboys a holiday, in honour of the excitement

and the event, arrived at the scene of operations, with Lady Rohallion's orders that the child should be brought to her.

Old John Girvan looked at the corpse attentively.

"This poor fellow has been a soldier," said he; "I can perceive that, by a glance. Lift him gently into the shed, lads, though it's all one to him how he's handled now!"

The corpse seemed to be that of a tall, well-formed, and fine-looking, dark-complexioned man in the prime of life; his dark brown hair, from which the white powder had all been washed away, was already becoming grizzled, and was neatly tied in a queue by a blue silk ribbon. In the breast-pocket of his coat, there were found a purse containing a few French coins of the Republic, but of small value, and a plated metal case, in which were some papers uninjured by the water. On the third finger of his left hand was a signet ring on which the name "Josephine" was engraved; so with these relics (while the body was placed with the rest in the boat-shed) John Girvan and the dominie, accompanied by Elsie, bearing the child, repaired to the presence of Lady Rohallion, who received them all in her little breakfast-parlour, the deeply embayed and arched windows of which showed that it had been the bower-chamber of her predecessors, in the feudal days of the old castle.

"Come away, Elsie, and show me your darling prize!" she exclaimed, as she hurried forward and held out her hand to the fisherman's wife, for there was a singular combination of friendly and old-fashioned grace in all she did.

"There is no a bonnier bairn, my leddy, nor a better, in a' the three Bailiwicks o' Kyle, Carrick, and Cunninghame," said Elsie, curtsying deeply, as she presented the child.

"Yes, madam," added the dominie; "the bairn is as perfect an Absalom as even the Book of Samuel describeth."

"But I dinna understand a word he says," resumed Elsie; "hear ye *that*, madam?"

"Ma mère, ma mère!" sobbed the child, a very beautiful dark-eyed, but golden-haired and red-cheeked little boy of some seven or eight years of age, as he looked from face to face in wonder and alarm.

"Faith! 'tis a little Frenchman," said the dominie.

"A Frenchman!" exclaimed Elsie, placing the child somewhat precipitately on Lady Rohallion's knee, and retiring a pace or two. "I thocht sae, by his queer jargon of broken English, wi' a smattering o' Scots words too; but French folk speak nae Christian tongue. Maybe the bairn's a spy—a son, wha kens, o' Robespierre or Bonaparte himsel!"

"Elsie, how can you run on thus?"

"Ah, mon père—mon père!" said the child, sobbing.

"Hear till him again, my leddy," exclaimed Elsie; "the bairn can speak French—that cowes a'!"

"He cries for his father—poor child—poor child!" said Lady Rohallion, whose eyes filled with tears.

"Father—yes, madame; my father—where is he?" said the boy, opening his fine large eyes wider with an expression of anxiety and fear, and speaking in a lisping but strongly foreign accent: "take me to him—take me to him, madame, if you please."

"The bairn speaks English well enough," said the dominie; "he'll hae had a French tutor, or some sic haverel, to teach him to play the fiddle, I warrant, and to quote Voltaire, Rousseau, and Helvetius, when he grows older."

"What is your name, my dear little boy?" asked Lady Rohallion, caressingly; but she had to repeat the question thrice, and in different modes, before the child, who eyed her with evident distrust, replied, timidly:

"Quentin Kennedy, madame."

"Kennedy!" exclaimed all.

"A gude auld Ayrshire name, ever since the days of Malcolm the Maiden!" said the quartermaster, striking his staff on the floor.

"Rohallion's mother was a Kennedy," said the lady, a tender smile spreading over her face as she surveyed the orphan, "so the bairn could not have fallen into better hands than ours."

"Indubitably not, my lady," chimed in the dominie; "nor could he find a sibber friend."

"And your father, my dear child—your father?" urged Lady Rohallion.

"My father—oh, my father is drowned! He went down into the sea with the big ship. Oh, ma mère! ma mère!" cried the little boy, in a sudden passion of grief, and seeking to escape from them, as the terrors of the past night, with a conviction of his present isolation and loneliness, seemed to come fully upon him.

"And your mamma, my little love?" asked the lady, endearingly.

"She is far away in France."

"Where—in what town?"

"Hélas, madame, I do not know."

He sobbed bitterly, and Lady Rohallion wept as she kissed and fondled, and strove to reassure him by those caresses which none but one who has been a mother can bestow; but sometimes he repelled her with his plump little hands, while his dark eyes would sparkle and dilate with surprise and alarm. Then he would ask for his father again and again, for the child knew

neither what death or drowning meant; and it was in vain they told him that his father had perished in the sea. He could not understand them, and to have shown the child the poor pale, sodden corpse that lay in the boat-shed on the shore would have been a useless cruelty that must have added to his grief and terror.

Lady Rohallion, pointing upward as he sat on her knee, told him that his father was in heaven, and that in time he would meet him there; for, of such as he was, poor orphan, was the kingdom of heaven made; but in heaven or in the sea was all one for a time to little Quentin Kennedy, who wept bitterly, and noisily too, till he grew weary, or became consoled, by the winning ways of his gentle protectress, for, of course, the poor child knew not the nature of his awful loss and bereavement.

While the boy, although temporarily forgetful of his griefs, was stretched on the soft, warm hearth-rug before the fire that blazed in the parlour grate, and occupied himself with the gambols of a wiry Skye-terrier, John Girvan handed to Lady Rohallion the relics he had found on the drowned man.

"A ring!" said she; "this is painfully interesting; and it has an inscription."

"Yes, madame, it is like the *annuli* worn by the legionary tribunes in the Punic war," added Dominie Skaill, who never lost an opportunity of "airing" his classics.

"It bears a crest; that speaks of gentle birth," said Lady Rohallion, who had a great veneration for that fortuitous circumstance. "And there is a name, *Josephine*."

"Mamma—ma mère!" exclaimed the child, starting and looking up at the, no doubt, familiar sound.

"His mother's name, I am sure; poor little fellow, he has heard his father call her so," said Lady Rohallion, as she opened the plated case and drew forth the documents it contained. One was on parchment, the other two were letters.

"A military commission—Girvanmains, look here!"

It was the commission of Quentin Kennedy, *gentilhomme Ecossais*, to be captain in the Royal Regiment of Scots, in the service of his Most Christian Majesty, and was signed by the unfortunate Louis XVI., as the date showed, in the year before his execution.

"So this poor drowned man has eaten his bread by tuck of drum!" exclaimed the old quartermaster, with a kindling eye, as he stooped to caress the orphan's golden curls. "Puir fellow—puir fellow! He has been a commissioned officer like myself, so I'll e'en turn out the Rohallion Volunteers, and he shall be borne to his grave as becomes a soldier, with muffled drums and arms reversed—eh, dominie?"

"Yes, and the spoils of war shall be cast on the pile, as we read in the eleventh book of the Æneid; and they shall march like the Thebans, striking their weapons one on another, to the sound of the trumpet—eh, quartermaster?"

"I'd batoon the first lout I caught doing aught so unsteady or so unsoldierlike," was the indignant response.

"But how came this Scotsman to be serving the French King," asked the dominie; "as such was he not a renegade soldier, such as the Romans were wont to stab and leave unburied, as we find in Tacitus?"

"He had been in the foreign brigades, the Scottish and Irish," replied the lady. "One of these letters is from Monsieur the Comte d'Artois, and it praises the courage of the Scottish Captain Kennedy, of the Regiment de Berwick, in the campaigns upon the Meuse and Rhine. The other letter is from his poor wife, and is subscribed Josephine. Ah me, how sad! the name that is on the ring."

They spoke in low tones, as if loth to disturb the child, who was still playing with the terrier.

"What says it, my lady?" asked the dominie, "for though well versed in the dead languages, praised be Providence and the auld pedagogy of Glasgow, I know little of the living—French especially, the language of Voltaire, Diderot, and Helvetius—of democrats, levellers, revolutionists, and the slaves of the Corsican tyrant."

"The letter has no date, dominie," replied the lady, smiling at this outburst; "the cover also is wanting, but it runs thus."

Standing one on each side of her chair, each with a hand at his ear to listen, the two old men heard her translate with ease the following letter:—

"My own dear, dear Quentin,—

"This is the last letter you will receive in France from your own Fifine. The next I shall address to you, as you may direct, to Scotland. Ah, mon Dieu! how sad—how terrible to think that we are to be separated, and at such a time! But madame my mother's illness pleads for me with all, and more than all with you, Quentin. You as a Scotchman and royalist officer, and our poor child, for the very blood it inherits from his mother, would be welcome victims to the shambles of the great Republic; for the first Consul B. and Citizen M., his secretary of state, would not spare even a child at this crisis, lest it should grow into an aristocrat and an enemy.* Every hour the hatred

* The initials no doubt refer to Bonaparte and the secretary Hugues Bernard Maret, who assisted so vigorously in the 18th Brumaire.

of Britain grows stronger here, and the mode in which we treat the prisoners taken in Flanders and elsewhere, makes my blood alternately glow and freeze, Frenchwoman though I am! But I have not forgotten the Place de la Grève, or the horrors of that day, when my father's blood moistened the sawdust of a scaffold, just wetted by the blood of Marie Antoinette.

"Enough of this, however, dear Quentin; 'tis safer to speak than to write of such things, though this letter goes by a safe and sure hand, our dear friend, the Abbé Lebrun, for in this land of spies the post is perilous. Destroy it, however, the moment you receive it, for we know not what mischief it might do us all, though the ship by which you sail, goes, you say, under cartel, and by the rules of war can neither be attacked nor taken.

"Rumour says that Monsieur Charles Philippe, the Comte d'Artois, is now with his suite at Holyrood, the old home of those Scottish kings with whom his fathers were allied; and that the ancient Garde du Corps Ecossais is to be re-established for him there. I pray God it may be so, as in that case, dearest, Monsieur will not forget you and your services on the Rhine and elsewhere, and your steady adherence to his family in those days of anarchy, impiety, and sin.

"Kiss our little cherub for me. I am in despair when I think of him, though he is safer with you than with me, in our dreadful France—no longer the land of beauty and gaiety, but of the bayonet and guillotine. He must be our hostage and peace-offering to your family, and I doubt not that his innocent smiles and golden curls may soften their hearts towards us both. La Mère de Dieu take you both into her blessed keeping and hasten our reunion. Till then, and for ever after, I am your own affectionate little wife,

"FIFINE."

This letter, we have said, was undated, but the postscript led Lady Rohallion to suppose it came from a remote part of France. It ran thus:

"Your own petted Fifine sends you a hundred kisses for every mile this has to travel; as many more to little Quentin, as they wont add a franc to the weight in the pocket of M. l'Abbé."

So ended this letter, so sad in its love and its tenor, under the circumstances. With that of the Comte d'Artois, the commission, purse, and ring, Lady Rohallion carefully put it past in her antique buhl escritoire, for her husband's inspection on his return; and, on leaving the castle, the old quartermaster kept his word.

True to his inbred military instincts and impulses, he had the

Rohallion company of Volunteers duly paraded, in their cocked hats, short swallow-tailed red coats, white leggings, and long black gaiters; and, with arms reversed, they bore the dead soldier of fortune, shoulder-high, from the old castle-gate, where the scarlet family standard, with its fess *ermine*, hung half-hoisted on the battery.

Mournfully from the leafless copse that clothed the steep sides of the narrow glen in which the old kirk stood, did the muffled drums re-echo, while the sweet low wail of the fifes sent up the sad notes of the dead march—"The Land o' the Leal."

At one of the drawing-room windows Lady Rohallion sat, with the child upon her knee—little Quentin Kennedy, our hero, for such he is; and her motherly heart was full, and her kindly tears fell fast on his golden hair, when three sharp volleys that rung in the clear cold air above a yawning grave, and the pale blue distant smoke that she could see wreathing in the November sunshine, announced the last scene of this little tragedy—that the poor drowned wanderer, the Scottish soldier of fortune, who adhered to King Louis in his downfall, had found a last home in his native earth; and that, *perhaps*, all his secrets, his sorrows, and the story of his life were buried with him.

Then with a burst of sympathy and womanly tenderness, she pressed her lips to the soft cheek of the child, whose eyes dilated with inquiry and wonder, as he heard those farewell volleys that rung in the distant air, but little knew that they were fired above his father's closing grave!

CHAPTER V.

THE PAST.

"Still shall unthinking man substantial deem
The forms that flit through life's deceitful dream,
Till at some stroke of Fate, the vision flies,
And sad realities in prospect rise;
And from Elysian slumbers rudely torn,
The startled soul awakes, to think and mourn."

BEATTIE'S *Elegy*, 1758.

SUCH is the buoyant thoughtlessness of childhood, that a few days sufficed to console, to soothe, and to reconcile the poor boy to his new friends and his new habitation. The kindness, tenderness, and attention of Lady Rohallion did much, if not all, to achieve this; and doubtless she would have succeeded very well in the same way with an older personage than little

Quentin Kennedy, for she fully possessed, together with great amiability and sweetness of disposition, those requisites which Sir William Temple affirmed to be the three great ingredients of pleasant conversation,—viz., good sense, good humour, and wit.

Secluded and retiring in her habits, simple and old-fashioned in her tastes, she preferred residing quietly among her husband's tenantry at Rohallion, to figuring, as had been her wont, in the great world of fashion, such as it was to be found in the London of old King George's days, or in the smaller circle of the Scottish metropolis; and even when parliamentary business compelled Lord Rohallion to proceed southward, he could scarcely prevail upon her to accompany him, for travelling was not then the swift and easy process we find it *now*, in these days of steam and railways.

Thus the advent of her little protégé was quite a boon to her, and while rapidly learning to love the child, who had a thousand winning and endearing ways, she relinquished all idea of attempting to discover his mother till the return of her husband, though the notion was scarcely conceived, when it was abandoned as simply impossible, from the want of a distinct clue as to her residence, and the existence of the bitter and revengeful war that had been waged between France and Britain for five years now, ever since the siege of Toulon. Consequently there seemed nothing for it, as Quartermaster Girvan said, but to make a good Scotsman of the little Frenchman (if French, indeed, he was) —and the dominie failed not to quote Cicero, "anent the *adoptio* of the Romans."

So Lady Rohallion learned to love the child, and the child to love her with a regard that was quite filial; and his pretty prattle in broken English was her chief solace and amusement after the hours of attendance and *surveillance* she daily bestowed, like a good housewife and châtelaine of old, upon her household and her husband's tenantry; for there was not "a fishwife's bairn" in the hamlet below could be pilled or powdered for the measles or hooping-cough, without a due consultation being first held with my lady in the castle.

Sensation novels were then unknown, and Walter Scott was still in futurity, save as a translator of German ballads. Our respectable old friends, "Tom Jones," "Roderick Random," and "Peregrine Pickle," were still in the flush of their fame; but Lady Rohallion preferred the works of Mr. Richardson, and deemed the sorrows of Clarissa Harlowe, and of Fielding's "Amelia," to be sorrows indeed.

Being Winifred Maxwell of the gallant but attainted House of Nithsdale, her Jacobite sympathies were keen and intense;

thus, ten years before the date of our story, she suffered a real grief, and had worn a suit of the deepest black, on tidings coming from Maybole that Prince Charles Edward, with whom her mother had flirted in Holyrood, and for whom her uncles had shed their blood on the fatal field of Culloden—that the Bonnie Prince Charlie of so many stirring memories, so many Scottish songs, and so many faithful hearts, an old, soured, and dissappointed man, had been gathered to his fathers, and was lying cold and dead in his tomb, beneath the dome of St. Peter.

Though she had somewhat strong ideas on the subject of keeping up "the old spirit of the Crawfords of Rohallion," a good deal of which, we are sorry to say, meant looking down on their neighbours: and though she had an intense estimation for poor people of "that ilk," and for coats, quarterings, and family claims, and that kind of blood which the Scots designated as *gude*, and the Spaniards as *blue*, she was weak enough, as Lady Eglinton phrased it, to treasure immensely a copy of very flattering verses, addressed to her in her beauty and girlhood, by a certain democratic Ayrshire ploughman, named Mr. Robert Burns, for whose memory she had a very great regard.

She was full of the proud and fiery ideas of a past and manly age, for she was old enough to remember when the beaus and bloods of Edinburgh in their periwigs and square-skirted coats of silk or velvet, squired her and Eleanora Eglinton up the old Assembly Close, with links flaring and swords flashing round their sedans, swearing, with such large oaths as were then fashionable, to whip through the lungs any scurvy fellow who loitered an instant in their way.

But the first years of the present century saw a new world closing round her, and innovations coming fast, though the old language in which our laws are written yet lingered in the pulpit and at the bar.

To her aristocratic ideas, and to those of her friends, it seemed as if the malign influence of the French revolution tainted the very air, especially in Scotland, where, by the tendency of their education and religion, the people are naturally democratic in spirit; and it was pretty apparent, that the decapitation of Robert Watt at Edinburgh, and the persecution of "Citizen Muir," and his compatriots by the Government, in no way cooled the real ardour of the Friends of the People.

To Lady Winifred, it appeared also, that while, on one hand, the humbler classes were less genuinely affectionate and less deferential to the upper, on the other, they were less kindly and less courteous to each other. Everything seemed to be done in a hurry too, though the mail-coaches carrying four inside, usually

took a week or more in rumbling between Edinburgh and London with the varieties of an occasional break-down when fording a river, or receiving the contents of a robber's blunderbuss in a lonely part of the way.

Holidays were kept in a hearty old fashion, and there was no sour sabbatarianism to excite the wrath of the liberal-minded Scots, and the wonder and derision of their English neighbours. There were democrats and demagogues in every village, it is true; but patriotism, and a genuine British spirit rendered their revilings innocuous and all but useless.

Where now the dun deer rove in the desert glens, the Highland Clans existed in all their hardihood and numerical strength, to fill by thousands the ranks of our kilted regiments. The flags of "Duncan, Nelson, Keppel, Howe, and Jervis" were sweeping the sea. Beacons studded all the hills, and every village cross was the muster-place of volunteer corps; and there are yet those alive who remember the great night of the *false alarm* when it was supposed the French had landed, when the bale-fire on Hume Castle sent its blaze upon the midnight sky; when the alarm-drum, the long roll which a soldier never forgets, was beat in town and hamlet, and all Scotland stood to arms: and when the brave Liddesdale yeomanry swam the Liddle, then in full and roaring flood, every trooper riding with his sword in his teeth, as if to show that the old spirit yet lived upon the Borders, unchanged as in those days when the Lords Marchers blew their trumpets before the gates of Berwick or Carlisle.

And as it came to pass, it was in those stirring times of war and tumult—times not now very remote, good reader—that our little hero found a home in the old manor of Rohallion.

His mother sorrowed for him in sunny France beyond the sea, where she may never see him more, or know that he survived the wreck in which her husband perished; and now daily another received his morning kiss, and watched his footsteps and gambols; and nightly hushed him to sleep, smoothed the coverlet, caressed his ruddy cheeks and golden hair; yet that poor bereaved mother was never absent from the thoughts of good Lady Rohallion, who had now taken her place.

Of his many kisses and caresses, she felt that she was robbing that poor unknown, the affectionate "Fifine" of the dead man's letter; but how to find her, how to restore him, stultified and rendered every way impossible as all such attempts must be, by the war now waged by every sea and shore between the two countries?

Though little Quentin, we grieve to say, was gradually forgetting his own mother and learning to love his adopted one,

there were *times* when, nathelèss all Lady Rohallion's sweetness and tenderness, he felt that there was something lacking—something he missed; he knew not what, unless it were that he longed

> "For the touch of a vanished hand
> And the sound of a voice that is still."

A fortnight had passed away since the letter of Lord Rohallion had been brought by John Girvan from Maybole, and still there were no further tidings of his return; so the lady became sad and anxious, for she trembled at the idea of his returning by sea.

On one of the first nights of December, when the wind was moaning about the old walls of the castle, and the angry hiss of the sea was heard on the rocks below, she sat alone, by Quentin's little bed. He had just dropped asleep.

He occupied the same cot in which her own son Cosmo, Master of Rohallion, had been wont to sleep when a child about the same age. It was prettily gilt and surmounted by a coronet; the curtains were drawn apart, and by the subdued light of a night-lamp she could see the pure profile and rosy cheeks of the boy, as he reposed on a soft white pillow, in the calm sleep of childhood.

She could almost imagine that her son Cosmo, the tall captain of the Guards, was again a child and sleeping there, or that she was a young wife again and not an old woman, and so, as thoughts that came unbidden poured fast upon her, she began to recal the years that had rolled away.

Then out of the thronging memories of the past, there arose a vision of a fair-haired and handsome young man—one who loved her well before Rohallion came—his younger brother; and with this image came the memory of many a happy ramble long, long ago, in the green summer woods of pleasant Nithsdale, when the sunshine was declining on the heights of Queensberry, or casting shadows on the plains of Closeburn or the grassy pastoral uplands through which the blue stream winds to meet the Solway—and where the voices of the mavis, the merle, and the cushat-dove were heard in every coppice.

She thought of those sunset meetings, and of one who was wont to sit beside her then for hours, lost in love and happiness. Lady Rohallion loved her husband well and dearly; but there were times when conscience upbraided her, and she pitied the memory of that younger brother whom she had deceived and deluded, and whom, like a thoughtless young coquette, she had permitted—it might be, lured—to love her.

In fancy she traced out what her path—a less splendid one, assuredly—might have been, had Rohallion not won her heart,

and most unwittingly broken his brother's, for so the people said. And thus, while "speculating on a future which was already a *past*," the handsome, the gallant, and earnest young Ranulph Crawford, the lover of her girlhood, rose before her in fancy, and her eyes grew moist as she thought of his fatal end, for he died, a self-made exile, an obscure soldier of fortune, in defence of the Tuileries, and the public papers had recorded the story of his fall—not in the flowery language of the present, but in the cold brevity of that time—"as one Captain Crawford, a Scot, whose zeal outran his discretion, who in charging the populace, was wounded, taken, and beheaded by them."

"Clarissa Harlowe" had fallen from her hand, and the mimic sorrows of the novel were forgotten in the real griefs of Lady Winifred's waking dream. From these, however, she was roused by the clatter of a horse's hoofs at the haunted gate beside the gun-battery, and almost immediately after a servant announced the glad tidings,

"My Lady Rohallion, his lordship has arrived!"

CHAPTER VI.

LORD ROHALLION.

"She gazed—she reddened like a rose—
Syne pale as ony lily;
She sank within my arms and cried,
'Art thou my ain dear Willie?'
'By Him who made yon sun and sky,
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man!' and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded."—BURNS.

HASTENING to the drawing-room, she immediately found herself in the arms of her husband, who was throwing off his drab-coloured riding coat, with its heavy cape, his small triangular Nivernois hat, boot-tops, and whip, to his favourite valet and constant attendant, old Jack Andrews.

Rohallion kissed his wife's hand and then her forehead, for he had not outlived either affection or respect, though verging on his fifty-fifth year; and he had all that gentleness of bearing and true politeness which the Scottish gentlemen of the old school, prior to, and long after the Union, acquired from our ancient allies, the French.

"And you returned from London——"

"By sea, Winny—by sea," said Rohallion,

"After all my entreaties!"

"Zounds! Winny, I can't abide the mail, and am too old to post it now, as my old friend Monboddo used to do yearly, to kiss the king's hand; and so preferred the 'Lord Nelson' smack, from London to Leith, armed with twelve carronades, and sailing without convoy."

"And the voyage was pleasant?"

"A head-wind, a fourteen days' run, and an exchange of shots with a French privateer off Flamborough Head. At Edinburgh I took the stage to Ayr, and from thence Andrews and I jogged quietly home on horseback."

Still a handsome man, though portly in person, as became his years, Reynold Crawford, Lord Rohallion, had features that were alike noble in character and striking in expression. The broad, square forehead indicated intelligence and candour, his mouth, good humour, and the form of his closely-shaved chin spoke of decision and perseverance. His nose was perhaps too large, but his eyes were dark grey, gentle and soft, usually, in expression. He wore his own hair, which was still thick and wavy, powdered as white as a cauliflower, and tied with a broad ribbon, having a double bow at the back.

He still adhered to the frilled shirt, and had a large pearl brooch in the breast thereof; his long waistcoat was of scarlet cloth, edged with silver; his coat of bright blue broadcloth, with large, flat steel buttons, had a high rolling collar, small cape, and enormous lapels. Hessian boots, with tassels of gold and spurs of steel, and tight buff pantaloons for riding, showed to advantage his stout, well turned limbs, and completed his costume. He had a ruddy complexion, a hearty laughing manner, and a jolly *brusquerie* about him that smacked more of the soldier, or the agriculturist, than the peer of the realm.

"And now, Rohallion, tell me about our Cosmo—how is he looking?"

"Twice as well as ever I did at the same age, and that is saying something—eh, Winny? Why he is the pattern man of the Household Brigade, but a strange boy withal. Duty about the Court has increased that cold hauteur which always marked his character. I don't know where the deuce he picked it up—not from you or me, Winny. But the butler says that an early supper is served——"

"Yes, dearest—in my little parlour."

"Egad! the snuggest billet in the house, and I can assure you that I am as well appetised as ever I used to be when a hungry ensign in Germany. Permit me, madam," said he, drawing her hand caressingly upon his arm; "and now tell me, how do you like the mode in which my hair is queued?"

"Why, Reynold?"

"'Tis a new fashion taught to Jack Andrews by old Hugh Hewson, of St. Martin-in-the-Fields—the Scotch hairdresser—you have heard of him, of course?"

"The original of Dr. Smollett's Hugh Strap—who has not?" said she, laughing; "well, his dressing is very smart! I see now, Andrews, his lordship looks quite a beau!"

"I *was*—or had the reputation of being so, when first I wore that gurget at Minden, a boy of fifteen or thereabouts; and before I saw you, Winny, dear."

"I have a surprise for you——"

"Supper first, Winny, egad! I don't like surprises; we had enough of them in Holland, and they were not at all to our taste. Eh, Jack Andrews—do you remember our night march for Valenciennes?" he asked, turning to his old valet, who grinned an assent as he deposited a pair of silver-mounted holster pistols in a mahogany case. To Rohallion this veteran, Jack Andrews, was all that Corporal Trim was to Uncle Toby (both of whom, according to Sterne, had served in the 25th Foot, then known as Leven's Regiment), a servant, and at times friend and companion, and perpetual resort or reference on military matters. Long and hard service together, community of sentiment on most matters, combined the sympathy of camaraderie with the steady faith of a Scottish servitor of the old school in Andrews, who was a sour-featured, thin, and erect old fellow, in a powdered wig (though, by the Act of 1795, hair powder cost a guinea per head), with a pigtail, and the family livery, grey faced with scarlet; and somehow on old Jack it always looked like a *uniform*.

Attended by this valet, both well mounted, and having holster pistols at their saddles, he had ridden from Ayr, through Maybole, and was now ready for supper, braced by the keen December blast, and feeling happy and jovial to find himself once more at home from London, which, so far as travelling and the ideas of the time are concerned, was then nearly as distant from the Scottish capital as Moscow is to-day; and a perfect picture they formed, that gentle, high-bred, and loving old couple in powdered hair, seated at supper, with their antique equipage, conversing in the plain old Scottish accent, which was still used, with a Doric word here and there, by the Scottish aristocracy.

"Andrews and I would have been here an hour earlier," said his lordship, slicing down a daintily-roasted capon, "but the old piper of Maybole, in the burgh livery, would play before us all the way through the town, and two miles beyond it, according to

use and wont—a glass of wine, Andrews—but Pate is growing old, Winny, now; he fairly broke down in playing 'Lord Lennox March,' so I think we must add something to his piper's-croft and cow's mailing. They scarcely keep the poor fellow, when meal, malt, and everything are at such prices. I had, moreover, to inspect the Maybole volunteers. I say, Andrews, did you see how they shouldered arms?"

"Ah, my lord; knocking all their fore-and-aft cocked hats off, as they canted their firelocks from right to left," replied the valet, with a grim smile.

"Then we had to see an effigy of Tom Paine, burned in front of the Tolbooth, with a copy of the 'Rights of Man,' while we drank Confusion to the French, the Friends of the People, the National Convention, and Charles Fox. So you see, Winny, my time was fully occupied."

The wax lights in the silver candelabra and crystal girandoles, and the fire that blazed in the polished brass grate, diffused a warm and ruddy glow through the cossy old-fashioned parlour, with its pink damask chairs and curtains; and speedily the old general dismissed his supper and glass of dry sherry.

Then, Andrews, as if according to use and wont, without requiring to be told, removed the decanters, and placed before his master the "three elements," whisky, hot water, and sugar, and Rohallion, with ladle and jug, proceeded to make a jorum of hot steaming toddy.

"Now, Andrews, my man," said he, "make a browst like this for yourself in the butler's pantry, and then turn in; neither you nor I are so young as we have been, and you've had a long journey to-day. Good night. I require nothing more."

Andrews gave a military salute, wheeled round, as if on a pivot, so that his pigtail described a horizontal circle, and withdrew.

"Now, what is the surprise you have for me, Winny?" asked Rohallion, as he filled her ladyship's glass, a long one, with a white worm in its stem.

"*Tell me first the news from London.*"

"Well, gudewife Winny, nobody speaks of anything but this expedition to Egypt, and the expected surrender of Malta. Then if all goes right, ere long General Abercrombie will have about 15,000 men with him in the Bay of Marmorice."

"I am so glad our Cosmo did not think of going on foreign service."

"Why?"

"Can you ask me, Reynold—our only son?"

"I had been ten times under fire before I was half his age.

He was most anxious to go, and I wished him too; but, as the staff appointments were all filled up, and his battalion of the Guards will soon be detailed for service, I thought it a pity that the boy should lose his regimental rank."

"Cosmo will be twenty-five on his next birthday," said Lady Rohallion, thoughtfully, a remark probably suggested by the term "boy;" "our only son, Rohallion; we must indeed be careful of him."

"Careful of a strapping Guardsman like Cosmo!"

"There are times—when—when——"

"What, Winny?"

"I regret his having gone into the army at all."

"Odds my heart! then he would be the first Crawford of Rohallion that ever was out of it. His battalion may soon go to Ireland; the people there are more than ever discontented with the proposed union, and hope that the First Consul, the upstart Bonaparte, may enable them to cut a better figure than they and their allies under Humbert did at Ballinamuck last summer. I don't think the Horse Guards used me well in refusing me a brigade for service; so I don't return to London for some time, having paired off with our friend Eglinton, who is to put himself at the head of his Fencibles."

"Oh, I am so happy to hear this!" exclaimed Lady Winifred, clasping her plump white hands, the rings on which sparkled through her black lace mittens.

"Despite all I could urge, my old comrade, Jack Warrender of Ardgour, goes to Egypt in command of the Corsican Rangers."

"So Lady Eglinton wrote to me."

"And if he is knocked on the head,—which God forbid!—his daughter, Flora, will be long under trust, so her estate will be a fair one; and now, Winny, when I add that Mr. Fox and the Opposition are having their hair dressed *à la Brutus*, in imitation of the Parisian rabble, you have all my news."

"And now for mine," said she, with a delightful smile.

"Your surprise?"

"Yes—but you must come with me."

"Where?"

"To the nursery."

"That which was once the nursery, you mean."

"And which has become so *again*," she replied, laughing at his bewilderment.

Passing her arm through his, she led him to the sleeping-room, which adjoined their own, and desired him to look into Cosmo's little cot. Rohallion did so, and great indeed was his surprise

to find a beautiful little boy, whose hair, all golden and curly, and whose form of face, rich bloom, and long dark eyelashes, powerfully reminded him of what Cosmo had been at the same age, when sleeping in the same chamber and in the same cot.

"Zounds, Winifred, what in the world does this mean?" said he, with a droll expression twinkling in his dark grey eyes; "whose little fellow is this? Not *ours*, certainly; you can't have been stealing a march on me now-a-days."

"'Tis a long story and a sad one; but return with me to the parlour, and I shall tell you all about it," she replied, while selecting the key of her escritoire from the huge, housewife-like bunch that glittered at her *chatelaine*.

"Egad, then I'll brew another jug of punch the while; and now, Winny, I am all attention."

She related all that the reader knows: the storm on that gloomy November night; the attack made by the armed Frenchman, and the consequent flight of the British ship; her wreck on the Partan Craig and the loss of the crew, with the recovery of the child from a state of insensibility, and the burial of his father, by the ground bailie, John Girvan.

"My worthy old quartermaster did right—'twas like my good comrade!" said Lord Rohallion, while his eyes glistened; "I can imagine I see him marching up the glen at the head of the funeral party, erect as ever he marched under fire—a trifle more, maybe. The old Borderer did just what I should have done myself!"

Lady Winifred now laid before her husband the ring, the purse with its few franc pieces, and the papers of the drowned stranger, and all of these he examined with interest and commiseration, for he was a kind, generous, and warm-hearted man.

"This is sad—very sad, indeed!" he muttered.

"By the handwriting, Rohallion, and by the crest on the ring——"

"A lily, stalked and leaved, rising from a coronet."

"Yes."

"Well, Winny?"

"I should say they must have been people of figure and fashion—of good quality, at least."

"An old-fashioned phrase that, and going out now, like our fathers' swords and our mothers' hoops; call them aristocrats—eh, Winny?"

"Undoubtedly, and under suspicion, too, by the tenor of the poor lady's letter."

"'Josephine,'" said he, reading the inscription upon the ring; "why, that is the name of the widow Beauharnais, who three

or four years ago married the First Consul to escape the guillotine! You must preserve these relics with care, Winny; and as for the poor bairn, Rohallion must be his home till we find his mother, a task very unlikely to be accomplished, if ever at all, in these times, when France is at war with all the world, and her scaffolds are drenched daily with the blood of women, children, and priests, as well as of brave and loyal gentlemen. But into no better hands than ours, Winny, could this poor waif of misfortune have fallen. He is the child of a faithful royalist soldier, too—we must always remember that."

Like his worthy wife, Lord Rohallion inherited with his blood a strong dash of Jacobitism, thus his sympathies were all with the humbled royalty of France.

The worthy old Defender of the Faith, who muddled away his time at Windsor, and his son, the "first gentleman in Europe,' who spent his days and nights less reputably in his Pavilion at Brighton—Thackeray's man of waistcoats, wigs, and uniforms—had perhaps no truer servant than Major-General Reynold Lord Rohallion, K.C.B., &c. Yet among the "Stuart Papers," which, in 1807, found their way into the royal archives, there was discovered a correspondence between a certain peer whose initial was R. and "His Majesty Henry II. of Scotland and IX. of England," which rather excited the surprise of the ministry and privy council; but like the same secret correspondence of many other nobles of both kingdoms, it was deemed only wise and charitable to commit it to oblivion, for the grave had closed over the good old Cardinal Duke of York—the last of the Stuarts—and a few knew why, for a year and a day, the hilt of Rohallion's sword was covered by a band of crape.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR STORY PROGRESSES.

"Here he dwelt in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh fair and free;
Not a lord in all the county,
Is so great a lord as he."—TENNYSON.

KIND old Rohallion was deeply interested in and attracted by the little boy, who had many winning and endearing ways about him; and he particularly excelled in a bright and captivating smile, that was joyous in its perfect innocence.

He seated him on his knee at the breakfast-table in the library,

and strove, by all the art he was master of, to draw from him some clue, as to the part of France in which his mother resided, but save a knowledge of his own name, Quentin's recollections were few prior to the terror he had experienced on the wreck. All beyond that seemed vague, and his reminiscences were an odd jumble of a large town with a cathedral where his mamma *took him to hear Abbé Lebrun preach* or say mass—good Abbé Lebrun, who always gave him *bon-bons*, and wore such large spectacles. Then there was a *river with boats*, a bridge and a great *mountain with a windmill, where he used to go with his* nurse when she visited the miller.

Then, there was a Chanoinesse who gave him painted toys; there were some wicked soldiers, who burned a street and dragged away all the people to die, and of these same soldiers he had a peculiar dread and aversion. But whether they were ugly toys, or actors in some scene the child had witnessed, Rohallion could not tell; he supposed the affair referred to was some grim reality incident to the late revolution. He could gather nothing more that afforded a clue; and now as these memories were awakened in him, the faces of *others* came with them; tears filled the child's fine dark eyes, and he entreated piteously to have his mother brought to him and his nurse Nanette, or have his father brought to him out of the sea; and thus perceiving that nothing of certainty or value could be gleaned from him, his protectors tacitly agreed to let the subject drop.

Breakfast was just over when Andrews announced Quartermaster Girvan and Dominie Skaill, two individuals, who are perhaps bores in their way, but are nevertheless necessary to us in the course of this narrative.

They had heard of his lordship's arrival, and had "come to pay their dutiful reverence," for something of the old feudal sentiment lingered yet in Carrick, and a journey to Calcutta is a mere joke or pleasure trip now, when compared with how the Scots of 1798 viewed one to London, few prudent people attempting it without previously making a will, and settling all their earthly affairs.

"Welcome, Girvan, and welcome, dominie," said Rohallion, shaking each by the hand cordially; "I am glad to be at home again among you."

"Yea," replied the dominie, while rubbing one hand over the other, and smiling blandly, as perhaps his scholars seldom saw him smile; "your lordship has come back like Cincinnatus after the defeat of the Volci and the Æqui, to plough turnips and plant gude kail on haugh and rig—so welcome hame to Carrick, my lord."

The dominie had on his Sunday coat, with its huge flapped pockets; his best three-cornered hat, bound with black braid, was under his arm, and his square shoe-buckles shone like silver.

"And our little Frenchman has become quite a friend with your lordship, I see," said Girvan, patting the child on the head.

"Quite—a splendid little fellow he is!"

"But call him not a Frenchman," said the dominie, "when he bears the good auld Carrick name of Kennedy."

"Aye, dominie; it used to find an echo hereabout, in the old trooping and tramping times," replied Girvan.

"And has so still," added Rohallion, laughing; "for I am half a Kennedy, and often have I heard my mother sing—

"'Twixt Wigton and the town of Ayr,
Portpatrick and the Cruives of Cree,
Nae man may hope in peace to bide,
Unless he court Saint Kennedie."

"Like the Maxwells in Nithsdale, the Kennedies had all their own way in those days," said Lady Winifred, as she drew off her lace mittens, and prepared to adjust her ivory-mounted spinning-wheel.

"But to return to the present time, tell me, John Girvan, did that French ship actually come within range of our gun-battery?"

"Yes, my lord—or nearly so."

"And what were *you* about, John, to stand with your hands in your pockets at such a time? Egad, 'twas not like an old 25th man?"

The quartermaster reddened.

"There was a tremendous gale from the seaward," said Lady Rohallion, coming to his assistance; "a storm—a tempest——"

"And she came only within a mile of the Partan Craig, where the unfortunate merchantman was in sore peril—a foe on one side, a lee shore on the other—eh, dominie?"

"'*Here* Scylla bellows from her dire abodes,
Tremendous port—abhorred by men and gods,
And *there* Charybdis,'

as old Homer hath it," replied the dominie, promptly.

"Even had the battery been manned, my lord, I *am* doubtful—I am doubtful if these old twenty-four pounders would pitch shot so far; and she scarcely appeared, before she hauled her wind and disappeared into the mist," said Girvan, giving his old yellow wig an angry twist.

"Some of these small crafts are growing very saucy," said Lord Rohallion, to change the subject, which he saw was distasteful to his old comrade. "It was only the other day that a lieutenant with fourteen men from one of our gun-brigs landed

on the coast of France to distribute royal manifestoes of the Comte d'Artois, dated from Holyrood, but he and his men were taken by a party of dragoons who surrounded an *auberge* in which they were imprudently drinking. They were instantly hanged as spies, by order of General Monnet, and the bodies are to be seen on fifteen gibbets, a mile apart, along the coast between Boulogne and Cape Grisnez.

"Poor men! How horrible!" exclaimed lady Winifred.

"Such barbarities were not committed in our time, my lord, except among the Indians."

"Quartermaster—but we are getting old fellows now," said Rohallion, with something between a laugh and a sigh. "We have often stopped the march of the French with fixed bayonets, but we can't arrest the march of *time*."

"Aye, aye, my lord," said the old soldier, warming, and answering a friendly smile from old Jack Andrews, who was removing the breakfast equipage; "but, when at Minden, and while the French gun brigade was bowling through the six British regiments that stood there in division, we little thought that we would live to drink our grog in Rohallion, forty years after, hale carles, and hearty ones, too."

"If we ever *thought* at all, Girvan, which is not likely; reflection troubles a young soldier seldom, and, egad! we were beardless boys then."

"And those who were boys like ourselves then, and those who were grey-haired grenadiers of Fontenoy and Culloden—who had no need to powder their white hair—were alike mowed down together, and lay like herrings in a landing net," said Girvan, sadly.

"It was a day on which the ripe fruit and the blossom were gathered together," said Lady Rohallion, as her wheel revolved rapidly, and little Quentin sat at her feet to watch it.

"Your ladyship's speech savoureth of poetry," said the dominie, bowing; "it is even as my old friend Burns—puir Robbie Burns—would have expressed himself."

"It is ten years since the Scots Horse Guards were amalgamated with the new Life Guard Regiments," said Rohallion, commencing a familiar topic.

"Just twelve years this summer, my lord," replied Girvan.

"And though moving slowly up the list of generals, Girvan, I have not had a regiment since."

"Among the Romans——" began the dominie.

"A regiment! it is a brigade you should have," interrupted the quartermaster, ruthlessly.

"Among the Romans," began the dominie again, when Lord Rohallion, who was full of his grievance (was there ever an old soldier without one?) spoke with something of irritation.

"I have actually been refused a brigade for service, though senior to more favoured officers; but a time may come when Government may be glad to avail themselves of my services, though I am afraid, John, that I'm getting owre auld in the horn, as the drovers say. Besides, they think that we old fellows of Minden and Bunker's Hill are as much out of date as the snap-muskets and matchlocks of King William's time. And zounds, man! there are not wanting in the Lower House certain disloyal spirits, termed financial reformers, who grudged the old soldier the day's pittance which he has won by blood and sweat, and by wasting the flower of his days among the swamps of the Helder, the fevers of the West Indies, and elsewhere."

"The devil take all fevers and reformers together—amen," said the quartermaster; "but I believe this intended Egyptian business will be only a flash in the pan when compared with what *we* have seen."

"Among the Romans the soldiery at first received no *stipendium*," said the dominie, raising his voice and speaking very fast, lest he should be interrupted; "but every man served at his own proper charges."

"That would suit our modern whigs to a hair, dominie," said Lord Rohallion, laughing.

"Yea, even to the vinegar which he mixed with spring water as his daily drink, did he furnish all, in the early days of the Roman army."

"Vinegar grog!" exclaimed the quartermaster with disgust; "Heaven be thanked I was not born a Roman. Such beggarly tipple would never have suited the 25th. And now, my lord, when you are at leisure, I wish to show you a new farm-steading I have erected at the Cairns of Blackhinney, and also how bravely the young trees are thriving in the oakwood shaw."

"Glad to hear the latter, Girvan, for I agree with my worthy friend, Admiral Collingwood, that every British proprietor should plant as many oak trees as he can, to keep up our navy. 'I wish everybody,' said he, in one of his letters, 'thought on this subject as I do, they would not walk through their farms without a pocketful of acorns to drop in the hedges, and let them take their chance,' and so keep up the future wooden walls of old England."

Neither Rohallion nor the gallant old Admiral could foresee the days when those famous "wooden walls," would be represented by screw propellers, armour clads, cupola ships, and steam rams!

Rohallion assumed his walking cane and Nivernois hat, to which he still adhered, though it had been long out of fashion, and had the flaps fastened up to its shallow crown by hooks and

eyes; and, bowing ceremoniously, left the dominie to confer with the lady concerning the course of study on which little Quentin Kennedy was soon to enter, while he issued forth with his old comrade the factor to look over the estate.

Close by the haunted gate lay a fine old beech, on which a cavalier Lord of Rohallion hanged as a traitor one of his vassals whom he discovered serving as a soldier in an English regiment. It now lay prostrate, for the storm had torn it up by the roots.

"Have this removed as soon as possible, Girvan," said the old lord; "for, ugh! I never see a fallen tree, but I think of that devilish abattis we fell into at Saratoga, when the Yankees would have made an end of me, had it not been for Jack Andrews and others of the 25th."

"Aye, my lord, and some of the 17th Light Dragoons too—under Corporal O'Lavery—you remember him?"

"Who could ever forget him that served there—who could ever forget him or his story?" exclaimed the old general flourishing his silver-headed cane; "not I, certainly. It was he who was entrusted by my Lord Rawdon as a military courier (*estafette*, the French term it), to bring me an important despatch concerning the movements of the regiment, and this despatch the Yankees were determined I should not receive, for spies had informed them of the bearer and his route, so the way was beset by riflemen. The soldier who accompanied him fell mortally wounded; O'Lavery was riddled by bullets too, yet he rode manfully on, until from loss of blood he fell from his saddle. Then Girvan, resolved that the important paper which he bore should never fall into the hands of the Yankees, he crumpled it up and thrust it into one *of his wounds*. I discovered it, when next morning we came upon him dying in the bush, and he had just life sufficient left to point to the fatal place where Rawdon's letter was concealed.* As one of our greatest orators said, when Martius Curtius to sacrifice himself for his country leaped into the gulf of the forum, he had all Rome for his spectators; but the poor Irish corporal was alone in the midst of a desert—I quote at random, quartermaster. And yet, after all the brave deeds and service of those days, to refuse me this brigade for service—zounds! it was too bad—too bad!"

But Rohallion survived his disappointment, and the two following years glided peacefully away, at his old castle in Carrick.

* "The surgeon declared the wound itself not to be mortal; but rendered so by the insertion of the despatch. Corporal O'Lavery was a native of the county of Down, where a monument, the gratitude of his countryman and commander Lord Rawdon, records his fame."—*Records of the 17th Lancers.*

CHAPTER VIII.

QUENTIN'S CHILDHOOD.

"Ah, happy time! ah, happy time!
The days of mirth and dream;
When years ring out their merry chime,
And hope and gladness gleam.
Then how we drink the storied page,
In boyhood's happy home:
The marvels of the wondrous age
Of old Imperial Rome."—*All the Year Round.*

The New Year's day of 1801 passed over at Rohallion amid feasting and revelling, for in the good old fashion the worthy lord, as his fathers had done before him, entertained all his people in the great hall of the tower. There the trophies were hung with green holly and scarlet berries; there the Yule log still smouldered on the hearth, and there he shook the powder from his hair, while footing it merrily with the wives and daughters of the fishers and cottars, while old Girvan hobbled away in his brigadier wig, the dominie screwing up his fiddle to discourse sweet music with the piper of Maybole, while as an interlude came the drums and fifes of the Rohallion Volunteers, to make the old castle ring to the cheering sounds of "Lady Jean o' Rohallion's Rant;" and this hearty homeliness, together with a free distribution of gifts on "auld handsel Monday," made the lord and lady of the manor adored by their tenantry. On that day there was something for every one: to the dominie a snuff-mull, which he received with many bows, reminding the donor how "Tacitus affirmed that Tiberius prohibited the bestowal of new year gifts, which was a great saving of expense to the knights and senators." To the quartermaster a gilt-bound "Army List," to keep him in reading and reference for the ensuing year; to Elsie at the coves a lace-curchie, and to little Quentin a gallant rocking-horse. So all danced the new year in hand-in-hand, to the old song,—

"Now Yule has come and Yule has gane,
And we hae feasted weel!
Sae Jock maun to his flail again,
And Jenny to her wheel."

In the ensuing spring, when fresh flowers and budding leaves came to "deck the dead season's bier;" when the aroma of fertility, warmth, and verdure came from the sunny upland slopes, and the

mountain burns, as they bore brown leaves along, seemed to brawl louder over their stony beds towards the Firth of Clyde; when greener tints spread over the pastoral hills and glens about Rohallion; when the sky, long chilled by the frost of the past winter, had a richer tone and colour; when the air was warm and pleasant as it fanned the new-turned sods—when this sweet season came, we say, the old lord had ceased to lament having been refused a brigade in the expedition to Egypt.

By that time he had heard of the fall of his old friend and brother officer, the gallant Sir Ralph Abercrombie, and how war and disease had thinned the ranks of his army. He sorrowed for this: but his old spirit blazed up anew when he heard of how the 28th or Gloucestershire Slashers, in the Temple of the Sun, faced their rear rank about when surrounded, and defended themselves like a double wall of fire; how the Gordon Highlanders, at the bayonet's point, carried the cannon of the foe at the Tower of Mandora; how the Black Watch destroyed the boasted Invincibles, and won their scarlet plumes; and how the shrill pipes of the Highland Brigade rang in fierce defiance along the embattled heights of Nicopolis!

One name in the list of casualties made him start.

It was that of his old friend and neighbour, Colonel John Warrender of Ardgour, who fell, sword in hand, when leading the Corsican Rangers to a victorious bayonet charge against the *61st Demi-brigade.*

"*Oh, what a heart-stroke this is for his poor wife, Winny!*" *he exclaimed.*

"And Flora—poor little Flora, their daughter," added Lady Rohallion, with her eyes full of tears.

"She is too young to know fully the calamity that has befallen her. Order the carriage, Andrews; we'll drive up the glen to Ardgour in an hour after this."

"Poor Mrs. Warrender!—she did so love her husband, and had sore misgivings that they were parting for the last time."

"A sad morning this will be for her, indeed!" said Lord Rohallion, laying the gazette upon the breakfast-table and gazing into the clear, bright fire, full of thought, as the battle of Alexandria seemed to come in fancy before his practised eye.

"Now Rohallion, bethink you, if circumstances had been reversed," said she, laying a hand caressingly on his neck, "and if she had been reading *your* name in that paper, what my feelings would have been."

"The carriage would be ordered at Ardgour instead of Rohallion," said the old lord, with an affectionate smile; "they may need me yet—but egad! I am *now*, perhaps, better pleased that the brigade was refused me. Warrender gone—poor Jack!

and Abercrombie, too—I knew him when in command of the 69th."

"He died on board the flagship, my lord," said Andrews, who, in virtue of his years and peculiar position, ventured to gratify his irrepressible curiosity, by taking up the paper, to skim it at his master's back; "they landed and formed line in the water, bayonets fixed and colours flying," he continued, with a nervous voice and kindling eye; "28th and 42nd—Foot Guards and Royal Scots—I think I see them all—whoop! d—n it—why weren't *we* there?—I beg pardon, my lady," he added, in some confusion, as he proceeded in haste to remove the breakfast equipage, stumping vigorously on his left leg—in which he received a bullet at Saratoga—as he hurried away to order the carriage for the proposed visit of condolence, to which we need not invite the reader.

The treaty of Amiens which followed soon after the Egyptian campaign brought about a peace for fourteen months, and during that time, Lord Rohallion wrote repeatedly to our Ambassador at Paris concerning the little protégé who had now found a home in Carrick; but at a period when all the powers of Europe were only, as it were, taking breath and gathering strength for a greater and more deadly contest, such a trivial matter as the fate of a shipwrecked boy could gain but little attention. His lordship's letters remained unanswered, and by the 18th of May, 1803, Britain and France again drew the sword, which was never to be sheathed save on the plains of Waterloo.

Time had made little Quentin as thoroughly at home in the castle and with the family of Rohallion, as if he had been born there.

The absence of her son with the Guards (Carlton House and the Pavilion at Brighton were decidedly more amusing than that old castle by the sea), created a void in Lady Rohallion's heart; so the strange child came just in time to fill it, and she loved him tenderly and fondly. The old lord was never weary of chatting and playing with Quentin; and he was the especial pet and occasionally tormentor of the quartermaster, grey-haired Jack Andrews, and of old Dominie Skaill, who had been long since inducted to the honourable post of tutor, and as such, after his scholastic duties were over, he daily visited the castle, in which a room was set apart for study.

The following years saw Quentin Kennedy growing up into a fine and manly boy, bold in spirit and frank in nature; yet he retained even after his tenth year much of the chubby bloom, the rosy cheeks, the plump white skin, and the golden curls of his infancy.

Lady Rohallion and her visitors thought him a perfect Cupid; but her husband and the quartermaster—particularly the latter—

vowed he was a regular imp, who always broke his tobacco-pipes, tied explosives to the end of his pigtail, and played him a hundred other tricks, the result of Jack Andrews' secret education.

The dominie often shook his bag-wig solemnly, for the boy's ways were at times very erratic and required reprehension; but his constant friend and adherent was Lady Rohallion, who, when beholding his beauty, his gambols, and grace, or when listening to his prattle, and watching all his waggish little ways, could never think but with a sigh of the widowed and unknown mother whom all these would have gladdened, and who was, perhaps, still sorrowing for the child who had forgotten her and transferred his filial love and faith to a stranger—if, indeed, the royalist sympathies of that unfortunate mother had not been long since expiated under the guillotine.

Quentin's only annoyance existed when the Master of Rohallion, then a captain in the Guards, came home on leave, which, sooth to say, the Honourable Cosmo Crawford did as seldom as possible, the gaieties of London, club-life, the opera, and the atmosphere which surrounded the Prince of Wales, proving greater attractions than any to be found among the Highlands of Carrick. On these occasions, the boy felt sensibly how secondary a place he bore in the affections of the lady, and clung more to his friend the quartermaster.

In addition to a cold and chilling stateliness of manner, the master—a handsome and gallant soldier, however—disliked children generally, and half-grown boys in particular; thus if he ever spoke to Quentin, it was merely to quiz him as a young Frenchman (a nationality which the boy angrily repudiated), to call him a frog-eater, or little Boney, a name which, through some childish memory of the past, always roused his anger.

The master was not popular in Carrick; on his home visits, the piper of Maybole never ventured to play before *him* as before his father; no mendicant held forth his hand in hope of charity when he passed the kirk-stile on Sunday; the tenantry never gathered to welcome him back, and he had been heard to speak of a recently deceased prince as "the late Pretender," a horrible heresy in the house of Rohallion, and almost a solecism in Scottish society yet.

But our young friend was always relieved of his presence when the shooting season was over, when the summer drills of the Guards began, or when urgent letters from great but unknown friends required his return to London; and whither he departed with baggage enough for a regiment, and his English valet, whose finery, foppery, and town airs always excited the risible

faculties of Lord Rohallion, and the grim contempt of the cynical veteran, Jack Andrews.

Though bright and intelligent, Quentin was too erratic to be an industrious or plodding scholar; thus his Euclid and Cornelius Nepos, &c., were frequently left to themselves, that he might act the "truant," and have a day's fly-fishing in the Girvan or the winding Doon: or a ramble with his friend the gamekeeper through the preserves, where the deer came out of the fir woods to steal the dominie's turnips, and where the dark plover and the golden pheasant lurked among the sombre whin or feathery bracken bushes.

Then the "Life of Valentine and Orson," with the achievements of gallant Jack, the foe of all giants, together with similar ancient lore, in which the ex-quartermaster indulged him (generally about the time when his poor half-pay became due), together with the pungent military yarns of Jack Andrews, always proved sad opponents to the ponderous classics of Dominie Skaill; and as Quentin grew older, Cornelius Nepos, Tacitus, Æschylus, and others, were alike neglected, and frequently neither entreaties nor threats would substitute them for the pages of Smollett and Fielding—the Dickens and Thackeray of the preceding age.

Then the dominie would grow wrathful; but all without avail, for the boy was droll and loveable in his ways, and as the old lord said, "would wind them all round his little finger." Thus in the oddly-assorted society of that sequestered castle he picked up a strange smattering of knowledge on many subjects.

Sometimes he was present when Lord Rohallion and John Girvan had long consultations concerning farming and stock management, arable and pastoral; planting belts of pine for sheltering corn and deer; draining bogs and swamps; embanking or reclaiming; thatching farm-towns anew, and so forth—consultations which always ended in a jorum of hot toddy, and a reference to the war and chances of invasion, which naturally l to a mental parade of his Majesty's 25th Foot, and old perso reminiscences, varying from the days of Minden down to Sa toga, Bunker's Hill, and Brandywine, with Corporal O'Lavery the 17th, and Lord Rawdon's famous despatch. *Then* agricult and its patron, the Baronet of Ulbter, were voted a double bo and everything gave place to "shop" and pipe-clay.

At other times Quentin was present when curious arguments ensued over a pipe and glass of grog between his preceptor and the ruddy-visaged quartermaster, who was wont to treat the ancients and their modes of warfare with supreme contempt. Thus, if he extolled Brown Bess and her bayonet, which the French could never withstand, Dominie Skaill brought the *Par-*

thians into the field, and told him how at close quarters with the Roman Legion they were broken: but how the troops of Crassus broke those same legions in turn, by the dexterity with which they used their bows, never failing to wind up with a reference to the Caledonian warriors who routed the Romans in the days of old, and the schiltrons or massed spearmen of Wight Wallace in later times, for the dominie had all the history of Harry the Minstrel by heart, and like the quartermaster, his patriotism had been no way lessened by many a jovial night spent with their friend Burns in his old farm-house of Lochlea or Mossgiel.

Thus Quentin's mind became gradually imbued by quaint ideas and filled with a curious mixture of military, legendary, and historic lore. The very air he breathed was full of patriotism, for he was in the land of Burns—in Carrick, the ancient lordship of the kingly Bruces; and many a story the dominie told him of the times when the Earls of Cassilis, the Lords of Rohallion, the Lairds of Blairquhan, and other noblesse of Carrick, had their town mansions in Maybole; when love was made through barred helmets, and when there were hunting, and hosting and foraying; when castles were stormed and granges burned; when the Black Vault of Dunure saw Danish blood stream from its gutters after Largs was won; and the Abbot of Corseregal roasting on an iron grille ten years after the Reformation. But the story that Quentin loved best was of the Gipsy King who lured away the fair Countess Cassilis, and of the long years of captivity she spent in the grim old tower of Maybole, where to this day we may see the likenesses of herself and her rash lover, carved in stone upon the upper oriel.

Many a day they spent together, this patient dominie and his playful pupil, wandering among the ruins of the Castle of Kilhenzie, in feudal times a stronghold of the Kennedies, and there for hours they were wont to sit, under the aged and giant tree which still stands near its southern wall—a tree twenty-two feet in girth, and so vast that it covers nearly the eighth of an acre.

"On that tree many a bold reiver, gipsy loon, and landlouping Southron has been hung in his boots by the auld Kennedies o' Kilhenzie," the dominie would say; "they were a dour, stern, and warlike stock, boasting themselves to be kean-na-tigh, or, as the name bears, 'head of the race;' and who can say, Quentin, but *you* may be their lineal descendant, and if every head wears its ain bonnet, be Laird of Kilhenzie yet? yea, restored to your proper estate after all your wanderings, even as Telemachus was, who in childhood was also saved miraculously from the sea."

Then the boy would look up to the ivy-covered masses of the crumbling wall, with its gaping windows, through which the

gleds and hoodie-crows were flying, and feel strange throbbings and emotions wakened in his heart by the dominie's words; and there he often came alone to loiter, and think and dream over what his friend had said, till his musings took a tangible form, and ultimately, in all his day-dreams, he came to identify the old castle with *himself*—he knew not why.

When Quentin was brought first to Rohallion, he was wont to pray to his "blessed Mother who was in heaven," and to lisp the name of "la Mère de Dieu" with great reverence, to the utter scandal and bewilderment of Dominie Skaill, who smelt the old leaven of Prelacy and Popery strong in this, for he believed only in the Kirk of Scotland as by law established, confirmed by the Revolution Settlement and Treaty of Union (though sadly outraged by the restoration of patronage in 1712); and such language, he averred, was rank hanging matter in an adult!

Quentin's dark eyes were wont to sparkle and flash on hearing these rebukes, or France abused, as she was pretty sure to be, daily, by everyone in those days; but after a time all these emotions and ideas gave place to local influences, and he settled down into a quiet little Scottish schoolboy, though, as we have said, somewhat of a truant withal.

His mind sobered and changed even as his clustering golden curls grew into dark and shining chestnut, though dreamlike memories would still steal upon his mind—memories that came he knew not whence.

Once when the dominie pointed to a Vandyke that hung in the great hall, representing Lady Jean of Rohallion, and told him that "she was an evil-minded woman, who persecuted the saints of God in her time; and that the cross at her girdle was the hammer of Beelzebub, and an emblem of her damnable apostasy from the pure and covenanted Kirk of Scotland," the boy's eyes would assume their gleam, and then a pure, soft smile, as he said that "his mother in France wore just such a cross as that, and that he would love the picture for her sake."

Then Dominie Skaill would groan in spirit over "the bad bluid" that boiled in a heart so young and tender, and stamping up and down the hall in his square-toed shoes, would openly express his fears that "the bairn was a veritable young Claverhouse!"

On other occasions, and they were many, when Quentin was alone, and gazing on the sea that frothed so white about the Partan Craig, out of the perplexing mists of memory came the dreamlike incidents of the wreck on that gloomy November night; his loving father's pale and despairing face, when the ship went down and left them all struggling amid the cold waves of

a dark and stormy sea; and with these memories came others beyond that time, softer and dearer, like the recollections of a prior existence.

There was the cathedral, with its lights and music at mass: the bridge, the river, and the windmill; how surely he should know them all again! And so pondering and dreaming thus, he would lie for hours on the sunny bank that sloped southward from the cliff of Rohallion, while the blue Firth of Clyde that chafed upon the rocks below, came faintly and dreamily to his ear.

Thus his vision was turned inward, though his eyes were perhaps fixed on the blue ether overhead, where the seamews were revolving and the great eagle soaring aloft; or on the distant tower and Tolbooth of Maybole that stood clear and dark against the sun-set flush—the wavy undulations of the Carrick hills; the blue peaks of Arran that rose afar off, on the nearer coast of Cunninghame, chequered by golden light on violet coloured shadow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE QUARTERMASTER'S SNUGGERY.

"Ambition is dead within me: but there is some satisfaction in a queen's commission, with half-pay at the end of it."—*Once a Week.*

QUENTIN KENNEDY loved the venerable dominie, but was undoubtedly bored by his pedantry, and to escape it, once actually disappeared for three entire days, to the utter dismay of the whole household at Rohallion, when it was naturally supposed that he had been kidnapped by gipsies, or carried off by the smugglers, who frequented the coves in the rocks when the nights were dark and gusty; that he had been carried off by the pressgang from Ayr, or had fallen over the cliffs when bird-nesting, until Elsie Irvine arrived at the castle, in tears and tribulation, to announce that he had cunningly secreted himself in the "saut-backet" of her husband's clinker-built boat, and gone with the little fleet from the adjacent bay to the herring fishery.

When Lady Winifred's old friend and school companion, Eleonora Hamilton (then Countess of Eglinton) visited the castle with her two unmarried daughters, the Ladies Lilias and Mary—which she did once yearly—it was always a happy time for Quentin; for then he had two little companions with whom to romp and swing in the old terraced gardens; for whom to gather

birds' eggs and butterflies in the old woods of Rohallion, and before whom he could exhibit his boyish skill in shooting at the butts, or hooking a brown trout in the Girvan or the Doon; but of the two, his chief friend and playmate was the fair-haired, blue-eyed, and softly-voiced little Lady Mary, with whom he generally opened the dance at the annual kirn, or harvest home, which Lord Rohallion always gave to the field-labourers in the great barn of the home-farm, and on these occasions, the brightest ribbons that Maybole could produce, together with the dominie's violin and Pate's pipes, were in full requisition.

On a November night, about four years after the boy's arrival at Rohallion, his two friends, the dominie and ex-quartermaster, were seated in the latter's apartment discussing, which they did very frequently, the boy's pranks and progress, with a pipe of tobacco and a jug of hot toddy at the same time.

John Girvan's "snuggery," as he termed it, was in a square tower at an angle of the barbican wall of the old castle. The loopholes for defences by arrows or arquebusses yet remained under the window-sills, to enfilade all approach to the gateway. They had been made with special reference to the English and the Kennedies of Kilhenzie; but there was a chance now that "the French might come by the same road."

The chamber was small, but very cosy, papered with a queer old pattern over the wainscoating; the walls were of vast strength, the windows arched, the fire-place deep, and lined with shining Delft squares of the Puritan times, representing bulbous-shaped Dutch skaters, and the instructive old Scriptural story of Susannah and the Elders.

The dark oak floor was minus a carpet, for the quartermaster had been long enough under canvas and in barracks to despise such a luxury.

Over the mantelpiece was a gaudily-coloured print of the Marquis of Cornwallis in full uniform, with a huge wig and cocked hat—New York and a hecatomb of slaughtered Yankees in the distance. Under this work of art hung the quartermaster's old regimental sword, with its spring shell, his crimson sash and gilt gorget, graven with a thistle, and the (to him) magic number "25"—his household *lares*, as the dominie called them.

Bound with iron, an old baggage-trunk, that had been over half the habitable globe, bore the same number and regiment.

Pipes, whips, and spurs and boot-tops, dog-eared army lists and empty bottles, littered all the mantelshelf and window-bunkers, and with some very wheezy-looking old chairs made up the appurtenances of the room, through which the fire shed a blaze so cheerful, that the dominie had no desire, when he heard the wind

moaning through the battlements above, to face the blast which howled down the lonely glen that lay beyond the haunted gate.

A broiled poor man o' mutton and fried trout from the Girvan smoked on the table beside the toddy jugs, and all within looked cheery, as these two oddly-assorted friends, who had scarcely an idea in common, sat down to supper.

"Aye, dominie, it *is* a dreich night!" said the quartermaster, filling his pipe; "but your jug is empty, brew again; and now wi' a' your book-learning, can you tell me the name o' the man who invented this same whisky?"

"Many a night in Mossgiel, wi' Burns, we've drank to his memory, whoever he was," replied the dominie; "but odds my heart! John Girvan, I have scarcely got the better o' the fright that brat o' a laddie gave us, when he disappeared and ran off to the herring fishery."

The quartermaster laid down his pipe gravely, for he and the dominie had a perpetual disagreement about how Quentin was to be educated. The former laboured hard to teach him the use of fire-arms (Brown Bess in particular), to box, and to handle the pistol and broadsword, saying, that without such knowledge he would never be a man; while the poor dominie laboured still harder to infuse in his nature a love for literature and the arts of peace, and though compelled to console himself for Quentin's rapid progress in those of war, by some musty quotation concerning the Actian games which were instituted in honour of the victory over Marc Antony, he could not resist asking,

"To what end do you teach the laddie all this military nonsense—this use of sword and musket, John?"

"For drill and discipline, dominie—drill and discipline."

"Both excellent things in their way, quartermaster; the Romans, who conquered all the world——"

"South of Forth and Clyde—haud ye there, dominie!"

"Well, they conquered by the force of their discipline, and as that declined, so did their power; but to what profitable end, I say, teach the bairn all these havers about wars, battles, and bombshelling? Do you wish to make of him a tearing, swearing, tramping dragoon, such as we read of in the days of that atrocious Claverhouse?"

"Not at all, dominie."

"Then," asked Skaill, angrily, "what would ye make of him?"

"A man, where you would made him a molly."

The dominie snook his head, and as he did so the bag of his wig shook pendulously behind him.

"John Girvan, bairns should be taught early to delight, not in

arts which conduce to the destruction of human life, but in such as lead to charity, mercy, benevolence, and humanity."

"Quite right, dominie, and for utterly ignoring all these, I know a man of peace who had his lugs cropped off his head."

"Cropped?"

"Shaven clean off his head by a knife."

"Barbarous! barbarous!"

"But just, dominie—strictly just. Did you ever hear how our 28th, or North Gloucestershire, came to be called *the Slashers*?"

"Sooth to say, John, I never heard o' them at all."

"Well, pass the bottle, and I care na if I tell you. A company of ours was quartered with them in a town on the Canadian frontier. It was during the winter of '79, when the atmosphere was so cold that the hoar-frost on our sentries' greatcoats made them look for a' the world like figures round a bridecake; stiff half-and-half grog froze before you could drink it; the bugles froze with the buglers' breath; flesh came off if you touched a swordblade or musket barrel, and the air was full of glittering particles. We had to saw our ration beef in slices, and half roast our loaves before we could cut them. Men were found dead in the snow every day—stiff and frozen; in fact, there was no way of keeping ourselves warm, do what we might. I don't know how many degrees it was *below* the freezing point, but the cold was awful, and it seemed as if the mercury was frozen too!

"Amid the severity of that Canadian winter, the mayor of the town, a democratic and discontented ruffian, refused billets to the soldiers' wives, and the poor women and helpless children of the 28th nearly all perished in the streets; in the mornings they were found frozen like statues, or half-buried among the snow; but severely was the mayor punished, for one day as he sat at dinner the table was suddenly surrounded by a party of savages, in war-paint, with hunting shirts, fur cloaks, moccassins, and wampum belts. They whooped, yelled, brandished their tomahawks, and then dragging the mayor from the table, sliced off both his ears. After this they at once disappeared, and it was not known for some days that these pretended savages were soldiers of the 28th whose wives had perished through his inhumanity. It was for this that we first called them 'slashers,' a title which their bravery in the war fully confirmed."

"The wretch was rightly served," said the dominie; "and truly did our old friend Rob write of 'man's inhumanity to man making countless thousands mourn.'"

"Aye, dominie, that poem is as gude as any sermon that ever was written!" exclaimed the quartermaster.

"But to return to Quentin; it is wi' such barbarous stories as

that you have told me you fill the bairn's head, John, at an age when his mind should be impressed wi' ideas of charity and mercy. How noble it was of the great Constantine, to employ his son, as soon as he could write, in signing pardons and granting boons. Under favour, John, the pen is a nobler instrument than the sword."

"Then how about Wight Wallace and the Bruce of Carrick, dominie, eh? Had they never learned to handle aught but a goosequill, where would our auld mother Scotland have been today? so shut pans, ye auld gomeril, and brew your toddy."

The dominie chuckled and said,

"I have worn a red coat mysel', quartermaster, for when Thurot was off the west coast, I was a year in the volunteers under the Earl o' Glencairn."

"The best year of your life, dominie!"

"I had a sword, a musket, and a bayonet. 'Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just.'"

"And how did you feel when you saw the beacons blazing on the Carrick hills, and heard the drums dinging before you, on the night o' the *false alarm?*" asked the old soldier with a sly smile

"I shouted like Julian when sent to war, 'Oh Plato! Plato! what a task for a philosopher.'"

"The deevil you did!" exclaimed Girvan, puffing vigorously; "and what then?"

"Glencairn fined me twenty merks Scots, for speaking in the ranks."

"Fined—I'd have you flogged at the drumhead wi' the cat-o'-nine-tails."

"The Romans used a vine sapling, as we find in Juvenal, and——"

"Bother those Romans, whoever they were, if they really ever existed at all! You are ever and aye stuffing Quentin wi' those Romans and their sayings and doings."

"Indubitably, and I would that I could teach him all that ever was known to the seven wise men o' Greece."

"And who were they?"

"Bias, Pittacus, Solon, Chilo, Periander, Cleobulus, and Thales," replied the dominie with singular volubility; "all men who flourished before the Christian era."

"Powder and pipeclay! Egad, I'm glad they don't flourish now. Their names sound just like those of a regiment of niggers we had at the siege of Boston. Pardon, dominie,—but I must have my joke. I wish I could teach Quentin something of fortification," he added thoughtfully, as he watched the pale smoke from his pipe curling up towards the ceiling.

"It is an art almost coeval wi' man," responded the other approvingly.

"True," rejoined the quartermaster; "for did not Cain build a city with a wall round it on Mount Libuan, and call it after his son Enoch?"

"Right, quartermaster, right!" said the pedant, rubbing his hands with pleasure. "Yea, and the Babylonians, after the waters of the flood, built them cities, and wi' strong ramparts encompassed them about; but I hope, if I live, to hear Quentin Kennedy expound on all that and more, in the pulpit of Rohallion kirk."

"What!" roared the quartermaster, in a tone that made the dominie start back; "make a minister of him?"

"Yea, John Girvan; and wherefore not?"

"He has about as much vocation for the kirk as I have. Would you have him drag out his life like a drone in a Scotch country manse, when a' the world is up and stirring? Quentin is a penniless lad wi' a proud spirit, so he must e'en follow the drum, as his father followed it before him."

"His father before him, say ye? Some puir fellow, the son o' an outlawed Jacobite, doubtless. I dinna think, quartermaster, that *he* made much o' the trade o' war; a trade that is clean against scripture in every respect."

"Dominie, did not Richard Cameron, who fell bravely, battling for the right, at Airs Moss, only a hundred and twenty years ago, know every cut of his good broadsword, as well as the texts of his Bible? A man's hands should always be ready to keep his head; thus, whatever may be before him, I have taught Quentin to fence and shoot."

"No harm, perhaps, in either, for I remember me," replied the inveterate quoter, "that Bishop Latimer says of himself 'my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn any other thing.' But anent Quentin Kennedy, you and I will never be able to agree, John, so——"

"We'll e'en leave the lad's future to himself, dominie. I think he has some right to be consulted, and, odds heart! he is but a bairn yet; a bairn, though, that can handle his pistol as well as my other pupil, the Master Cosmo."

"Fie, fie, John Girvan! and a most sinfu' use has the Master made o' his skill."

"He has paraded a good many bucks and bullies by daylight; but what would you have an officer to do? If insulted he must challenge; if challenged, he must go out, or quit the service and society too."

The dominie shook his head solemnly in deprecation of such sentiments, and said—

"I fear me muckle the Master will meet wi' his match some day, and a black one it will be for the house o' Rohallion; but now for my *deoch an doruis*. Pass the dram bottle. Ugh! the road down the glen will be eerie to-night, and I can never forget that awfu' morning, John, when I saw the wraith of Cosmo's uncle, standing at the castle-gate, in his wig, cocked hat, and red coat, silent and grim, even as the ghost of Cæsar, on t e night before Philippi."

"Wi' a' the whisky you had under your belt, I wonder you didna see *twa* o' them."

"Jest not—jest not," said the dominie, with, we are sorry to say, half-tipsy solemnity, as he drained his *deoch* to the last drop, tied a large yellow bandanna over his three-cornered hat and under his chin, assumed his walking-staff, and prepared to depart. "I hope the servant-lass will air the night-cap that she puts wi' the Bible at my bedside every night."

The quartermaster laughed slily, as he knew that the cap referred to was a stoup of strong ale, which, in the old Scottish fashion, the dominie's servant always placed with the Bible on a stool near his bed.

The poor dominie's potations mounted to his head as he began to move, and, striking his cane emphatically as he stepped away, he sung, in somewhat uncertain tones:—

"My kimmer and I lay down to sleep,
Wi' twa pint stoups at our bed's feet:
And aye when we wakened we drank them dry,
Sae what think ye o' my kimmer and I?
Toddling butt and toddling ben,
When round as a neep ye come toddling hame!"

And so he departed in a mood that neither brownie nor bogle could scare.

CHAPTER X.

FLORA WARRENDER.

"Lovely floweret, lovely floweret,
Oh! what thoughts your beauties move—
When I pressed thee to my bosom,
Little did I know of love.
In Castile I never entered—
From Leon too, I withdrew,
Where I was in early boyhood,
And of love I nothing knew."—*Poetry of Spain.*

So without change, the joyous and dreamy period of Quentin's boyhood glided rapidly away, in studies, amusements, and occasionally mischief, such as throwing kail-castocks down the

dominies's *lum*, and blowing tam-o'-reekies* through his key-hole, until about his seventeenth year, when the Castle of Rohallion became the home of another inmate.

Mrs. Warrender of Ardgour, widow of Lord Rohallion's old friend and companion-in-arms, Colonel John Warrender, who, as we have related, fell at the head of the Corsican Rangers in the Egyptian expedition, died in London, bequeathing to the care, tuition, and trust of Lady Winifred her only daughter, in charge of whom Lady Eglinton arrived from England in the summer of 1806, accompanied by her two unmarried daughters, Lilias and Mary, now growing up into tall and handsome young women, with whom Quentin could scarcely venture to romp and race as in former days.

It was evening when an outrider, as a sort of avant-courier, arrived from Maybole to announce that the countess was coming with her charge; so Lady Rohallion assumed her black silk capuchin, her husband his cane and jaunty old-fashioned triangular Nivernois (to which he rigidly adhered, despite the almost general adoption of the present form of round hat), and summoning Quentin, who was busy among the fire-arms in the gun-room, they set forth for a stroll along the avenue to meet their friends.

"Poor Jack Warrender!" said Lord Rohallion, musingly; "I wonder whether his girl resembles him?"

"I should think not," replied Lady Winifred, smiling, as her recollections of the late colonel's personal appearance were not flattering.

"I have not seen the child for four or five years."

"Flora will be past sixteen now. She had her mother's forehead, and soft, dovelike eyes; the colonel was a stern and rough-featured man."

"But a good-hearted fellow, Winny, as ever cracked a joke or a bottle. I saw him first as a jolly ensign, carrying the union colour of his regiment, at Saratoga, and, egad, my dear, that wasn't yesterday."

"Flora's mother died of a broken heart."

"She was always delicate," said Lord Rohallion.

"Ah, like most men, you don't believe in that kind of death; but she never recovered the shock of her husband's fall in Egypt, and thus, after five years' constant ailing and pining, she has passed away to her place of rest."

"Poor woman!"

"What is the difference of age between Flora and our Cosmo?"

* Lighted tow blown through a cabbage-stock.

"A suggestive question."

"How?"

"Never mind, my lord."

"Some sixteen years or more, I think. You should remember best, Winny, their ages."

After this they walked on in silence, the lady, already match-making and scheming out certain matters with reference to the young heiress of Ardgour, had her mind bent on futurity; while the old lord's thoughts were with the past, full of other days and other scenes, when youth and hope went hand in hand—days, which, in the wars of Napoleon, were being fast forgotten by the world at large.

The evening was beautiful; the air was still and calm, though at times a breeze stirred gently the foliage of the sycamores of that stately avenue which led from the haunted gate to the ancient highway from Maybole—trees which had cast their shadows on many a generation of the Crawfords of Rohallion, who had gambolled along that avenue in infancy, and tottered down it in age; and since the days of King James VI. they had seen many a son of the house go forth with his sword and return no more, for many of them have fallen in domestic feuds and foreign wars.

On the uplands the golden grain was waving, but there was no sound in the air save the voice of the cornerake in the fields, the hum of the summer bee, the plaintive notes of the cushat-dove among the foliage of the oak-wood shaw, or the flash of the bull-trout in the linn that bubbled on one side of the avenue, and disappeared under a quaint arch, on each side of which stood two moss-grown lions sejant, the armorial supporters which the family of Rohallion inherited from Sir Raynold Crawford, high sheriff of Ayrshire, the uncle of Sir William Wallace of Elderslie.

Quentin, who had been in advance with a couple of barking terriers, now came running back, waving his hat, to announce that Lady Eglinton's carriage was coming bowling along the dusty road; and just as he spoke it wheeled into the echoing avenue, where the horses' hoofs crashed among the gravel.

The driver, who was seated on a splendid hammercloth (with the dragons, *vert*, vomiting fire), reined up on perceiving Lord and Lady Rohallion, and the servants at once threw down the steps as their mistress desired to alight.

Assisted by her host, she stepped down, a stately woman of a noble presence, considerably older than her friend, Winifred Maxwell, being past her sixtieth year, but still bent on being young despite wrinkles and other little indications of "the

enemy." She wore the then fashionable little bonnet of green and blue, or union velvet, as it was named, in honour of Ireland, a large chequered Burdett kerchief over her neck and shoulders, and her whole person was redolent of hair-powder and perfume, as her black satin robe swept over the gravel.

Her two daughters sprang forth after her, accompanied by the new visitor (of whom more anon), all three handsome and lady-like young girls, faultless in symmetry, delicacy, and refinement, and all possessed of considerable beauty, and looking happy, blooming, and smiling, in their Leghorn gipsy hats, which were wreathed with flowers.

"Welcome, my dear Lady Eglinton," said Rohallion, bowing like an old-fashioned courtier of Versailles or Holyrood, as he planted his little Nivernois under his left arm, and gave his right hand to the Countess to lead her up the avenue; "unlike your humble servant, egad, madam, you grow younger every day —and then your travelling costume—I vow it is charming."

"My lord," said the old lady, smiling, "you are still quite a Lothario, and as complimentary as ever. My girls at least have the latest London fashions, but I prefer the bonnet of 1801, as being more becoming my style—perhaps I should say, my years."

We question whether this amiable lady and her daughters in "the latest London fashion," would have been in the mode now, as their narrow skirts made them exactly resemble the figures we see in the little Noah's ark.

"And this is Fiora Warrender," said Lord Rohallion (after the usual greetings were over), kissing the girl's hand and forehead with kindness and regard; "welcome here, child, for the sake of your father. Many a day Jack Warrender and I have been under fire together, and often we have shared our grog and our biscuit —long before you saw the light, Flora."

Her fine eyes filled as the old lord spoke, and a beautiful expression passed over her soft, fair face. She was in second mourning—muslin with black spots; and her gipsy hat with its crape bows gave her a very picturesque look. She had sandalled shoes on her feet, that, like her hands, were small and very finely shaped. Her ear-rings and bracelets were of brown Tunbridge wood, then the simple fashion when not in full dress.

"We have brought a sweet companion for you, Quentin," said Lady Mary, laughing, as she presented both her hands to her young friends; "wont she be quite a little wife for you?"

"Mary!" said her mamma, in an admonitory tone.

"Of course, mamma, you know I am much too old for Quentin."

"Too tall, at least, to talk nonsense," replied Lady Eglinton.

whose ideas of deportment belonged to the last century, and whose old-fashioned stateliness always abashed Quentin, who blushed like a great schoolboy as he was, and played nervously with his little hat.

"What, mamma!" persisted Mary, "mayn't I still flirt with Quentin?"

But her mother, who with all her kindness of heart, had always doubts about the wisdom of lavishing so much attention on a strange child (whose future and antecedents were alike obscure), as the Rohallion family bestowed on poor Quentin Kennedy, turned away to speak with her host and hostess, *leaving the young people to themselves, while the carriage, with its double imperial, was driven round to the stable court.*

"I hope you have had a pleasant journey from the South?" said Lady Rohallion.

"We had a break-down at York, and I was sorely tired when we reached Edinburgh. There I was somewhat recompensed by hearing Kemble in Macbeth, and Mrs. Kemble sing the new fashionable ballad, 'The Blue Bells of Scotland,' at the conclusion of the piece; but the candle-snuffers neglected our box so much, that, before the farce, we were driven to the card assembly in the new room in George-street, where, for a dull little town, there was a pretty genteel assemblage; though the dresses of the women were five years behind London, I was glad to see hair-powder still worn in such profusion."

"Since the Union," said Lady Rohallion, "Edinburgh has been a city of the dead, and very different from what our grandmothers described it."

"A veritable village, where one meets none above the rank of mere professional men, struggling hard, poor fellows, to keep up appearances."

"But at the assembly, mamma, there was *one* person of position," said Lady Jane.

"True, child—the young Earl of Aboyne, whose name was unfortunately associated with that of the late unhappy Queen of France, Marie Antoinette."

"Ah, yes," said Rohallion, laughing, "I remember that the Polignacs spoke maliciously of her dancing *Ecossaises* with him at the balls of Madame d'Ossun."

"We went with him to Corri's Concerts, which are led by Signor Stablini, and also to see the storming of Seringapatam, opposite the New College, 'the wonder of the English metropolis, for the last twelve months,' as the papers have it. I have brought your ladyship the 'Last Minstrel,' the new poem of that clever gentleman, Mr. Walter Scott, which has just

appeared; Mr. Constable's shop at the Cross was quite besieged by inquirers for it; and for your lordship I have the Gazettes detailing the captures of Martinique and Guadaloupe."

"I thank you—they will be a rare treat for me and for old John Girvan, who enjoys the reversion of all my military literature."

"At Edinburgh we had quite a chapter of accidents. One of Lord Eglinton's favourite horses came in dead lame at the Leith Races; then my abigail left me abruptly, having gained a prize of two thousand guineas in the State lottery, and with it an offer of marriage from a dissenting minister. A wheel came off the carriage just as we were descending that steep old thoroughfare named the West Bow, and by this accident all our new bonnets from the Gallery of Fashion in the High-street were destroyed; it also caused a fracas between our poor coachman and a lieutenant of the City Guard, who, with his silver epaulettes on, and all the airs of office, was drumming a woman out of town. The fracas caused a three days' detention, as one of the bailies, a democratic grocer, threatened to send our coachman on board the pressing-tender at Leith for contumacy; but ultimately and happily, the name of Lord Eglinton terrified the saucy patch into complaisance. Then we heard of foot-pads infesting the Lanark-road, but fortunately we had the escort of some of the Scots Greys who were conveying French prisoners to the West Country, so we reached Maybole without any untoward accident."

While the countess was rehearsing the adventures of her journey, Lord Rohallion, partly oblivious of her and of her daughters, had been absorbed by Flora, in whose soft features he sought in vain for the stern eyebrows, the high nose and cheekbones of her father, the colonel.

Lady Rohallion glanced at their ward, from time to time, with mingled satisfaction and interest, as she had certain views regarding her, and these were nothing less than a marriage, a few years hence, between her and Cosmo, the master, an idea which had strengthened every day she looked towards Ardgour, the well-wooded heights of which were visible from the windows of Rohallion.

"But man proposes, and God disposes," says the proverb. How these views were realized, we shall come in time to see.

All unaware of the plots forming against her in the busy brain of her mother's friend, Flora had already drawn near Quentin, and, surveying him with something of wonder and interest in her fine eyes, she said—

"So you are the little boy of whom I have heard so much in the letters of Lady Rohallion to mamma?"

"I am Quentin Kennedy, Miss Warrender."

"Who was rescued from that horrible wreck?"

"Yes."

"You are not so *very* little, though."

"I am taller than *you*," replied our young friend, in a tone of pique.

"But I look the eldest."

"We are much of an age; I heard Lady Rohallion say so."

"I think I shall like you."

"I am sure that I shall like you very much!" responded Quentin, blushing in spite of himself. "You know that we are to be companions, and learn our studies together?"

"And such delightful walks we shall have in this old avenue," said she, looking up at the grand old sycamores, between which the golden sunset fell in flakes of warm light.

Thus the boy and girl were friends at once.

About five was then the fashionable dinner-hour; thus, as Lady Eglinton had arrived later, a few friends and neighbours came to sup at Rohallion.

The conversation all ran on rents, agriculture, and politics; high-toryism had full sway. Thus Napoleon, the Corsican tyrant—who was averred to have copied Alexander in Egypt, Cæsar in Italy, and Charlemagne in France, no bad example surely—together with Sir Francis Burdett, and the atrocious opposition party, were very liberally devoted to the infernal gods.

The younger ladies idled over the piano, in the old-fashioned yellow damask drawing-room. The faithless Quentin, apparently quite oblivious of the presence of his former friend, Lady Mary, was quite fascinated by the new visitor, whom he had innumerable matters to tell and to show.

The worthy lord smiled benignantly as he watched them, and, while taking a pinch of the Prince's mixture from the gold-enamelled box, which had been presented to him by H.R.H. the Duke of York, he remarked to an old friend, who, in powder, wide cuffs, pigtail, and knee-breeches, seemed the counterpart of himself, that "truly we lived in rapid and wonderful times."

Poor Lord Rohallion! he could little foresee the time when posterity would be flying over Europe at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and when, instead of powdering his cherished pigtail, he might have it cut by machinery—the Victorian age of Crystal Palaces, crinoline, and chloroform—of spirit-rapping, wordy patriotism, and paper collars.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE, AND MATTERS PERTAINING THERETO.

"They would sit and sigh,
And look upon each other and conceive
Not what they ailed; yet something did they ail,
And yet were well—and yet they were *not* well;
And what was their disease they could not tell."

ACCORDING to a recent novelist, "the happiest portions of existence are the most difficult to chronicle." As we approach that period of Quentin's career, which was indeed his happiest, we experience something of this difficulty; and having much concerning his adventures to relate, must glance briefly at the gradual change from boyhood into youth—from youth to manhood, almost prematurely, for, by the course of events, misfortunes came early; and somewhat abruptly was Quentin thrust forth into the great battle of life.

But we anticipate.

At that happy time, when he had neither thought nor care—no past to regret, and no future to dread, Flora Warrender and Quentin were in the bloom of their youth. The girl was already highly accomplished; but Dominie Skaill, when acting as tutor to the lad, strove to imbue *her* with some love for classical lore, and he bored her accordingly.

In winter especially, the old castle was dull and visitors were few. The old quartermaster talked to her of Minden and Saratoga; of proceeding for leagues upon leagues in heavy marching order up to the neck in snow; of scalp-hunting Choctaws and Cherokees, tomahawks, and war-paint. The parish minister, fearing that she had become "tainted with Episcopacy during her sojourn in the English metropolis," dosed her with such gloomy theology as can be found nowhere out of Scotland, mingled with local gossip, which often took the form of scandal; the dominie prosed away "anent" the Romans, or of chemical action, the laws of gravitation, the dogmas of Antichrist, and the dreadful views of society taken by the Corsican usurper and his blood-smeared Frenchmen, till the young heiress felt her head spin. Lord Rohallion, whose ideas were chiefly military, and Lady Winifred, whose thoughts ran chiefly on housewifery and acting doctor to all the children on the estate, were not very amusing either; so she turned with joy and pleasure to her new friend Quentin Kennedy, who was ever ready for a gallop into the country, a ramble in the woods, or a romp in the garden.

Long and many were the confidences between them, for both were orphans, and they had thus many emotions in common.

He told her in detail what she had already heard, and what all in the Bailiewicks of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunninghame knew, the story of his being saved from the wreck of an unknown ship, whose whole crew perished, and that his father, who had been a Scottish officer in the service of Monsieur, was drowned with them; that *now*, he could barely shadow out his thin spare figure, and pale and anxious face, it seemed so long since then; that, save the Crawfords of Rohallion, he had no friends on earth that he knew of, and that he was to become a soldier, he believed—at least his good friend Mr. Girvan always said so, and that was his own wish.

"A soldier!" repeated Flora; "my poor papa was one, and those horrid French killed him. Oh that I were a man, to join with you in a life of such peril and adventure! But Lady Rohallion says I am to be a soldier's wife," she added, smiling, and burying her pretty nostrils in a thick moss rose.

"To be married?"

"Yes; she says that the Master of Rohallion is to marry me, whenever he returns home."

"And do you love him, Flora?"

"I don't know," she replied, blushing as red as the rose in her hand, and casting down her dark eyelashes.

"Why?"

"Because, Quentin, I never saw him."

"Not even at Ardgour?"

"No, nor in London, for when my dear mamma was there, the Master was always at Windsor or Brighton with the Guards."

"Then why are you to marry him?" persisted Quentin.

"Because I am told that it will be very convenient for all parties, as the lands of Rohallion and those of Ardgour march together for miles over hill and glen," replied Flora, using the Scottish phrase for "adjoin."

Then she would tell him, with all the kindness and friendship of Lady Rohallion, how sorely she missed the extreme tenderness and gentleness of her own dear mother, and how that beloved parent sunk like a bruised reed, nor ever rallied since the terrible morning when news came to Ardgour that her father had fallen in battle under Abercrombie, and his general's letter and the Duke of York's too, alike failed to afford the consolation they expressed.

There was no love-making in confidences such as these; but both were young; the lad was handsome, sturdy, and impetuous. Flora was winning in manner and delicately beautiful, with soft dove-like dark eyes of violet-grey, and lashes that were almost

black like her hair; and such intercourse, if it was pleasant and delightful, was perilous work, and apt to lead to the development of a friendship that certainly would *not* be platonic.

When climbing the beetling cliffs that overhung the waves, the sea-pinks and wild flowers that grew in such dangerous places, were always culled, and the rare birds' eggs, that lay in the cliffs and crannies, were gathered by Quentin for Flora.

His whole desire and study were Flora Warrender and the anticipation of her every want and wish. Many of his sports, the trout pools in the Girvan, the fishing boats in the bay, the otter holes by the Doon, the covers where the golden pheasant lurked among the green and feathery fern, were neglected now for places nearer home—for the sycamore avenue, the terraced garden, the yew-hedge labyrinth, for wherever Flora was to be found, *he* was not far off.

Her soft and modulated voice was full of music, it had a chord in it that vibrated in his heart, so the lad sighed for her and knew not why.

Could it be otherwise when they were always together? They admired and sketched the same scenery—the cliffs of Rohallion and the gaping caverns below, where the sea boomed like thunder when the tide was coming in; the ruins of Kilhenzie; the old kirk in the wooded glen, where the golden broom and blue harebells grew; the long and stately avenue of sycamores, and the Lollard's linn that poured in white foam under its ancient bridge. When Flora drew, he was always there to marvel at the cunning of the lovely little hand that transferred all to paper so freely and so rapidly. They repeated the same poetry; they conned the same tasks, loved the same lights and shadows on glen and mountain, sea and shore; they had the same objects and haunts, and so they grew dear to each other, far dearer than either knew or suspected.

In those days, our young ladies, when singing, neither attempted to foist bad German or worse Italian on their listeners; neither did they dare to excel in opera, or run out into "artistic agonies." Like her mother before her, Flora contented herself with her native songs, which she sung with great sweetness (thanks to Corri's tuition), and Quentin was always at hand by the harp or piano to turn over the music, as all well-bred young men have done, since time immemorial.

How swiftly flew those days of peace and joy in that old castle by the sea, when each was all the world to the other! And is it strange, that situated as they were, a deep and innocent love should steal into their young hearts?

The old tenantry, particularly Elsie Irvine, who always con-

sidered Quentin her own peculiar pet, the quartermaster and the dominie, blessed them in their hearts, and called them "man and wife," which made them blush furiously; but nothing of this kind was ever said in the hearing of Lady Rohallion, for they had early learned intuitively that such jests would displease her; though those worthy souls could never gather *why*, until a period of our story yet to come.

Their friendship and regard grew with their years, and they *never had a quarrel. The dominie* likened them to Pyramus and *Thisbe*, and quoted largely from Ovid; but they were much more like their prototypes, Paul and Virginia.

Lord and Lady Rohallion seemed to forget that the time was coming rapidly when Quentin would cease to be a boy, and Flora a girl. Had they thought of this, much misery might have been spared to all; but, though many around them saw their progress, and marvelled where it would all end, the worthy old couple saw nothing to alter in the matter.

Two years more gave a manliness to the beauty, form, and character of Quentin Kennedy, while Flora, even when on the verge of womanhood, never lost the sweet and childlike sensibility of expression, which was the chief characteristic of her fair and delicate face.

In all this pleasant intercourse they had never known the true character, or the actual depth of their attachment for each other, until one day when Quentin was verging on eighteen.

They had been wandering in the leafy summer woods, far beyond the Girvan, which was in full flood, as rain had been falling heavily for some days previously. Fed by a thousand runnels from the Carrick hills, there was a *spate* (*Scottice*, torrent), in the stream, and at a part of it, about a mile distant from the castle of Rohallion, they heard old Jack Andrews tolling the dinner-bell, an ancient copper utensil which hung on the north gavel of the keep, where, in the days of old, it had frequently been rung for a less peaceful purpose than to announce that the soup was ready, or the sirloin done to a turn.

To make the circuit necessary to cross by the rustic bridge at the Kelpie's-pool (where, as all in Carrick know, a belated wayfarer was drowned by the river fiend) would have kept them too late, so Quentin took Flora in his arms to bear her through the stream, at a ford which was well known to him, and where the water was about four feet in depth.

"Dear Quentin, you will never be able to carry me," said Flora, laughing heartily at the arrangement; "I am sure that I am much too heavy."

"Not for me, Flora—come, let us try."

"Should you fall?"

"Well, Flora?"

"You would be swept away and drowned."

"I care not if *you* are safe," said he, gallantly; and, like a brave lad, he felt what he said.

"But I would be drowned, too, you rash boy," said she, with a charming smile.

"Then a ballad would be made about us, like so many lovers we have heard of and read about. Perhaps the Kelpie would be blamed for the whole catastrophe," replied Quentin, laughing, as he clasped her tightly in his arms. He was confident and bold, and the kind of training he underwent at the hands of our military friend, Mr. John Girvan, the gamekeeper, and others, made him hardy and strong beyond his years, yet he felt his fair Flora a heavier weight than he had quite reckoned on.

His high spirit gave him strength, however, and bearing her high upon his breast and shoulder, with her skirts gathered tightly round her, he boldly entered the rushing stream.

Then for the first time, when he felt her soft warm arm and delicate hand clasping his neck, half fearfully and half caressingly; when her cheek was close to his; when her breath mingled with his own, and her thick dark hair swept over his face, a strange and joyous thrill ran through him—a new and giddy emotion took possession of his heart.

Mysterious longings, aspirations, and hopes glowed within him and in mid-stream, even when the foaming water swept past with stones and clay, and roots of aged trees, Quentin did what he had never done before, he pressed his lips—and his soul seemed on them—again and again to those of Flora Warrender, and he murmured he knew not what in her ear, and she did not repel him.

Her excitement, perhaps, was too great; but we suspect that he was partly frightened and partly pleased. He landed her safely on the opposite bank, and again the castle-bell was heard waking the echoes of the woods.

The Girvan was passed now, and to speak metaphorically, that classic stream, the Rubicon, too!

They had divined the great secret of their hearts, and, hand in hand, in happy but thoughtful silence—Quentin, however, seeming the most abashed—they returned to Rohallion, both powerfully agitated by the new and sudden turn their affection seemed to have taken.

When their eyes met, their pulses quickened, and their colour came and went.

From that hour a change came over them; they were more

observed, less frank, apparently, and, outwardly, less joyous. In the presence of Flora, Quentin grew timid, and he became more earnestly, but quietly assiduous to her than before.

Each, in absence, thought more of the other's image or idea: and each weighed the words and treasured the stolen smiles and tender tones of the other.

They were lovers now!

It was the voice of nature that spoke in their hearts. Flora had long loved her young companion without exactly knowing it. The episode of the river had brought the passion to a culminating point, and the veil was raised now. She saw his position and her own; and, while experiencing all a young girl's pride and rapture in the assurance that she has a lover, a strange sense of trouble came with her new emotion of joy.

As for Quentin, he slept but little that night; yet it was not his wetting in the river that kept him awake. He felt himself a new being—he trod on air! He rehearsed to himself again and again the adventure of the flooded stream, and went to sleep at last, with the memory of Flora's kisses on his lips, and murmuring the conviction which brought such delight to his young heart—

"She loves me! Dear, dear Flora loves me!"

CHAPTER XII.

A LAST KISS.

"Yes; open your heart! be glad,
Glad as the linnet on the tree:
Laugh, laugh away—and merrily
Drive away every dream that's sad.
Who sadness takes for joy is mad—
And mournful thought
Will come unsought."

After the climax recorded in our last chapter, events succeeded each other with great rapidity at the castle of Rohallion.

At that period of our story, Flora Warrender had attained her full stature—the middle height. In form, she was round, firm, and well developed—plump, to speak plainly—yet she was both symmetrical and graceful. Her eyes, we have said, were a kind of violet grey, clear, dark and exquisitely soft. Long lashes, and the remarkable form of her white lids, doubtless gave them this expression. Her forehead was low and broad, rather than high; her smile won all, and there was a charming air of delicacy

and refinement in her manner, over all her person, and in all she said or did. The form of her hand and foot alone sufficed to indicate her station, family and nurture.

"There is a mysterious character, heightened, indeed, by fancy and passion, but not without foundation in reality and observation, which lovers have ever imputed to the object of their affections," says Charles Lamb; and viewed through this most favourable medium, to the mind of Quentin Kennedy, young and ardent as he was, Flora Warrender, in all the bloom of her beauty and girlhood, seemed indeed something "exceeding nature."

Thus it was with a heart filled with painful anticipations of coming trouble, that he heard Lord Rohallion, one morning at breakfast, when Jack Andrews emptied the contents of the letter-bag before him, exclaim,—

"A letter from Cosmo! It is for you, Winny—the careless young dog, he has not written here for six months—not even to thank me for paying that precious gambling debt of his, lost among those popinjays of the 10th Hussars. Then there was that devilish scrape with the French dancer, whom he took down to Brighton with Uxbridge's son, Paget of the 7th, and that set——"

"Hush—remember Flora!" whispered Lady Rohallion.

"And the duel, too," persisted the old lord; "pah! in my time we didn't fight about such trumpery ware as French dancers. But what says Cosmo?"

"He comes home by the next mail," replied Lady Rohallion, a bright and motherly smile spreading like sunshine over her face; "how I shall rejoice to see him—the dear boy!"

"A *dear* boy, indeed!" said his lordship; "his Guards' life has cost me ten thousand guineas, if it has cost me a sixpence, Winny."

"Cosmo is coming," said Lady Rohallion, pointedly; "do you hear, Flora?"

"Yes, madam," replied Flora, colouring, and casting a furtive glance at Quentin, who appeared to be solely occupied with his coffee and kippered salmon.

"Cosmo writes that he has succeeded, by a death-vacancy, to the majority of his battalion of the Guards, which, of course, gives him the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the army."

"As captain he has enjoyed that for some years."

"He has therefore applied for the command of a line regiment."

"That will be simple enough, as so many second battalions are being raised just now for this projected expedition to Spain."

"The Duke of York has promised that his wish shall be gratified, and he has obtained a few months' leave, to come down here and see us—to have, as he says, a shot at the birds and a day's fly-fishing with John Girvan, in the Doon, before he returns to active service."

"And we shall see him, then——"

"In three days—three days at furthest, Flora," she added, with a glance at Miss Warrender.

"Bravo! you shall see something like a soldier, Flora, when Cosmo returns—something like what I was, about the time of Saratoga; eh, Jack Andrews?"

"Yes, my lord," responded Andrews, "coming to attention," as well as a man might with a hissing tea-urn in his hand.

"Send up the housekeeper, Andrews," said Lady Rohallion, "we must have the master's rooms put in order, and also one for his valet; for I suppose he comes here with him."

"If so fine a knight of the shoulder-knot can tolerate Rohallion," said his lordship, laughing.

"Come with me, Flora; I know, child, how glad you will be to assist me," added Lady Winifred taking Miss Warrender's hand, and leading her away, while Quentin, whose heart beat painfully, appeared to be busy with a newspaper. It detailed how forty thousand Frenchmen were being foiled before Zaragoza's walls of mud, yet it seemed all a maze to poor Quentin, and he saw not how Flora's rich colour deepened as she withdrew.

The master was coming to Rohallion!

Quentin remembered that gentleman's cold and haughty manner, and the half-concealed dislike which he ever manifested towards himself. He remembered what Flora had more than once told him two years ago of Lady Rohallion's intentions or hopes regarding her, and his heart grew sick with apprehension of a rival so formidable. He thought perhaps Cosmo might have formed an attachment elsewhere; but that would not prevent him from making love to Flora, were it only to kill time; and in her lover's eyes, she seemed so beautiful, that the master would certainly find it impossible to oppose the desire of his mother; and Quentin dreaded her yielding to the united influence of the family, and the advantages a suitor of such rank, experience, and position could offer.

He saw it all, and considered Flora lost to him!

Pride made him silent on the subject, and Flora, who with female acuteness divined what was passing in his mind, deemed it unnecessary or unwise to speak of it. She pitied Quentin, for she soon perceived how pale and miserable he looked; while

he misconstrued her reserve and became fretful, even petulant with her.

As if to add to his trouble, with that obtuseness of intellect (shall we call it petty malice?) peculiar to their order, some of those same persons, who long ago were wont to annoy Flora and make Quentin blush, by jestingly calling them "man and wife," *now* taunted him with his too probable loss on the arrival of the master, a boy's love being almost deemed, beyond any other, a legitimate subject for banter.

These stinging remarks made Quentin's heart swell with pride and jealousy, doubt and alarm, for now he heard the matter referred to daily in the course of conversation.

"So, my dear lady," he heard the parish minister say, when paying his periodical visit, "local rumour says that the master is coming home to obtain a final answer from a certain young lady, before rejoining the army."

Lady Rohallion merely bowed and smiled, as much as to say that local rumour was right.

"They have an old man's blessing," he added blandly, as he departed on his barrel-bellied Galloway cob, and thought of an augmented stipend in futurity.

"The master's coming home to enter for the heiress, and have a shy at the grouse and ptarmigan," the gamekeeper said, while cleaning the arms in the gunroom.

"He'll walk the course—wont he, Mr. Quentin?" added the groom, while preparing the stables for more horses.

"To carry the fortress, and leave *you* to march off with the honours of war," said the quartermaster at one time.

"A braw day will it be for Rohallion!" remarked the dominie at another. "There shall be dancing and feasting, scattering of nuts as we find in Pliny, with shooting of cannon, and shouts of *Io Hymen Hymenæ!*"

"My puir Quentin," said Elsie Irvine, while, pondering on such rumours, he wandered moodily enough "by the sad sea wave," "so you're gaun to lose your wee wifie at last?"

Thus every one seemed to discuss the affair openly and laughingly, and their remarks and mock condolences were as so many pins, needles, daggers, what you will, in the poor lad's heart, so that his doubts and fears became a veritable torture.

So great was the bustle of preparation in the castle, that the evening of the third day—the day so dreaded by Quentin—drew nigh without him obtaining a suitable opportunity of conversing with Flora; for so much did Lady Rohallion occupy that young lady's time, that he scarcely met her, save at meals, or in the

presence of others. But on this evening he suddenly saw her walking before him in the avenue, and hastening forward, he joined her in silence.

Flora seemed weary, but rosy and smiling. Quentin was nervously excited, but pale and unhappy in expression. Neither spoke, as they walked slowly forward, and he did not take her hand, nor did she take his arm, according to their usual custom, and the omission stung Quentin most. Frankness seemed at an end between them, as if three days had changed alike their nature and the relation that existed between them.

Flora looked very beautiful and piquante in her gipsy hat wreathed with roses, with her hair dark and wavy floating over her shoulders, while a blush mantled from time to time in her soft cheek, and her dark liquid eyes stole furtive glances from under their long lashes at her young lover, fond glances of pity mingled with coquetry, but all unseen by him, for Quentin's gaze was fixed on vacancy.

At length they reached the lower end of the avenue near the Lollard's Linn, where there still stands a sombre thicket of very ancient thorn trees, that were coeval, perhaps, with the first tower of Rohallion.

According to local tradition, this place was haunted by a spectre-hound, which no one could attempt to face or trace with safety, even if they had the courage to attempt it. Its form, that of a great, lean, lanky staghound, black as jet, was usually visible on clear nights, gazing wistfully at the moon; and in storms of wind and rain, its melancholy baying would be heard to mingle with the blast that swept through the ancient sycamores. It molested none; but if assailed, it became terrible, swelling up to nearly double its usual size, with back and tail erect like those of a polecat, its jaws red as blood, and its eyes shooting fire.

Those who saw the dog-fiend in this state became idiots, and sickened or died soon after. Tradition went further, and asserted that the spectre-hound was nothing else than the spirit of Lady Jean of Rohallion (whose grim portrait by Vandyke, with a hawk on her wrist and a gold cross at her girdle, hung in the ancient hall), a high-flying cavalier dame, by whose order, after the battle of Kilsythe, several fugitive Covenanters had been shot down in cold blood, and buried in that thicket, where her unquiet soul was condemned to guard their remains in this canine form until the day of doom.

At all events, the old thorn trees where the spectre was wont to appear, looked particularly gloomy on this evening, and as the lovers passed near it, Flora drew closer to Quentin, and then she perceived that his eyes were full of tears.

"Quentin—Quentin dear!" she exclaimed in a tone of earnest question and expostulation. It was the first time, almost, that she had addressed him since Cosmo's letter came, and now her voice thrilled through him. He threw his left arm round her, and clasping her right hand within his own, pressed it to his heart, which beat tumultuously, and while the long avenue seemed whirling round them, he said,—

"So Lady Rohallion has made up her mind that—that—you shall marry the master, Flora?"

"So it is the fear of this that distresses you?"

Pride sealed Quentin's lips.

"My poor Quentin," resumed Flora, looking tenderly and innocently into his eyes, "you love me very much, don't you?"

"Love you—love you, Flora!" he stammered.

"Yes."

"I love you better than my life!" he exclaimed passionately.

"Well," said she, with a beautiful smile and a gaiety of manner that he did not quite relish; "I will never marry any man but he whom I choose myself—certainly not he who is chosen by others."

"Darling Flora!"

"There—there—*stop*—and perhaps, Quentin, I mayn't marry *you*. 'Tis said people change when they grow older, and we are very young, you know; but Quentin, dear, I love you very, very much, be assured of that."

Her head dropped on his shoulder, and he kissed her passionately—the LAST time he was ever to do so in the old avenue of Rohallion.

At that moment the clatter of hoofs was heard, and ere they could part or regain their composure, two horsemen, one in advance of the other, both riding fast, with brown leather saddle-bags and long holsters—the first in a fashionable riding-coat with a cape, the latter in livery, and both in top-boots and spotless white breeches, passed up the avenue at a hand-gallop.

Both had seen our lovers near the thorn thicket, and the first horseman, whom Quentin's heart rightly foreboded to be the dreaded Master of Rohallion, turned in his saddle, and said something to his groom, indicating the pair with his whip. They both looked back and laughed immoderately, as they dashed through the ivy-clad arch of the haunted gate.

Separating in haste and confusion, Quentin and Flora hurried away to calm their excitement and seek the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XIII.

COSMO THE MASTER.

"Why make I friendships with the great,
When I no favour seek?
Or follow girls seven hours in eight—
I need but once a week?
Luxurious lobster night's farewell,
For sober studious days!
And Burlington's delicious meal,
For salads, tarts, and peas."—*Pope.*

THE first rider was indeed the Master of Rohallion, who had arrived with a punctuality that was more military than personal, as the Honourable Cosmo Crawford was somewhat erratic, and, as the Guards Club said significantly, "nocturnal," in his habits; and here it may be well to inform the English reader that his haughty title of MASTER he obtained in right of his father being a Scottish baron, the custom being older than the reign of James IV.

In ancient times, the heirs apparent of Scottish nobles were not discriminated according to their father's rank by the titles of marquis, viscount, earl, or lord, but were simply styled as the Masters of Marischal, Glencairn, Glammis, Lindesay, Rohallion, and so forth, a custom existing in Scotland to the present day, in most houses, under ducal rank.

Cosmo Crawford was tall and strongly built, but handsome and graceful, with a cold and stately manner, that sometimes degenerated into banter, but seldom perfect suavity, and he had a somewhat cruel and sinister grey eye. The pupils of the latter feature had a peculiarity worth noticing. They possessed the power of shrinking and dilating like those of a cat. His hair was curly and worn in the Prince Regent's profusion, but without powder, that being already considered almost Gothic, or decidedly behind the age, the curls on one side being so arranged as to conceal a very palpable sword-cut. Like that of his valet, to whom he flung his riding-whip, hat, and coat, his garments were all of the latest Bond Street cut, and he lounged towards the yellow-damask drawing-room as coolly and leisurely as if he had only left it two hours instead of two years ago, according but a cold stare to the warm smile and respectful salute of poor old Jack Andrews, who, throwing open the door, announced,

"The Master, my Lord!"

"Welcome home, boy—God bless you!" shouted the hearty old lord, springing towards him; but Lady Rohallion anticipated him, and received Cosmo in her arms first.

"Dear mother, glad to see you," said he, kissing her forehead; "father, how well, how jolly and hale you look!"

"Hale," repeated the white-haired peer; "don't like to be called *hale*, it smacks, Cosmo, of breaking up; looking well, only for one's years, and so forth."

"And my Lady Rohallion," said Cosmo, kissing his mother's hand, "what shall I say of you?

> 'With curious arts dim charms revive,
> And triumph in the bloom of fifty-five.'"

"Arts, you rogue," said his father; "it's no art, but the pure breeze from our Carrick hills and from the Firth of Clyde, with perhaps earlier hours at night and in the morning than you keep in London."

"Well, I am sorry my compliments displease you both," said he, laughing; "I am unfortunate, but pray be merciful; I have bade adieu to the Guards, to London, and all its glories to rusticate among you for a time. So, so, here comes Miss Warrender of Ardgour, I presume, and Quentin Kennedy; I saw you both in the avenue, I think," added Cosmo, the pupils of his pale eyes shrinking as he concentrated his gaze and knit his dark brows, which nearly met in one, over a straight and handsome nose. "Flora, you are charming. May I——"

The kiss he bluntly gave her seemed to burn a hole in Quentin's heart, for it may readily be supposed that he saluted the lovely young girl with much more *empressement* than he did the worthy lady his mother. Flora blushed scarlet, and glanced at Quentin imploringly, as much as to say, "don't be angry, dearest—you see that I cannot help this;" but he felt only rage to see the little cherry lip, which his own had so lately touched in tremulous love and reverence, roughly and eagerly saluted by this *brusque* and *blasé* guardsman. Rapid though Flora's glance was, the latter detected it.

"And this is Quentin?" said he, surveying him through his eyeglass, with a deepening knit in his dark brows, and a smile on his haughty lips; "what a great hulking fellow he has become! Begad, he is tall enough for a rear-rank grenadier; and why is he not set to do something, instead of idling about here, and no doubt playing the devil with the preserves?"

There was some sense in the question, but coming from such a quarter, and the tone in which it was spoken, cut Quentin to the quick.

"He is barely done with his studies," urged Lord Rohallion coming to his favourite's rescue.

"Before I was his age, I had mounted my first guard at St James's Palace."

"And I mine on the banks of the Weser," said his father.

Quentin looked steadily at the cold, keen face of the master who was not yet six-and-thirty—but his Guards' life made him look much older; thus, to a lad of Quentin's years, those of the master seemed quite patriarchal; a time came, however, when he thought otherwise, and removed the patriarchal period of life a few years further off.

"Well, Cosmo, talking of age," said Lord Rohallion, slapping his tall son on the back, "to be lieutenant-colonel of a line regiment at six-and-thirty, with the Cross of the Bath, for doubtless you will get it——"

"Of course, father, of course—one thing follows the other—well?"

"Is being decidedly lucky," said Lady Winifred, closing his lordship's sentence, and glancing at Flora, to see what she thought of it.

"With the prospect of a long war before him, too."

"Yes, father, and I hope that the luck in store will belie the prophecy of my old foster-mother, Elsie Irvine, at the Coves, who used to allege, that when I *first* left your room, mother, a puling and a new-born brat, I was carried *down* a stair instead of up, a certain token that I should never rise in the world. I have often made the Prince Regent, Paget, and other fellows laugh at that story; yet I have always had a fair run of success in everything I undertake."

"Which should make you in future avoid all affairs at Chalk Farm, and so forth; you have had three men out there in three years, Cosmo."

"And winged them all. My dear lord, don't talk. Some small sword affairs of yours, when Leicester Fields was the fashionable place, are still remembered in London."

"Yes—I ran two friends of Mr. Wilkes fairly through the body there one morning, for permitting themselves to indulge in national reflections, and would do so again if the same cause were given me: but, zounds! what else could we do in those days of the 'North Briton?' By-the-bye, is this new movement about the stuff called gas spreading in London?"

"Yes; I wish you had been there on the 28th of January 807, and seen Pall-Mall actually lighted with it—by a man named Winsor, the Cockney call him a madman for thinking of such a scheme!"

"Did you pass through Edinburgh?"

"I was obliged to do so, my lord, unfortunately."

"Did you make any stay there?"

"Stay! I should think not—only long enough to dine with some jolly fellows of the Cinque Ports Dragoons, at the new barrack, built some fifteen years ago at Piershill—"

"Once Colonel Piers' place—Piers, of the old Scotch 17th—Aberdour's Light Dragoons."

"Exactly, and then to get a relay of post-horses at Ramsay's stables. But as for staying in Edinburgh, egad! it would be intolerable to me, with its would-be dandies and its freckled women whose faces have that sweet expression imparted by the soothing influences of Presbyterianism and the east wind; and then its one street, or only half a street to promenade in, who the devil would stay there that could stay out of it? Why, not even the rhyming gauger who hailed it as 'Edina, Scotia's darling seat.'"

As his son concluded with a loud laugh, Lord Rohallion shook his powdered head, for he could not endorse this unpatriotic depreciation of the Scottish metropolis, and poor Lady Winifred sighed as she glanced at a black silhouette by Miers, presented to her by the bard of Coila, with a copy of his verses in her honour; and then remembering the fancied glories of the Old Assembly Close, as she and her friend, Lady Eglinton, had seen them in her girlhood, she said:

"In my time, Cosmo, Edinburgh was wont to be gay enough."

"A sad gaiety. Thank God, mother, the Guards can never be quartered in so dull a provincial town."

"Its dulness is the effect of the Union, which removed court, council, parliament, revenue, and everything," said Lord Rohallion.

"I thought most people had ceased to consider *that* a grievance," said his son, laughing again; "but I think that if Edinburgh has been dull since 1707, it must have been truly diabolical before it."

"Cosmo," said his mother, reproachfully, "I know not what some of your ancestors who fought at Flodden and Pinkey would have thought of you."

"The more fools they to fight at such places."

"Not so," said the old lord, rising, with some asperity in his tone; "God rest all who ever fought or died for Scotland and her kings; and I must tell you, Cosmo, that you will never be the better or the truer Briton for being a bad or false Scotsman!"

The master gave another of his sinister laughs; and, finding that the conversation had suddenly taken an uncomfortable turn, his father said with a smile—

"I was about to express a hope, Cosmo, that with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, you mean to settle at last, and become quiet."

"What, my lord—have I been drawing too heavily upon you and old John Girvan of late?"

"I mean that pranks which passed well enough in a subaltern, wont do in one who looks to the command of a regiment."

"Pelting the rabble with rotten eggs at Epsom, and so forth, you mean? No; in my days a sub, after pulling off half the knockers in Piccadilly, breaking all the oil lamps in Pall Mall, getting up a cry of fire in the Haymarket, and bringing out the engines to pump on the rascally mob; having, at least, one set-to with the rough and muscular democrats of the watch, would finish off by a champagne supper somewhere, and thus bring to a close a reputable London day, which, in our corps, usually begins after evening parade. Ah, my lord, you slow fellows of the King's Own Borderers knew nothing of such pranks, with your long pig-tails, your funny regimentals, and Kevenhüller hats."

"The reason, perhaps, we cocked those same hats so bravely on many a field," retorted his father. "In my days the army was the school of good-breeding, sir—but here's Jack Andrews announcing tea and devilled grouse in the inner drawing room."

"Cosmo, give your arm to Flora, if Quentin can spare her," said Lady Rohallion, smiling. "They are great friends and companions."

"Oh—ah—indeed," said the Master, sarcastically, as he gave Flora Warrender his arm. "I think I saw them exchanging strong marks of their mutual goodwill as I rode up the avenue."

Quentin grew scarlet, and Flora painfully pale at this remark, which stung her deeply, and roused her indignation.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ABRUPT PROPOSAL.

"Wherefore dwell so sad and lonely
By the desolate sea-shore;
With the melancholy surges
Beating at your cottage door?
You shall dwell beside the castle
Shadowed by our ancient trees!
And your life shall pass or gently,
Cared for and in rest and ease."

For two days after his arrival the Master strove to engross as much of Flora's time as she would yield, or as he could spare from the study of his betting-book, the pages of the "Sporting Maga-

zine," playing billiards right hand against the left, quizzing the dominie, who paid him a ceremonious visit, and in relating to the quartermaster certain military "crammers" about the alterations and improvements in the service since *his* time, some of which were astounding enough to make the old fellow's pigtail stand on end, with wonder and dismay, lest the said service was going to the deuce, or further.

Quentin he seldom favoured with more notice than a cool and insolent survey through his eye-glass.

There were times when the honourable Cosmo was moody, ennuyéed, and irritable, and none knew why or wherefore; but he had frequent recourse to Mr. Spillsby, the butler, for brandy and rare dry old sherry; and he smoked a great many cigars, which were a source of marvel to all who saw them, tobacco, in that form, being almost unknown in England, till the close of the Peninsular War.

It was not ambition, or a desire to see active service that made the haughty and somewhat *blasé* Master propose to leave the household troops and begin the sliding scale from the Guards to the line; nor was it any desire to settle in life that made him enter at once and so readily into his mother's old and favourite scheme of a marriage between him and their ward, the heiress of Ardgour.

While he could not be insensible to the fresh budding beauty of Flora Warrender, the conviction that he had impaired his finances, anticipated his heritage, and had calculated to a nicety the value of all the oak, pine, and larch woods upon the estate—that each and all were numbered and known to certain hook-nosed, long-bearded, and dirty children of Judah in London—all, even to the venerable lines of sycamores in the long avenue, the pride of his father's heart—trees that for centuries had cast their shadows on his ancestors in youth, in prime, and age. While this conviction, we say, filled him with as much shame, sorrow, and repentance as he could feel, with it came the knowledge that Flora's fortune, which had accumulated during her minority, and, indeed, ever since her father's fall in Egypt, would afford him a most seasonable escape from shipwreck on several rocks which he saw ahead.

"Hah!" said Cosmo, as he tossed away the end of his cigar, "some one says truly—don't know who the devil he is—that if we could look into each other's breasts, there would be no such thing as envy in the world. Egad! I'll enter for the country heiress."

He roused himself and resolved to make the effort, all the more willingly, that to a half, or wholly *blasé* guardsman like himself, long used to the glittering banquets, the late orgies, and startling

scenes of Carlton House and the Pavilion at Brighton, the bloom, beauty, and country freshness of Flora Warrender, were indeed charming.

Flora, instinctively, and in a feminine spirit of pride and opposition to Lady Rohallion's plots and plans, kept somewhat studiously out of the Master's way—a somewhat difficult task, even in a mansion so spacious and rambling as the old castle; but on the evening of the second day after his arrival, from the stone balustraded terrace of the antique Scoto-French garden where he was smoking, Cosmo saw her light muslin dress fluttering among the narrow green alleys of the old and carefully clipped yew labyrinth, and then he hastened to join her, to the infinite mortification and chagrin of Quentin Kennedy, who had not seen her for the entire day; and who, just as he was approaching the garden, found himself anticipated, so he at once retired, leaving the field in possession of the enemy.

An older or more experienced lover would have joined them, and thus, perhaps, might have marred the plans of the Master, who, to do justice to his coolness and courage, lost no time in opening the trenches.

Midsummer was past now; the foliage of the tall sycamores, of the oakwood shaw, and other copses of Rohallion, though leafy and green, were crisped and dry; in the haughs or low-lying meadows, the mower had already relinquished his scythe; the green corn rigs were yellowing on the upland slopes "that beaked forment the sun;" next month they would be golden, brown and ready for the sickle; on bush and spray the blackbird sang cheerily, and the plover's note came shrilly out of the green and waving fern.

The sun was setting, and the screech of the white owl would ere long be heard, as he blinked and looked forth for the moon from the ivied windows of Kilhenzie. The white smokes of the hamlet on the shore of the little bay, passing up among the trees, curled into the clear air and melted over the ocean. The flowers that whilome had endured the scorch of the noonday sun, were drooping now, as if pining for the coming dew; and the stately peacocks sat listlessly, with their broad tails, argus-eyed, upon the balustrades of the garden terrace.

Inspired by the beauty of the evening, lulled by the summer hum of insect life among the flowers, and all unaware that her lover, with his gun on his shoulder and wrath in his young heart, was plunging pitilessly through some one's corn, Flora was musing or dreaming, as only a young girl dreams or muses, on what fate had in store for her now, with this new inmate of her present home. Mr. Walter Scott's new poem "Marmion" had fallen from her

hand, which was ungloved, and so, pure in whiteness and delicacy, was half hidden among her dark and wavy hair, as she reclined with her elbow upon the arm of a moss-grown seat, which yet bears the date, 1590, with the Rohallion arms and coronet, upon a hanging shield. The fingers of her left hand were playing unconsciously with the strings of her gipsy hat, which lay upon the gravel at her feet; and as the Master approached her, the young lady seemed the perfection of bloom and beauty, as she sat enshrined in the glory of the sunset that streamed along the alley of the labyrinth.

His costume was very accurate, for the gentleman and the tradesman did not then, as now, dress exactly alike, and wear exactly the same stuffs; and certainly Cosmo was looking his best, as he seated himself by her side and very deliberately took possession of her left hand, saying in a voice which he meant to be, and which had often enough proved elsewhere to be, very seductive,—

"I fear, my dear Miss Warrender, that this gloomy old barrack is not a place for you to vegetate in."

"How so, sir?" she asked, while regarding him with a quiet smile.

"It too evidently influences your naturally joyous temperament; and pardon me, you look *triste*."

"Oh, no—your mother is quite one to me, and I love Rohallion very much."

"Then as for Ardgour, I think it gloomier still."

"Some parts of Ardgour—the vaults, I believe—are said to be coeval with the Bruce's castle of Turnberry; at least so the dominie told me. Mamma so loved it; and for her sake, I love it too."

"Very proper, and very pretty; but the world of fashion—a brilliant world, of which you know nothing—should be your sphere, my dear Miss Warrender. London, Brighton, the Prince's balls at Carlton House, the parks, the theatre, the opera! You must come forth from your shell, my dear Flora, like—like—like (he thought of Venus rising from the sea, but the simile was not apt)—for you know it is absurd, positively absurd, that you should be buried alive in this horrid old-fashioned Scotch place, among rocks and rooks, ivy and ghost stories. Egad! were the house mine, I'd blow it up, and build one more suitable to the present time and its requirements."

"What! would you really uproot this fine old place of so many historic memories?"

"To the last stone! What the devil—pardon me—do old memories matter now, my dear girl? *En avant!* we should look forward—never back."

"I am sorry that your sentiments are so prosaic," said Flora, coldly.

"I trust that my my mother has not filled your dear little head with her usual nonsense about Scotch patriotism, the defunct Pretender, the unlucky Union, and so forth—eh? I always said that the verses addressed to her by her rhyming friend Burns, the democratic gauger, turned her head; and this new man, Scott, with his Marmions and Minstrels, bids fair to make the disease chronic. You have no idea, Miss Warrender, how we laugh at all such stuff in London. Patriotism indeed! It doesn't pay, so Scotchmen don't adopt it, and they are wise. All patriotism *not* English is purely provincialism, and any man holding other opinions in Parliament would be as much out of place as a crusader or a cavalier. But to return to what I was saying, I should like to show you the great world that lies beyond the Craigs of Kyle and the rocky hills of Carrick—to take you back again to London."

"London is to me full of sad memories."

"Sad—the deuce—how?"

"For there my dear mother died," said Flora, lowering her voice and withdrawing her hand, while her eyes and her heart filled with emotion.

After a pause:

"I love you, dear Flora," said Cosmo, again taking possession of her hand, and placing his lips close to her shrinking ear. "Our marriage is the dearest wish of my mother's heart, as it was of yours—and, may I add, that it is the dearest hope of mine?"

This was coming to the point with a vengeance!

Instead of being mightily flattered or overcome, as he not unnaturally expected, Flora, without withdrawing her hand, as if its retention mattered little, turned half round, and said, with a quiet calm smile:

"Remember how little I have known you, sir, save through you parents, my guardians."

"True; the duties of honour at Court, and—ah, ah!—my profession, Flora, called me elsewhere; but you don't refuse me, eh? My dear girl—the deuce!—you surely can't mean that?'

Flora grew pale and hesitated, for with all her love for Lady Rohallion, she had a kind of awe of her, and Cosmo was eyeing her coldly and steadily through his glass.

"Nay, speak, Flora," said he, with, perhaps, more irritation than tenderness in his tone. "I have, perhaps, not much personally to recommend me to a young girl's eye, and this wound, which I got at the Helder, when assisting to compel those Dutch devils to hoist the colours of the Prince of Orange

—a sabre-cut across the face—has not improved me; but speak out, Flora Warrender; notwithstanding the ties between us, you refuse me?"

"This proposal possesses all the abruptness of a scene in a drama."

"Well, what is life but an absurd drama? 'All the world's a stage, and the men and women merely players.'"

"Well, I am not inclined to play the part you wish."

"You refuse me?" he reiterated, his eyes the while assuming their wicked and louring expression.

"I do, Cosmo Crawford," she replied, trembling very much, but speaking, nevertheless, firmly; "I do once and for ever refuse you."

Young and inexperienced though the girl was, the abrupt and systematic proposal of the Master rather insulted than flattered her.

"No *tie*," she added, "save a fancied one made by Lady Rohallion, ever bound us; so there are no pledges to return, no bonds, nor—I can't help laughing—hearts to break."

"And this desire to—to——" he stammered.

"It was your mother's idea alone."

"Say not so, Miss Warrender, it is mine also. Though I know that my good mother, because she jilted some fellow in her youth —my father's younger brother, I believe—thinks she makes atonement to the gods, or whoever rule these little matters of love and marriage, by making as many miserable matches, and marrying right off as many persons as she can."

"Miserable matches! So she conceived one for us. You are very encouraging and complimentary to say so just after your offer to me."

"Pardon me; but consider, my dear Flora," he resumed, while rallying a little, though sorely provoked to find himself confused and baffled by a country girl, of whose rejection he felt actually ashamed to tell his own mother, "are you not labouring under some deuced misconception in giving this very decided, and, I must say, very extraordinary refusal?"

"How?"

"Is it not, that to the affection and rank I proffer, you prefer the absurd love of a silly upstart, who shall go hence as he came hither, no one knows or cares how—a waif cast on the shore like a piece of dead seaweed, or the drowned renegade his father—a creature whose past affords no hope of a brilliant future! Speak, girl," he exclaimed, while almost savagely he grasped her wrist; "is it this that prevails with you, in opposition to the wishes of your dead mother and the whole family of Rohallion?"

"What if it is, sir?" asked Flora, haughtily, for his categorical manner offended her deeply.

"What if it is!" he repeated with louring brow.

"Yes, sir."

"Then the cool admission ill becomes Flora Warrender of Ardgour, whose forefathers bear so high a place in the annals of their country!"

"Oh, but they were mere provincials, and their bravery or patriotism are unworthy the regard of such a citizen of the world as the Master of Rohallion," said Flora.

He sullenly threw her hand from him; but she did not retire, being loth that his family, especially the old lord, whom she dearly loved and respected, should know of this scene; and loth, too, that it should end in this unseemly fashion.

"Cursed be my mother's doting folly!" thought he, while his pale eyes alternately shrunk and dilated; "so—so, nothing but an heiress will suit our foundling, our 'Tom Jones,' for a charmer—it's vastly amusing. Confound it, a little more of this presumption will make me wring the brat's head off!"

While his cool insolence piqued Flora, her decided rejection roused all his wrath and pride; he thought of his pecuniary interest, too, so both sat silent for a time.

"Well, begad! this passes my comprehension!" he exclaimed at length, as he buttoned his accurately fitting straw-coloured kid gloves.

"To what do you refer, friend Cosmo?" asked Flora, looking at him almost spitefully.

"To this whole matter. Do you know, my fair friend, that you are perhaps the first young lady of your age that, in all my experience, ever took a fancy to a hobbledehoy lad in preference to a man; so while you reconsider the offer, you will perhaps permit me?" He bowed, and conceiving her consent given, proceeded to light a pipe, by the then very elaborate process of a small flint, steel and matches in a little silver tinder-box, on the lid of which his coat of arms was engraved. "And so you studied together, I presume, under that absurd Dominie Skaill, with the knee-breeches and hugh shoe-buckles (like a heavy father at Old Drury), keen grey eyes, and Scotch cheek bones one might hang one's hat on, eh?"

"Yes," replied Flora, tying the ribbons of her gipsy hat under her dimpled chin with an angry jerk.

"And you learned Latin, Coptic, and Sanscrit together, I suppose," he continued in his cool sneering tone; "and to conjugate the verb *to love*, in all."

"Exactly so, and in Greek, Chaldaic, and Chinese, and ever

so many more languages, so that we became very perfect in grammar," replied she, smiling wickedly, while the grim Master's cat-like eyes filled with a very baleful green light; yet he had not the sense to see that his operations were conducted on a wrong plan before such a fortress as the fair lady of Ardgour.

"Come, Miss Warrender, whatever we do, hang it, don't let us quarrel, and so make fools of ourselves."

"I have not the least intention of quarrelling, and trust that you have none."

"Then allow me to kiss you once, and we shall become better friends, I promise you."

"Kiss *me!*" exclaimed Flora, starting.

"Yes—why not—what does a little kiss signify?"

"So little that you shall never have one from me, were it to save your life," said Flora, with a burst of laughter.

"Perhaps your fair cheek has become sacred since that beggarly little rival of mine saluted it? It is a capital joke, is it not?"

"Perhaps," said Flora, reddening, and rising to withdraw; "and what then?"

"If so, I would say you were as great an idiot as my old grandmother Grizel Kennedy, of Kilhenzie, was."

"Respectful to her and polite to me! And she——"

"After Prince Charles Edward kissed her at the Holyrood ball, she never permitted the lips of mortal man—not even those of my worthy grandfather Cosmo, Lord Rohallion, K.T., and so forth, to salute her, lest the charm of the royal kiss should be broken; and their married life extended over some forty years and more."

At this apocryphal story, which has been told of more old ladies in Scotland than Grizel of Rohallion, Flora laughed heartily, as well she might; and her merriment made the Master excessively provoked.

"We are, I hope, at least friends?" said he, presenting his hand with great but grim suavity.

"Oh yes, Cosmo, the best of friends—do excuse my laughing so; but nothing more, remember, nothing more," she replied, and withdrawing her hand, which he attempted to kiss, she darted through the labyrinth towards the house, leaving "Marmion" forgotten on the gravel behind her.

"By Jove! to be baffled, laughed at, and by a chick like this!" muttered Cosmo with an oath which we care not to record, as he gave the volume a kick, and strode angrily away, full of bitter and dark thoughts, and inspired with rage at a rivalry which, in truth, he was ashamed to acknowledge, even to himself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BLOW.

"Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seemed Athens as a paradise to me:
Oh, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turned a heaven unto a hell!"
Midsummer Night's Dream.

A VERY dark idea crossed the Master's mind, and then another, darker skill!

A few guineas judiciously bestowed among the smugglers, who, when the nights were dark and gusty, frequented the coves near the castle (and when some person or persons unknown hung a lantern over the rocks to guide their steerage through a narrow cleft in the Partan Craig), might for ever rid him of Quentin Kennedy. They could land him on the sands of Dunkirk or Boulogne, or, or—what?

Oh, no! he thrust away the *next* idea as too horrid, though *such* things had been done of old in Carrick by the lawless lairds of Auchindrane, and to denounce them, in one terrible instance, had not the sea given up its dead?

He thought of despatching a line to the lieutenant commanding the pressgang at Ayr, by whose agency poor Quentin might be shipped off for seven years' sea service in the East or West Indies, but dread of exposure, and the outcry consequent thereto, made him relinquish such kidnapping ideas of revenge, though they were practical enough in the days when George III. was king.

Revolving these thoughts, with brows knit and his stealthy eyes fixed on the ground, Cosmo quitted the garden and entered the avenue, where the evening shadows under the sycamore trees were gloomy and dark; and there as he strode forward, with a quick and impatient step, he stumbled roughly against some one, who, like himself, seemed lost in reverie.

"Quentin Kennedy!" he exclaimed in a hoarse voice, as this collision brought all his readily excited fury to the culminating point; "confound it, fellow, is this *you?*"

"I beg pardon, sir—I did not see you—I was lost in thought," replied Quentin.

"Lost in thought, were you?" repeated Cosmo, in his most insulting tone; "you were loitering near the labyrinth in the garden?" he added, with almost fierce suspicion.

"I was down in the oakwood shaw, two miles off."

"Hah—indeed! and what have *you* been doing with that gun?"

"Sir!" stammered Quentin, his natural indignation rising as he perceived the other's resolute intention of insulting him.

"I say, what the deuce have you, or such as you, to do with that gun, and on these grounds?"

Quentin drew back, haughtily, in growing anger and surprise, and fearing that the Master was mad or intoxicated, and that he was about to make an assault, he very naturally brought the fowling-piece to the position of charging.

"What, you scoundrel! would you charge me breast high?" cried the Master, choking with rage; "would you shoot me as the poacher Campbell shot Lord Eglinton on his own lands, here in Ayrshire too? I'll teach you to know your proper place, you scurvy young dog!"

With these injurious words, and before even Quentin, who was completely astounded by the wantonness of the whole affair, could be aware of his purpose, Cosmo rushed upon him, wrenched the gun away, and clubbing it, dealt the poor lad a terrible blow on the head with the heavy iron butt, stretching him senseless on the grass. Then uttering a heavy malediction, the fierce Master, still boiling with unappeased rage, passed through the ivied-gateway and entered the mansion. Having the fowling-piece in his hand, force of habit led him towards the gun-room, where he proceeded to draw the charge, for it was still loaded, and to leave it for the under gamekeeper to clean.

Perceiving that there was blood on the lock and also on his straw-coloured kid gloves, he carefully wiped the former, and threw the latter into a stove. Regret he had none for the atrocity he had just committed; but he disliked the appearance of blood, it looked ugly, he thought—dangerous, and deuced ugly.

"Egad, I hope I haven't killed the young rascal!" he muttered; "how the deuce am I to explain the affair to the old people?—they will be certain to blame me."

Stepping from the gun-room into the library, which adjoined it, he was suddenly met by Lady Rohallion, who gave him an affectionate glance, which suddenly turned to one of anxiety, as she surveyed him by the last light of the sunset, that streamed through a deeply-embayed window. With an assumed smile and some commonplace remark, he was about to pass on, shame and mortification compelling the concealment of what he had done, when she laid her hands on his arm, and said tenderly,

"Dearest Cosmo, what *has* happened—you look extremely pale?"

"Do I, mother—pale, eh?"

"Yes, and quite ruffled too," she added.

"Well, perhaps so—your friend Flora is the cause."

"Flora Warrender?"

"Yes."

"Explain, Cosmo, explain?" she asked with evident uneasiness

"I had a long conversation with her in the garden, and it was decidedly more animated than amatory in the end."

"You quarrelled?"

"Not at all—I proposed," he replied, with a strange smile.

"And were accepted?"

"The reverse."

"Rejected—you—*my* son, rejected?"

"Finally so—or for the present shall we say?" replied Cosmo, lighting a pipe by the old and elaborate process, to conceal his agitation. "A wilful little jade she is as ever I knew. Evidently has no fancy for me, or for increasing the number of his Majesty's lieges under canvas, or for seeing the world in a baggage-waggon, as a lady attached to a regiment of the line."

The courtly old lady gazed at her son almost mournfully; for this mocking *brusquerie*, acquired in the Pavilion of the Prince Regent, but ill accorded with her old-fashioned ideas of gentle bearing.

"You have been wrong, Cosmo," said she gravely; "you have been too hasty—too abrupt."

"Now, faith, do you think so, really?"

"It was absurd to propose for any girl, especially a young lady of family and fortune, after a two days' acquaintance."

"Egad, my most respected mamma, in London, I've known a score of women of the first fashion, who would have eloped with me for better or worse, and taken post horses for Gretna, on a two hours' acquaintance."

"Oh, Cosmo!"

"So I am wrong, you think, my lady mother?"

"Decidedly; but I trust that time will put all right. I do not despair."

"Neither do I, be assured," said he, with one of his strange smiles.

"The silly girl, of course, felt flattered by your offer?"

"Not at all—one might think such matters were of daily occurrence with her."

"Did she make no consideration of our family and its antiquity?" she asked, bridling up.

"My dear mother, it seems to be of very little importance to Flora Warrender whether the said family flourished at the court

of old King Cole, from whose grave Kyle takes its name, or at that of his Majesty of the Cannibal Islands; or at all events, she wont have me. Confound it!" he exclaimed, as if talking to himself; "to think that I, almost the pattern man of the Household Brigade—chosen by many a proud peeress to squire her through the crush of the opera; by the fighting men of the corps as their second in every affair of honour; by the Prince Regent to arrange his déjeûners, afternoon receptions, and crack suppers; I, the star of Fops' Alley—deemed the best stroke at billiards in London—the best hand on a tiller at Cowes, or to pull the bow-oar to Richmond; chosen to ride the most vicious brutes at Epsom and Melton, and who can hit a guinea at twenty yards with a saw-handle and a hair-trigger—that I, I say, should be outflanked by a country booby passes my comprehension, unless, as in old King James's days, there be witchcraft again in the Bailiwick of Carrick! To be jockeyed by a country lout and a lass of eighteen—deucedly disgusting! Thank heaven! this can never be known in town, or how would the lady-killing Cosmo be roasted! I think I hear Paget of the Hussars, and the rest of our set laughing over it; and, by Jove, they would laugh too, until I had one or two of them *out* at Chalk Farm for a morning appetiser."

"How this little rebuff nettles you! Take courage, Cosmo," said his mother, almost laughing at his angry and odd enumeration of his many good qualities.

"Well, I have changed my mind many times; so do women, and so may Flora. This is a boy's love; she will tire of his *idea*, and then is my time to cut in and win in a canter. You, my dear mother, yourself once loved, before my father proposed——"

"Stay," said Lady Rohallion, interrupting, with sudden agitation, and hastening angrily to change the unwelcome topic; "a sudden light breaks upon me! Cosmo, on the night you arrived, it seemed to me you spoke very oddly of Flora Warrender and Quentin Kennedy."

"How—about something in the avenue, was it?"

"Yes; that you had seen them exchanging marks of their mutual good will, or words to that effect."

"Exactly so, my Lady Rohallion," said Cosmo, slowly emitting the smoke of his pipe.

"What *did* you mean, Cosmo?" she demanded, with increasing asperity.

"Much more than I said, mother."

"That you saw Quentin kissing Flora?"

"Or Flora kissing Quentin, my dear lady mother, I don't think it makes much difference," said he, with an angry laugh, while she

almost trembled with indignation; "but what do you think of your amiable ward and your protégé—a lively young fellow, isn't he?"

"I ought to have been prepared for this," said Lady Rohallion; "indeed, Eleonora Eglinton forewarned me that something of this kind might happen. A separation by school, college, or something else, should have been made whenever Flora came here. I must consult Rohallion, and have such arrangements made for Quentin as shall prevent his interference with the views we have so long cherished for our only son. The foolish girl—the presumptuous boy—to be actually kissing her!"

"Shameful, isn't it?" said Cosmo, who had been despatched somewhat precipitately into the Guards for making love to his mother's maids.

"Such vagaries must be controlled and punished."

"He should have been gazetted a year ago to a West India Regiment, or one of the eight Hottentot Battalions at the Cape; they are quite good enough for such as he; or send him still-hunting with a line regiment into Ireland, where sluts from behind a hedge may send him to the devil before his time."

"Oh, fie, Cosmo, you are cruel and unjust;" but she added bitterly as pride of birth, her only failing or weakness, got the mastery for the moment; "no unknown waif, no nameless person like this youth Kennedy shall come between my son, the Master of Rohallion, and our long cherished purpose—no, assuredly! Andrews," she added, raising her voice, as the thin, spare military valet passed through the library, "desire Miss Warrender to speak with me in the yellow drawing-room, before the bell rings for supper."

Then leaving her son, Lady Rohallion swept out of the library to have a solemn interview with her ward.

The last flush of sunset had died away, and one by one the stars were shining out.

The night wore on, and nothing was seen or heard of Quentin. Indeed, save the Master, as yet no one missed him; but as he did not appear when the supper-bell clanged in the belfry of the old keep, Cosmo, with several unpleasant misgivings in his mind, hastened unseen into the avenue, down the long vista of which the waning moon shed a broad and pallid flood of radiance, ere, in clouds that betokened a rough night, it sunk beyond the wooded heights of Ardgour.

Cosmo went to the place where so savagely he had struck the poor lad down; but Quentin was gone; the grass where he had lain was bruised, and on the gravel was a pool of blood about a foot in diameter—blood that must have flowed from the wound in his head; but other trace of him there was none!

CHAPTER XVI.

EXPOSTULATION.

"Pledged till thou reach the verge of womanhood,
And shalt become thy own sufficient stay!
Too late I feel, sweet orphan! was the day
For steadfast hope the contract to fulfil;
Yet still my blessing hover o'er thee still."—*Wordsworth.*

LADY ROHALLION had so frequently spoken to Flora Warrender on the subject of the proposed or expected marriage with Cosmo, that she had little diffidence generally in approaching the subject; but now there was a new and unexpected feature in the matter—a lover, a rival—thus she felt aware that the adoption of some tact became requisite.

What the good lady could hope to achieve, where her enterprising son had failed in person, it is difficult to imagine; nevertheless, she resolved to remonstrate with Flora.

"She is too young to judge for herself, and must therefore let others judge for her," said she, half aloud.

"You wished to see me, madam," said Flora, entering with an air of annoyance, only half concealed by a smile, as she correctly feared this formal summons had reference to the recent scene in the garden.

Seating Flora beside her on a sofa, she took her by the hand, and while considering what to say, played caressingly with her dark wavy hair, and said something in praise of her beauty, so the girl's heart foreboded what was coming next.

"You are rich, dear Flora," said Lady Rohallion, insinuatingly, "but most, perhaps, in beauty."

"I am often told so, especially by you," replied Flora, laughing.

"An heiress, too."

"But what of it, madam?" she asked, gravely.

"You know, dear Flora, that money is the key to a thousand pleasures—it is alike the object of the avaricious, and the ambition of the poor."

"True, Lady Rohallion," replied Flora, smiling again; "but, as we say in Scotland, a tocherless lass, though she may have a long pedigree, may have a pleasure that no heiress can ever enjoy."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; the most flattering and glorious conviction!"

"Pray tell me?"

"She can prove to her heart's content that she is loved for herself, and herself alone. Poverty makes all equal——"

"True; but so does wealth," interrupted Lady Rohallion, annoyed by her own mismanagement in the beginning. "You are rich, but my son is also rich, and he loves you, Flora, well, truly and devotedly."

"And have two days sufficed to summon all this truth and devotion?"

"Flora, Flora, you are well aware that it has been an old purpose and hope, between your parents and his, to unite or cement their old hereditary friendship by a stronger tie, and that this intended marriage has been an object of solicitude to all——"

"Save to those most interested in it—myself especially."

"Do not say so, my dear child—the match is most suitable."

A gesture of annoyance escaped Flora, but Lady Rohallion resumed:

"Our families have known each other so long; it has been a friendship of three generations—Cosmo and you suit each other so admirably; and then the Ardgour lands run the whole length of the Bailiwick with our own."

"The most convincing argument of all," replied Flora, in a tone which made Lady Rohallion colour deeply, and the secret annoyance of both was gradually rising to a height, though each strove to conceal it.

"Consider our family, Flora!" exclaimed Lady Winifred, haughtily; "look at that gilded vane on yonder turret. It bears a date—1400; in that year, Sir Ranulph, first baron of Rohallion, was made Hereditary Admiral of the Firth of Clyde, from Glasgow Bridge to Ailsa Craig, by the Regent Duke of Albany. We are not people of yesterday!"

Flora failed to perceive what this aqueous office had to do with her or her affairs.

"In three years," she began, "I shall cease to be your ward——"

"Three, by your father's will, Flora."

"So do not let us embitter those three remaining years, my dear madam, by this project, a constant recurrence to which serves but to excite and pique by the attempt to control me."

"I trust, my dear but wilful Flora, that we have not been unjust stewards in the execution of the trust your worthy parents bequeathed to us, and if the hope of a nearer and dearer connexion——"

"Your son, the Master, is a brave and noble gentleman, I grant you," interrupted Flora, with quiet energy; "but save in name, we have been almost strangers to each other, and he is so

many years my senior, that when we last met he treated me quite as a little girl—a child! Our tastes, habits, manners, and temper are all dissimilar; ah, madam, pardon me, but I never could love him!"

"Never love Cosmo—*my* Cosmo?" said Lady Rohallion, with indignant surprise.

"Never as a husband, though dearly as a friend."

"Fancy, all! You would love him with all a true wife's devotion ere long. In girls of your age, love always comes after marriage, it is unnecessary before it. You little know how dear and loveable he is, and how gallant too! What wrote Sir Ralph Abercrombie to the Duke of York concerning him, after that affair at the Helder? 'The bravery of the Honourable Captain Crawford, of the 3rd Guards, in the action of the 27th instant, forms one of the most brilliant episodes of the war in Holland!'"

Flora gave an almost imperceptible shrug of her white shoulders, for praises of Cosmo's valour at the Helder had been a daily story of the old lady for some time past. Slight though the shrug and the smile that accompanied it, Lady Rohallion detected them, and her eyes sparkled brightly with anger. She arose with ineffable hauteur, and shook out her flounces, as a swan ruffles its pinions, to their fullest extent.

"Miss Warrender," said she, with her hands folded before her and her powdered head borne very erect indeed, "is it possible that this strange opposition alike to the earnest wishes of the living and of the dead, arises from a cause which I have hitherto disdained to approach or to allude to—as a species of midsummer madness—a love for the luckless lad to whom for so many years we have extended the hand of protection, Quentin Kennedy?"

At the name which concluded this formal exordium, a deep blush suffused the delicate neck of Flora; but, as her back was to the lighted candles, the questioner did not perceive it, though scrutinizing her keenly.

"And why, madam, may I not love poor Quentin if I choose?" asked the wilful Flora, bluntly.

"Because he is, as you justly named him, *poor*," replied the other, with calm asperity.

"But I am rich," urged Flora, laughing through all her annoyance, with an irresistible desire to pique Lady Rohallion.

"He is nameless."

"How know we that, madam? Kennedy is as good a name as Warrender."

"True, when borne by an Earl of Cassilis, by a Laird of Colzean, of Kilhenzie, or Dunure; but not by every landless waif who bears the name of the clan or family. God knoweth how in

my heart I dearly love that boy; yet this fancy of yours passes all bounds of reason, and all my expectations, in its absurdity. I have destined you for my son Cosmo, and none other shall have you!" she added, almost imperiously.

"Destined," said Flora, with mingled laughter and chagrin, "because the march-dyke of Rohallion is also the march-dyke of Ardgour."

"Nay, nay, think not so unworthily of us; *we* need to covet nothing and to court none; but destined you are, because it was your dear mother's dying wish."

"To make me miserable?"

"To make you happy, foolish girl; dare you speak of misery with *my* son?"

"So you would actually have me to marry a man I don't like, and scarcely ever saw? It is a common sacrifice in the great world, I am aware; but my sphere has been rather small——"

"You would not marry a boy, surely?"

"I may at least love him," replied Flora, simply; "and I have no wish to marry at all—just now, at least."

"This is the very stuff of which your novels are made!" exclaimed Lady Rohallion, crimsoning with passion, and raising her voice in a manner quite unusual to her. "Mercy on me! I wonder why I have never detected Quentin at your feet, on his knees before you, for that I believe is the true and most approved mode; but we know nothing of him, he may be base-born for aught that we can tell, and Lord Rohallion shall learn that Quentin Kennedy—a brat, a very beggar's brat—shall never come between our own son and his success; and so, young lady, your humble servant!"

And inflamed by genuine passion, Lady Rohallion, as she uttered this unpleasant speech, (which, to do her justice, was scarcely uttered ere repented for) in a loud and imperious tone, swept away with a haughty bow, in all her amplitude of black satin, and with that hauteur of bearing which made the Scottish gentlewomen of her day so stately and imposing.

Her words, the fiery glance of anger she darted at Flora, and the tenor of the expostulation proved too much for the temper or the nerves of that young lady, who on being left to herself, burst into a passion of tears.

But a hand was laid on the lock of the door, as if some one was about to enter; and fearing it might be the Master, she started up and escaped by another door to her own apartment.

CHAPTER XVII.

FORTH INTO THE WORLD.

"This nichti s my departing nicht,
For here nae langer I maun stay;
There's neither friend or foe o' mine,
But wishes me away.
What I hae dune through lack o' wit,
I never, never can reca';
I hope you're a' my friends as yet—
Gude nicht, and joy be wi' ye a'."
Johnnie Armstrong's Good Night.

THE knock-down blow given to Quentin by the butt-end of the clubbed fowling-piece, besides inflicting a severe wound which bled profusely, stunned him completely for a time, and in this condition he was found by the quartermaster, who was returning from having a jug of punch and a quiet rubber with our quaint friend the dominie at his little thatched cottage in the village.

Great were the alarm and concern of the kind-hearted veteran when he found his young friend and favourite in a condition so pitiable. He raised him, tied a handkerchief over his wound to stanch the bleeding; then gradually as consciousness returned, Quentin remembered all that had occurred, and told Girvan of his meeting with the Master—the unmerited and unexpected insolence of the latter, his sudden assault, and that was all he knew.

The disquiet of the ex-quartermaster was greatly increased on hearing of a *fracas* so unseemly and so dangerous, and he knew in a moment that it contained *more* elements of discord than Quentin admitted or perhaps knew; though he was ignorant of the Master's abrupt proposal, the garden scene, and of the subsequent expostulation, which was in progress at that moment, and which we have detailed in the preceding chapter.

"I can't blame you, my boy," said the old soldier, half communing with himself, and shaking his head till his pigtail swung like a pendulum; "I can't blame ye," he repeated, as he gave Quentin his arm, and together they walked slowly towards the castle; "ye are young—the temptation is great, though I hae long since forgotten all of such matters, save that love-making tendeth to mischief."

"Quartermaster," stammered Quentin, "I don't understand, what——"

"But I do! The devilment first began in Father Adam's garden, and it will go on so long as the world wags."

Quentin coloured deeply, and his heart leaped with mingled rage and exultation—rage at the Master for the injury he had done him, and exultation for its cause—jealousy, by which he was assured that Flora loved him, despite all the attention and the greater attractions of the *blasé* guardsman.

But what was to be done now?

To remain longer under the same roof with the Master of Rohallion was impossible; but whither was he to go? The quartermaster, without adverting further to what he too well knew to be the secret spring or moving cause of a quarrel so sudden and unbecoming in its details, hurried Quentin to his secluded little quarters, "the snuggery," already described as existing in a tower of the castle. There he gave him a glass of sherry and water as a reviver, sponged and cleansed, with ready and kindly hands, his face and hair from the clotted blood which disfigured them, applied with soldier-like promptitude a piece of court-plaster to the cut, and brushed a lock or so gently over to conceal it.

That Lady Rohallion must be informed of the encounter and have it explained away, if possible; that the Master should be urged to apologize to Quentin (a very improbable hope); and that they should be made to shake hands and commit the affair to oblivion, was the mode in which the worthy ground-bailie proposed to solder up this untoward affair. Quentin was long inexorable, and with the fury of youth vowed to have some mysterious and terrible revenge; but gradually the inexpediency, the impropriety, and impossibility of obtaining reparation by the strong hand dawned upon him, and he consented to leave the matter in the hands of Girvan—to have it explained gently to Lady Rohallion, and leave her to be the mediator between them.

On being informed by Jack Andrews that she was in the yellow drawing-room, and as there was still an hour to spare before the supper bell rang, they proceeded thither to have an interview with her.

While passing through the outer drawing-room, which was quaintly furnished with *marqueterie* cabinets, tables, and bookcases, with chairs and *fauteuils* of Queen Anne's time, they heard voices in the inner apartment, and one of them was Lady Rohallion's, pitched in a louder key than was her wont, so they paused, unfortunately, only to hear the LAST words of her conversation with Flora—words which fell like molten lead on the ears and in the heart of the listener whom they most concerned.

"—We know nothing of him—he may be base-born for aught that we can tell, and Lord Rohallion shall learn that Quentin Kennedy—a brat, a very beggar's brat—shall never come between

our own son and his success—and so, young lady, your humble servant!"

These bitter, bitter words—words such as he had never heard from *her* lips before, made Quentin reel as if stunned, so that with the effect they produced upon him, added to that of the recent blow, he would have fallen had not the quartermaster caught him in his arms, and held him up, surveying him the while with a kind and father-like expression of solicitude and bewilderment in his old and weather-worn visage.

Rousing himself, with his teeth set and his eyes flashing, he made three efforts to turn the door handle and enter the room.

It was *his* hand that Flora had heard upon the lock when she started from the sofa and fled to her own apartment in a passion of tears, so that when he entered the inner drawing-room it was empty, and thus Quentin knew not—though his heart foreboded—to whom the injurious words of Lady Rohallion had been addressed; but their tenor decided him at once in a preconceived intention of leaving, and for ever, the only home he had now in the world, and almost the only one of which he had any distinct memory.

"This is no longer a place for me, John Girvan, and so sure as God sees and hears me, I shall leave it this very night!" he exclaimed, as with his eyes flashing and full of tears, and his heart now filled only by new, and hitherto unknown emotions of sorrow, bitterness, and mortification (unknown to him at least) he walked to and fro upon the gun-battery, where the 24-pounders of *La Bonne Citoyenne* faced the waves of the Firth, on which the last rays of a waning moon were shining coldly and palely, especially on the ridge of foam that boiled for ever over the Partan Craig.

"And whither would ye go, Quentin?" asked Girvan, who felt in his honest heart an intense commiseration for the lonely lad, knowing that were he to remain after the insult he had received, and the words he had heard, it would argue a poverty of spirit he would be loth to find in Quentin; "whither would ye go?"

"Away to France, to seek my mother."

"Impossible—it's hostile ground, and once on it you would be made a prisoner by the authorities, and shut up in Bitche, Verdun, or Brisgau, if they did not hang you as a spy, or send you to serve as a private soldier in the *Corps Etranger*. You must think of another scheme, less rash and romantic."

"I know of none."

"In all the wide world, Quentin," said Girvan, with his nether lip quivering, "ye have no home but this."

"*This!*" repeated Quentin, grinding his teeth.

"Yes."

"Well—I care not; I will go anywhere from it—the farther away the better!" (And Flora? suggested his heart.)

In vain the quartermaster urged him to do nothing rashly, and to await the return of Lord Rohallion, who had ridden over to Eglinton castle, to visit his old friend and American comrade, Earl Hugh, who had just returned from London; but pride and passion, with a conviction that the mother's unwonted bitterness was only a supplement to the son's insulting conduct, seemed to dissolve all the ties that had bound Quentin to Rohallion and its family.

These emotions of anger had full swing in his heart. What Lady Rohallion had said, the old lord must, he argued, have heard repeatedly, and may often have thought; and so, forth—forth to seek his bread elsewhere, he would go before the clocks struck midnight.

Mentally he vowed and resolved, that the first hour of another morning should see him far in search of a new home.

Deluding good John Girvan by some excuse, he slipped to his own room and packed a few necessaries in a small portmanteau, feeling, while he did so, a sense of mortification that they were the gifts of those whom, in justice to himself, he was compelled to leave. His watch, a ring, a breast-pin, and other trinkets given to him by Lady Rohallion, he laid upon his dressing-table, leaving them in token that he took with him nothing but what was absolutely necessary.

The time was an hour and a half from midnight. Unheeding he had heard the supper-bell clanged long ago, and cared not what any one—Flora excepted—thought of his absence now. Opening a window, he looked forth upon the night. The moon had waned, and the atmosphere was thick and gusty—yea, nearly as stormy and as wild as on that night when he had been washed ashore on the sand of the bay below Rohallion.

Putting his purse in his pocket—it contained but a half-guinea, he gave a last glance at his bed-room—to leave it with all its familiar features cost him a pang; there were some of Lady Rohallion's needlework, and sketches by Flora, books lent him by the dominie, gloves and foils that had borne the dint of many a bout between him and John Girvan; quaint shells given to him by Elsie Irvine, and many little trophies of his shooting expeditions with the gamekeeper, and so forth. He quitted the room with a sigh, and slipping downstairs reached the hall-door unseen by any of the household.

"And now a long farewell to Rohallion!" he exclaimed, as he reached the ivied arch of the haunted gate.

"Not so fast, Quentin," said a voice, and the rough hand of the worthy quartermaster grasped his.

"John Girvan," said Quentin, with emotion.

"I thought it would come to this. So you are really about to take French leave of us—to levant in the night, and without beat of drum?"

"Yes."

"To go out into the wide world?"

"Yes."

"I knew it would be thus, for I knew your spirit, Quentin, and so have been keeping guard here at the gate."

"Guard—for what purpose? To stop me?"

"No."

"What then?"

"To aid and help ye, Quentin, laddie," said Girvan, placing a heavy purse in his hand. "I have saved something here, forty guineas or so, off my half-pay, take them and use them cautiously, wi an auld man's blessing—an auld soldier's, if you like it better."

"Girvan—John Girvan," said Quentin, with a very troubled voice; "I cannot—I cannot——"

"What?"

"Deprive you of what I may never be able to repay."

"Ye must and ye shall take the money, or I'll fling it into the Lollard's Linn!" said the other, impetuously. "It was I who laid your father's head in the grave, laddie, in the auld kirkyard yonder in the glen, and ill would it become auld John Girvan, of the 25th, to let his son go forth to seek his fortune in this cold hard world, portionless and penniless, while there was a shot in the locker—a lad I love, too!"

"But the repayment, John Girvan, the repayment."

"Heed not that—it will come time enough; and if it never comes I'll never miss it; but ye'll write to me from the next burgh-town, wont ye, Quentin, laddie?"

"I shall, John—I shall," replied Quentin, now so softened that he sobbed with his face on the old man's shoulder.

"God bless ye, my bairn—God bless ye!"

"And you, John."

"You'll think o' me sometimes."

"Oh, could I ever forget?"

"Sorely will *she* repent this at my lord's home-coming," said Girvan, bitterly.

"My father was an ill-starred wanderer, and perished miserably, poor man! What right have I to hope for, or to look for, a better fate than he? My mother, too. . . . . Do they see me now, and know of all this? . . . . And Flora—dear Flora, whom I shall see no more!"

"Take a dram ere you go, laddie, for the night is dark and

eerie," said Girvan, producing a flask from his pocket; "'a spur in the head is weel worth twa on the heels,' says an auld Scots proverb."

"You will bid the dominie good-bye for me."

"That shall I, laddie—that shall I."

"And tell—tell *her*, that I have gone forth to seek my fortune, and—and——"

His voice failed him, so he slung his little portmanteau on his shoulder, and wrung the hand of his kind friend for the last time. Hurrying away, he disappeared in the darkness, and, as he did so, a sound that followed on the wind made him pause, but for an instant.

It was the old quartermaster sobbing like a child.

* * * * *

So, thus went Quentin Kennedy forth into the world.

"Few words," says a charming writer, "are more easily spoken than *He went forth to seek his fortune;* and what a whole world lies within the narrow compass! a world of high-hearted hopes and doubting fear; of noble ambition to be won and glorious paths to be trod, mingled with tender thoughts of home and those who made it such. What sustaining courage must be his who dares this course, and braves that terrible conflict—the toughest that ever man fought—between his own bright colouring of life, and the stern reality of the world. How many hopes has he to abandon—how many illusions to give up. How often is his faith to be falsified and his trustfulness betrayed; and, worst of all, what a fatal change do these trials impress upon himself—how different is he from what he had been."

Bitterness tinged the spirit of Quentin Kennedy with an impression of fatalism, and he marched mournfully, doggedly on.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NAVAILING REGRET.

"Ay waken oh!
Waken and wearie;
Sleep I canna get
For thinking o' my dearie.
When I sleep I dream,
And when I wake I'm eerie;
Rest I canna get,
For thinking o' my dearie."—*Old Scots Song.*

WHEN, three days after these events, Lord Rohallion returned home from his visit to Eglinton and to his brave old comrade—the "Sodger Hugh" of Burns' poem—he found the members of

his household in a considerable state of consternation and excitement. This was consequent to the sudden and mysterious disappearance of his favourite, Quentin Kennedy; but gradually the whole story came out in all its details, even to the crushing observation, so unfortunately and unintentionally overheard by the lad and the quartermaster in the outer drawing room.

Lord Rohallion was very indignant with his son for making an attack so unprovoked as the affair in the avenue, which, to do him justice, the Master described truly enough. He was seriously angry with Lady Winifred for speaking so ungenerously of his young favourite, and with the quartermaster too, for permitting, even aiding, him in the means of flight.

Now, three days had elapsed and no tidings had been heard of him; but there were no railroads or steamers in those days, or other means of locomotion than the occasional stage-coaches and carriers' waggons, so the family supposed that he could not be very far off.

The Master was sullen, resenting all this interest as an insult to himself, so he spent the whole day abroad in search of grouse and ptarmigan, and had even ordered his valet to pack up and prepare for returning to London, an order which that powdered gentleman of the aiguillette heard with extreme satisfaction, "the hair of Hayrshire by no means agreeing with his constitution," while the "red hands and big beetle-crushers of the women were by no means to his taste."

It was evident to Cosmo that Flora entertained a horror of him; and now that her anger had fully subsided and emotions of alarm replaced it, Lady Rohallion mourned for the poor lad repenting of the past, and trembling for the unknown future.

"A plague on your planning and match-making, Winny," said her husband, as they sat together on the old stone seat in the garden, late on the third evening after Quentin had disappeared; "I never knew any good come of that sort of thing."

"You know, Reynold, how long this proposed marriage has been a favourite scheme of ourselves and the Warrenders," she urged, gently.

"But you were—pardon me, Winny, dear—too officious or energetic; and Cosmo has been most reprehensibly rash!"

"Ah, don't say so!"

"I must! Had you left the girl to herself, this romantic fancy for her early playmate had soon been forgotten, or merged in a woman's love for Cosmo, and his proposal had been accepted, as I hope it yet shall be. Woman change, don't they, sometimes?" he added, with a sly twinkle in his eyes.

"Yes; but there must be reasons," said she, hesitatingly.

"Of course—of course."

"From the hints that Cosmo gave of what he had seen or overheard, I deemed it right to interfere."

"An error, I think; couldn't you let the young folks alone? Heaven knows, many a girl I kissed, in my first red coat and epaulettes," said Rohallion, while knocking the gravel about with his silver-headed cane.

"But Cosmo does so love that girl."

"Love her?" said Rohallion, laughing.

"Yes."

"Then it must be after some odd fashion of his own."

"How, my lord?"

"Why, zounds! Cosmo has passed unscathed through the perils of too many London seasons to be bird-limed by a country belle like Flora, beautiful though she be. She is not the style of girl that passes muster with the Household Brigade, I fear."

"Flora Warrender?"

"I mean that she is too genuine—too unsophisticated—in fact, I dont know what I mean,—somewhat of a character, if you will; and then, Quentin—poor Quentin——"

"Poor dear boy! pray don't upbraid me more, Reynold," she urged with tears.

"I do not mean to do so, Winny."

"I remember him only as the sweet little prattling child, saved from the wreck on that wild and stormy night; and I love him dearly, as if he were our own; he was full of affection and gentleness!" she continued, covering her face with her handkerchief.

"And yet you trampled on him, Winny," said Lord Rohallion, taking a pinch of Prince's mixture with great energy, and making his hair-powder fly about like a floury halo, "trampled upon him as if he had been a beggar's cur—he a soldier's son!"

"Oh, Reynold, upbraidings again!"

"It wasn't like you, Winny, dear—it wasn't like you."

"My deep interest in Cosmo's welfare, provocation at Quentin, and the extreme wilfulness of Flora, all served to bewilder me. I own that I was wrong, and not quite myself; but the dear bairn is gone, Reynold, gone from our roof-tree, and sorrow avails not."

"He was so good, so gentle, of so sweet a disposition," said Lord Rohallion, musingly; "always doing kind offices for everybody. Egad! I've seen him carrying horse-buckets for the old groom in the stable-court, because the man was feeble and ailing; but here come the dominie and John Girvan—perhaps they have news. Good evening, dominie. Any tidings of the deserter, Girvan?"

The kind-hearted dominie, who since Quentin's disappearance

had been as restless as if his galligaskins had been lined with Lieutenant James's horse-blister, shook his head mournfully, while lifting his old-fashioned three-cornered hat, and bowing thrice to the lady, who presented him with her lace-mittened hand.

"I have just been telling Lady Rohallion that I thought she was unnecessarily severe, and I regret very much, Girvan, that Quentin overheard those casual words in the drawing-room—words lightly spoken, and not meant for him to hear."

"Poor lad! as for his falling in love with Miss Warrender, it was quite natural," said the quartermaster; "how could you expect aught else, my lady?"

"True—true," replied Lady Winifred, with an air of extreme annoyance at having private family matters openly canvassed by dependents; but the affair had gone beyond their own control now; "propinquity is frequently fatal."

"Prop—what? I dinna quite comprehend, my lady; but this I know, that if a winsome young pair are left for ever together——"

"That is exactly what I mean, Girvanmains," interrupted the lady, with cold dignity.

"Well—it is pretty much like leaving a lighted match near gunpowder; there will be a blow-up some time when least expected."

"May you not be all wrong in your views of this matter?" said Lord Rohallion, who somewhat shared his wife's feeling of annoyance; "I must question Miss Warrender herself; I feel assured that she will conceal nothing from me."

"Not even that she allowed this sprightly young fellow to kiss her in the avenue, eh?" said the sneering voice of the Master, who appeared suddenly at the back of the stone chair, which he had approached unseen, and whereon he lounged with a twig in his mouth, and a Newmarket hat knowingly depressed very much over his right eye. "It was very pretty and becoming, wasn't it, dominie? ha! ha!"

"Cosmo!" exclaimed his mother, with positive anger.

"*Osculatio*—a kissing-match—eh, dominie?"

"There may be no harm in a kiss, my good sir," said the pedant, gravely, for though mightily shocked, as became the precentor of Rohallion kirk, on hearing of such undue familiarity, he felt himself bound to defend his young pupil and friend.

"No harm, you think?"

"Indubitably not."

"A rare old put it is! But what do such little favours lead to?"

"They may lead to reconciliation, as when the king kissed

father-in-law; or they may indicate homage, as we find in the book of Esther."

"And what about the kiss of Judas, dominie, when on such matters?" continued the sneering Cosmo.

"That I leave you, sir, to discover; but that there may be nothing wrong in the act itself, I can refer you to Genesis, Hosea, and all the sacred writings, which abound in solemn salutes by the lip, so that the kiss of Quentin may have been a pure and sinless one."

The dominie gave the fore-cock of his hat a twist with his hand, as if he had settled the matter, while Lord Rohallion, notwithstanding his annoyance, could not but join his son in a hearty laugh at the serious earnestness of the defence.

"You will have a vigorous search made for Quentin Kennedy," said he; "despatch messengers in every direction, John Girvan; spare neither trouble nor money, but bring the young rogue back to us."

"That shall I do blithely, my lord," replied the quartermaster, as he and the dominie made their bows and retired, while Cosmo curled his thin lips; and after a pause, uttered one of his harsh and unpleasant mocking laughs.

"The Master has the eyebrows of a wicked man, or I am no physiognomist—grieved am I to say so, dominie," whispered Girvan, as they walked away together.

"Ye are right, John, the *intercilium* is covered with hair, whilk I like not, though Petronius and Ovid call such eyebrows the chief charm of the other sex;

"'Ye fill by art your eyebrows' vacant space,'

saith the latter. It is an auld—auld notion that beetle-brows indicate an evil temper—a crafty and fierce spirit; and of a verity, the Master Cosmo hath both."

"Who the deuce could have anticipated such a blow-up as this?"

"About a woman! Pah! women," said the dominie, cynically, "according to a German philosopher, are only like works carved of fine ivory; nothing is whiter or smoother, and nothing sooner turns *yellow*."

"Are ye sure he was not a Roman philosopher?" asked the quartermaster, drily.

"I am; yet Petronius and Ovid both say——"

"Bother them both, dominie! leave Greek roots and Latin verbs alone, *now* that the poor boy is gone—God bless and watch over him! I know he'll ever have a warm corner in his heart for us both, and that, go wherever he may, he'll neither forget

you nor the poor old quartermaster; but now to have a glass of grog, and then to set about this search that my lord has ordered —a search which I know right well will prove a bootless one."

A vigorous pursuit and inquiry along all the highways were now instituted. Girvan, the dominie, the gardener, gamekeepers, grooms, Jack Andrews, Irvin the fisherman, the running footman, the parish minister on his puffy Galloway cob, and even Spillsby, the portly and unwieldy butler, were all despatched in various directions to the neighbouring farms, mansions and villages without avail.

John Legat, usually known in the Bailiwick as *Lang Leggie*, the running footman (for one of those officials still lingered in the old-fashioned household of Rohallion), scoured all Kyle and Cunninghame, with hard boiled eggs and sherry in the silver bulb, that topped his long cane, scarcely pausing to imbibe these, his sustenance when on duty; and though he returned thrice to the castle, he was despatched like a liveried Mercury, thrice again, but without hearing tidings of the missing one.

Since the last Duke of Queensberry ("old Q."), who died in 1810, Lord Rohallion was perhaps the last Scottish peer who retained such an old state appendage as a running footman.

Long did they all, save the sullen master, hope, and even flatter themselves, that the wanderer would return; but days became weeks, and no trace could be discovered and no tidings were heard of him anywhere.

An armed lugger that did not display her colours, but was very foreign in her build and in the rake of her masts, had been seen standing off and on near Rohallion Head. About midnight she was close in shore, steering clear of the Partan Craig, and burning a blue light. By sunrise she was far off at sea: could he have gone with *her?*

There had been a numerous and somewhat lawless body of gipsies encamped near the oak-wood shaw on the night of his disappearance, for the ashes of their night-fires had been found, together with well-picked bones and broken bottles, the usual *débris* of their suppers *al fresco;* but there were other traces more alarming: several large pools of blood which showed that there had been a fight—perhaps murder—committed among them. These wanderers had departed by sunrise, and passed beyond the craigs of Kyle, where all traces of them were lost. The quartermaster thought of the money he had given Quentin, and trembled lest the gold had only ensured his destruction, till the dominie reassured him by remembering that there were more Kennedies than Faas among those gipsies, and the former would be sure to protect him for the sake of his name.

On that night, too, the pressgang from Ayr had been more than ten miles inland, in search of certain seamen who had sought refuge as farm labourers; so this knowledge was another source of fear, as there was a great demand for men, and the officers were not very particular.

There had been a recruiting party beating up for various regiments in the Bailiwick of Cunninghame, and it had been at Mayboie on the night after Quentin fled. The party had marched, no one could say whether for Edinburgh or Glasgow. Could Quentin have enlisted?

The night was a dark and stormy one; could he have lost his way and perished in the Doon or the Girvan, both of which were swollen by the recent rains? This was barely possible, as he knew the country so well.

There were no electric wires to telegraph by, no rural police to apply to, and no penny dailies to advertise in. People travelled still by an armed stage or the carrier's waggon, just as their great-grandfathers did in the days of Queen Anne. Twanging his horn as he went or came, the Riding Post was still, as in in Cowper's *Task*.

> "——the herald of a noisy world,
> With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks,
> News from all nations lumbering at his back."

Posts came and went from the capital of the Bailiwick, but there were no tidings of Quentin, so the Master of Rohallion laughed in secret at all the exertions, doubts, and fears of those around him.

Every alarming idea was naturally suggested. The quartermaster's early instincts made him think most frequently of the recruiting party; but he grieved at the idea of the friendless and homeless lad, so delicately nurtured and gently bred, enduring all he had himself endured—the hardships and privations of a private soldier's life; while the kind-hearted dominie actually shed tears behind his huge horn barnacles at the bare thought of such a thing, and mourned for all his wasted classic lore.

Aware that she had been in some measure the primary cause of Quentin's expulsion from Rohallion, Flora Warrender had rather a difficult part to play now. To conceal entirely that she mourned for him would be to act a part which she disdained; but when she spoke with sorrow or anxiety, she excited the sarcasms of Cosmo, and even a little pique in Lady Winifred, who more than once said to her, almost with asperity, "Flora, you should have known your own position, and made Quentin

remember his; then all these unseemly events had never taken place."

"How, madam?"

"You should at once have put an end to this mooning and tomfoolery. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, madam," sighed Flora, who seemed to be intent on a book, though she held it upside down.

"How cool—how composed you are!"

"Less so, perhaps, than I seem," replied Flora, who felt that tears were suffusing her eyes.

"Young ladies took these matters very differently in my time; but since this revolution in France, manners are strangely altered. (Here we may mention that the epoch referred to was now superseding the Union in Lady Rohallion's mind.) Tears!" she continued; "I am glad to see them, at least for your own sake."

"They are *not* for my own sake, Lady Rohallion, but for the sake of poor Quentin, who has fallen under the displeasure of you all, and who, through my unwitting means, has—has—become——"

"What?"

"Homeless, friendless, and alone! Oh, it must be so sad to be alone in the world—all alone!"

Lady Winifred lowered her eyes, and her irritation passed rapidly away.

She had somewhat changed since that stormy night on which we first introduced her to the reader, and had altered, as people do with increasing years, so as to be at times—shall we say it?—almost selfish in much that related to her own immediate hearth and household, and more especially in all that concerned the still more selfish Cosmo, on whom she doted, and in whom she could see no imperfection. Yet she could not but reproach herself bitterly when thinking of Quentin Kennedy, and the harsh, cutting words he had overheard.

Then as his smiling, loving, and handsome face came vividly in memory before her, she would ask of herself, "Is it thus, Winifred Rohallion, you have treated the strange orphan, the helpless child once, the mere lad now, who was cast by fate, misfortune, and the waves of that bleak November sea, years ago, at your door and at your mercy? Was it generous to cast forth upon the cold world the friendless, poor, and penniless youth, who loves you—ay, even as your own son *never* loved you? And what answer is to be given if, at some future day, his mother, who may be living yet, should come hither and demand him of you—you who stung and galled his proud spirit by

taunts, upbraiding and unmerited reproach?" And so she would whisper and think what she dared not say aloud; though "perhaps the lowest of our whispers may reach eternity, for it is not very far from any of us, after all."

By the past memories of her early life—by those of *one* whose face came at times unbidden before her, and by the pleasant days of *their* youth in pastoral Nithsdale—by those evenings when the sunset glowed so redly on the green summits of Mouswald and Criffel, while the Nith brawled joyously over its pebbled bed, and the white hawthorn cast its fragrance and its blossoms on the soft west wind—by all these, it might be asked, had she no compassion for the young love she was seeking to mar and crush?

She had alike compunction and compassion; but in this instance she deemed it the mere love of a boy for a girl, and not quite such as Rohallion's brother, Ranulph Crawford, had for her some seven-and-thirty years before.

Seven-and-thirty! a long vista they were to look back through now; but the events of her youth seemed clearer at times than those of her middle age, and as we grow older they always are so in dreams.

Quentin would soon forget the affair, she was assured, and self-interest and love for her own son blinded her to the rest—to all but a sorrow for the lost youth, and a craving to know his fate, where he was now, and with whom.

Thus many a night after his disappearance her heart upbraided her keenly; and many a lonely hour, unseen by others, she wept and prayed—prayed for the welfare and safety of the unknown lad she might never see or hear of more, for as a mother she had been to him, and he had been ever tender, loving, and kind as a son to her—much more than ever the Master had been in the days of his infancy and boyhood, for he was always cold, cruel, and headstrong; and now Quentin's place was vacant among them, as completely as if he was in the grave.

And Flora Warrender, though mentioned last, her sorrow was not the least. How lonely and how tiresome the old castle seemed to her now! All their favourite walks—the long, shady avenue by the foaming Lollard's Linn; the grand old garden with its aged yew hedges; the kelpies' haunted pool, where first she learned that he loved her, and felt his kiss upon her cheek; the ivied ruins of Kilhenzie, and every old trysting-place, seemed deserted now indeed.

She had no companion now in her rambles to touch up her sketches, to compare notes with in reading, to hover lovingly by her side at the piano, and so forth: thus Flora's "occupation" seemed, like the warlike Moor's, to be gone indeed!

The sunny August mornings came, but there came not with them Quentin, to meet her fresh and ruddy from a gallop along the shore, with a dewy bouquet from the garden, or with a basket of speckled trout from the river.

Slowly passed each lingering day, and evening followed; but there was no one to ramble with now by starlight in the terraced garden—to linger with by the sounding sea that surged upon the shore below and foamed upon the distant rock, or to share all her thoughts, and anticipate every wish.

She hoped he would return when his money was spent and when his passion cooled, or his love for her obtained the mastery. So did Lady Rohallion and the old lord—that honest, worthy country gentleman and gallant peer—never doubted it; but the quicker-seeing quartermaster did; so day followed day until they began to count the weeks, and still there came no news of the lost Quentin Kennedy.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN OLD SOLDIER'S STORY.

"If he was of Leven's," said the lieutenant.
"I told him your honour was."
"Then," said he, "I served three campaigns with him in Flanders."
Tristram Shandy.

A LAST glance at his old friends before we go in pursuit of Quentin.

"I fear me," said the quartermaster, shaking his old yellow wig, which still survived, and letting a long stream of tobacco smoke escape from his mouth, as he and the dominie lingered over their toddy-jugs one evening in "the snuggery," I fear me much that the Master's London debts and liabilities are more than his father, worthy man, reckons on, and that Rohallion, wood and haugh, hill and glen, main and farm-town, will all be made ducks and drakes of within a week after the old lord is carried through the haunted gate and up the kirk loan yonder."

"Wae is me that I should hear this," said the dominie sadly.

"I speak in confidence, dominie," said the quartermaster, laying his "yard of clay" lightly on the other's arm, and lowering his voice.

"Of course—of course. But how different hath the Master's life been from his father's! Wasting his patrimony among London bucks and bullies—among parasites and flatterers, even

as Timon of Athens wasted his substance, till he was driven to seek sustenance by digging for the poorest roots of the earth."

"Our old lord has ever acted wisely, dominie; when not on active service, he has ever been resident on his ain auld patrimonial property—wisely so, I say, for it beseems not that the great names of the land should die out of the memory of those who inhabit it; d—n all absentees, say I!"

And as the quartermaster buried his red nose in the toddy-jug, the concluding anathema became an indistinct mumble.

"Bankruptcy and disgrace are before the Master, I fear," he resumed with a sigh, as he snuffed the long candles, which were placed in square-footed holders of carved mahogany, mounted with silver rings on the stems; "war may save him for a time, but only if he leaves the Guards."

"War, say ye?"

"Yes—for if he owed sums that surpassed the national debt, his creditors could never touch him while under orders for foreign service."

"But at his home-coming?"

"Ah, there's the rub, dominie. A fine story it would be to have the Master of Rohallion—he, the heir of a line that never was disgraced—ever stainless and true—arrested by a dog of a bailiff—arrested, perhaps, at the head of his regiment, it might be after fighting the battles of his country! Zounds, dominie, it would be enough to make all the old oaks in Rohallion wood drop their leaves and die, as if a curse had come upon the land! It would break his father's heart, and, much as I love the family, I would rather that Cosmo was killed in action, and that he had to endure such disgrace, or that after facing the French, as I know he will do bravely (for there never came a coward of the Crawford line), he had to flee ignobly to Holyrood, and become an abbey laird, that he might snap his fingers at the laws of both Scotland and England, until, perhaps, he got the lands of Ardgour."

The dominie was truly grieved to hear such things, for he had all the old Scottish patriarchal love of the family, under whom his forefathers—stout men-at-arms—in their time, had been trusted dependents, through long dark ages of war and tumult; so he drew a long sigh, took a deep draught from his toddy jug, and asked in a low voice—

"If aught were to happen unto the Master, how would the title go?"

"I scarcely ken, dominie; by the death of Ranulph Crawford in a foreign land, it would probably fall to some far-awa cousin, after the lands had been frittered among disputants in the Court

of Session, and the auld patent that King James signed on a kettle-drum head, had been hacked to rags by a Committee of Privileges. Confound the law, say I, wi' a' my heart! However, the old lord, Heaven bless him! is a hale man and strong yet, so let us not anticipate evils, which are sufficient for their own day."

"Four weeks—a whole month to-night, John, since we last saw Quentin," said the dominie, to change the subject.

"Poor Quentin!"

"As a bairn how bonnie he was—yea, beautiful as Absalom!"

The quartermaster sighed with impatience, it might be with a little air of disappointment, as he pushed his toddy-jug aside, and proceeded energetically to refill the bowl of his pipe. Why, thought he, has Quentin never written to me, according to his promise?

It was September now. The bearded grain that had been yellowing on the long corn-rigs of Rohallion was already gathered in; the harvest-kirn or home had been held in the great barn of the Home Farm, and the tawny stubbles gave the bared land a sterile aspect, till they disappeared as the plough turned up the shining furrows, where the black ravens flapped their wings, and the hoodie-crows sought for worms. The leaves were becoming brown and yellow as sienna tints spread over the copsewood, and the sound of the axe was heard at times, for now the husbandman looked forward to the closing year, and remembered the rhyming injunction:—

> "Ere winter preventeth, while weather is good,
> For galling of pasture get home with thy wood;
> And carry out gravel to fill up a hole,
> Both timber and furzen, the turf and the coal."

"Four weeks—ay, it is September now," said the quartermaster.

"And I fear me the lad will return no more."

"Say not so, dominie; he may come upon us when we least expect him."

"It may be, for, of a verity, life is full of strange coincidences."

"Strange, indeed! I have told you many a soldier's yarn, dominie; but did you ever hear of the strange meeting I had with an old man of the clan Donald?"

"Where—in the Highlands?"

"No, in America."

The dominie shook his head as a negative.

"Then fill your pipe, brew your toddy, draw your chair nearer the fire, and I'll tell you about it.

"You see, dominie, it was in the winter of '75, when Rohallion was lieutenant in the Light Company, and I but a corporal, that, with a detachment of ours, we joined Major Preston and Captain —afterwards the unfortunate Major—André in the stockaded fort of St. John, on the Richelieu River, in Lower Canada. In the fort were seven hundred rank and file, chiefly of the Cameronians and the 7th or Royal Fusiliers, and our orders were to defend the place to the last!

"We were soon attacked with great vigour by the American General Montgomery, at the head of Lord knows how many rebellious Yankees and yelling Indian devils; but like brave men we defended ourselves till the whole place was unroofed and riddled by shot and shell—defended ourselves, amid the snows of severe winter, on half-rations, and what was worse, on half-grog, till our ammunition was expended. Then, but not till *then*, we were compelled to surrender, and give up our arms, baggage, and everything to the foe.

"Disheartened by defeat, and denuded of everything but our regimentals, we were marched up the lakes by Ticonderoga. As I had no desire for remaining a prisoner during a war, the end of which none could foresee, and not being an officer, having no parole to break, I resolved to escape on the first available opportunity, and did so very simply, on the night-march along the borders of Lake George. There was a halt, during which I contrived to creep unseen into a thick furzy bush, and there I remained, scarcely daring to breathe, till the prisoners fell into their ranks an hour before daybreak, and surrounded by their escort of triumphant Yankees and Indians in their war-paint, proceeded on their sad and heartless journey into the interior.

"After the poor fellows had departed and all was still, while the ashes of the watch-fires smouldered and reddened in every breath of wind that passed over the snowy waste—and keen and bitmg blasts they were, I can tell ye, dominie—I slipped out of my friendly bush, stealthily as a snake might have done, and crawled away on my hands and knees from the vicinity of the deserted halting-place, for I dreaded to encounter some straggler of the escort, and still more did I dread some rambling Indian, who would have swooped down upon me with his scalping-knife, and I had not the slightest ambition to see my natural wig added to the other grizzly trophies on a warrior's hunting-shirt.

"Arms I had none, and was scarcely clothed. I was hungry, weary, and, on finding myself alone, I began to reflect whether I had acted wisely in escaping to face individually the perils that awaited me, for my tattered red coat marked me as an enemy and in the stern frost of an American winter, you may believe, it

was not to be discarded or cast aside without a substitute. Such a garb increased my perils, and we all know what it cost poor Major André, of the Cameronians, when caught in his uniform within the American lines.

"The cold seemed to freeze my faculties, and vaguely endeavouring to retrace the way we had come, I hoped by some chance, and by the care of Providence, to reach the junction of the Sorrel or the Richelieu with the St. Lawrence, for there I knew that Colonel Maclean was posted with the royal regiment of Scottish Emigrants, but concerning how far I was from thence, and how I was to reach it, I knew no more than of what the man in the moon may be about at this moment.

"Vainly I toiled on till day dawned fully on the vast extent of snow-covered country. Then I found myself among the high and wooded hills that look down upon the bosom of the Hudson. Far in the distance lay Fort St. John which we had so long defended, and which had the Stars and Stripes where the Union Jack waved before. On the other hand, Lake George, a sheet of snow-covered ice, with all its isles, lay like a map at my feet, far down below.

"Cold, cold, ice, frost, snow, a biting wind everywhere! I sighed and shuddered with misery, and longed for any other garment than my fatal red coat, that I might approach a house or homestead, and crave a morsel of food, and permission, for a minute, to warm myself by the kitchen fire; but to make the attempt was too rash, and, though my prospects were not cheering, I had no desire to court a rifle-shot from some loophole or upper window.

"As I stumbled on by the skirts of a fir copse, which somewhat sheltered me from the biting north wind, and while the drowsy numbness of exhaustion was stealing over me, I heard a loud and sonorous voice commanding me to 'stop.' I turned and saw a man approaching me.

"His form was powerful and athletic, apparently, rather than tall, and he seemed about fifty years of age or more; very brown and weather-beaten in visage, and his hair was white as the snow around us. He had on a thick fur cap, the warm earlaps of which were tied under his chin; and over a yellow Indian hunting-shirt he wore a seaman's pea-jacket, with two rows of large white horn buttons in front. It was girt by a belt of untanned leather, in which were stuck a hunting-knife, a pair of brass-mounted pistols, and a rusty basket-hilted Highland broadsword. He was evidently one of the insurgents—'Mr. Washington's rebels,' as we named them. He carried a long rifle, and wore a pair of large deer-skin boots, that came well over his

ardy thighs, and were strapped to his waist-belt. His whole appearance and bearing indicated a state of bodily strength, hardihood, confidence, and warmth, all of which, at that particular moment, I greatly envied. With his right hand on the hammer and his left on the barrel of his rifle, as if about to cock it, he said, in a voice that was both sharp and deep in tone—

"'Stand, Englishman, if you would not be shot down, as many a time I have seen your countrymen shoot others, in cold blood.'

"'I don't think even death could make my blood colder than it is already,' said I, with chattering teeth; 'but you accuse us unjustly of outrage.'

"'Do I?' said he, with a fierce sneer; 'by your doings at Lexington, I don't think the Redcoats are much changed since I saw them in Lochaber.'

"'I am not an Englishman,' said I, glancing at the sword in his girdle.

"'Then, what the devil *are* you?' he asked sharply.

"'I am a Scotsman, as I rather think you are,' I added, for he had a Skye-terrier look about that face that indicated a West Highlander.

"'Indeed,' said he, in an altered tone, placing the butt of his rifle on the ground, greatly to my satisfaction and general ease of mind; 'you are one of the force that defended Fort St. John, under Major Preston and Captain André?'

"'Yes.'

"'And how, then, are you here?'

"'I was a prisoner, but escaped; and so great is my misery, that I beg of you to make me a prisoner again, if you are in the American interest.'

"'By your yellow facings, you are not one of the King's Fusiliers.'

"'I am a 25th man,' said I.

"'A 25th man?' he repeated, coming nearer, and looking hastily about to see if we were observed, but all around the vast landscape seemed desolate and tenantless; 'I will screen and save you if I can, for the sake of the old country neither of us may ever see again; but, more than all, for the sake of the *number* on your buttons. Here, taste this first, and then follow me.'

"He drew a leather hunting-bottle from the pocket of his rough pea-jacket, and gave me a good dram of Jamaica rum, but for which, I am sure, I should have died there, for the cold was fast overpowering me.

"'So you are a 25th man?' said he, surveying me with con-

siderable interest; 'well, for that reason, if it were for nothing else, I shall befriend you. Come this way.'

"I was too cold—too intensely miserable—to question his meaning, but accompanied him through the wood, by a narrow path where the snow lay deep, and where, in some places, it had fallen in such a manner over the broad, horizontal and interlaced branches of the pine trees as to form quite a covered passage, where the atmosphere felt mild—even warm, compared with the temperature elsewhere. After a time, we reached an open plateau, on the slope of the hills that look towards Lake George, where we found his hut, a comfortable and warm little dwelling, sheltered by stupendous pines, and built entirely of fir logs, dressed and squared by the hatchet, and pegged each down into the other, through holes bored by an augur. It had a stone chimney, within which a smouldering fire soon shot up into a ruddy blaze as he cast a heap of crackling fir cones on it, and then added some dry birch billets, that roared and sputtered cheerily, and threw showers of sparks all over us.

"He gave me some food, broiled venison, hard biscuits, and a good can of Jamaica grog; and he also gave me that which I needed sorely—warm clothing, in the shape of an old frieze coat, lined with martin skins, in lieu of my poor, faded and tattered regimentals, which, for security's sake, we cast into the fire and burned.

"Three days I remained with the trapper or hunter, for such he seemed to be, and on the fourth, after having carefully reconnoitred all the neighbourhood, he announced his intention of conducting me to Colonel Maclean's outposts upon the Richelieu; and being now thoroughly refreshed, I was glad to hear the tidings.

"'I shall never forget your kindness to me,' said I; 'and I value it all the more because you are one of those who are in arms against the king.'

"'It is maybe not the first time I have been so,' said he, with a deep smile puckering all his eyelids.

"'And you saved my life simply because I was a 25th man?"

"'Yes—because one of your regiment—it was Lord Leven's—no, Lord Semple's then—saved *mine*, at a harder pinch, some thirty years ago,' said he, gravely, as he marched on before me through the snow, with his long rifle sloped on his shoulder.

"'You have been a soldier, then?'

"'Like yourself, Lowlander, for I know you are southland bred by your tongue.'

"'In what regiment?' I asked.

"'In the clan regiment of Macdonald of Keppoch. Rest him,

God!' he exclaimed, taking off his cap and looking upward, while his keen grey eyes glistened, it might be in the frosty wind, under his bushy eyebrows.

"'When was this—and where?'

"'Can you be so dull as not to guess? It was in the ever-memorable and ever-glorious campaign under his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, whom Heaven long preserve! It was in 1746, just thirty years ago. Look at these scars,' he added, showing me several sword wounds that were visible among his thick white hair. 'I got these at Culloden, from Bland's dragoons, when fighting for Scotland and King James VIII.'

"'You must be an old man?' said I.

"'Old,' he exclaimed; 'I am barely fifty—young enough to fight and ripe enough to die for my new home, this land of America, to which I was banished as a slave with many more of my clan and kindred.' He was now warming with his subject and the recollections of the past. 'There is,' he resumed a pass in the hills here that reminds me of my native glen in Croy. Often I go there and sit on the 16th of April, as the fatal day comes round, when outnumbered, three to one, by British and Hanoverians, the Highland swordsmen went down like grass on Culloden moor, before the withering fire of grape and musketry! Then the river that flows into Lake George seems the Nairn—the water of Alders; yonder open moorland seems the plain of Drummossie, and the distant farm among the pine-trees passes for Culloden House. Afar off in the distance the bastions of Ticonderoga become those of Fort George, that jut into the Moray Firth, and yonder wooded mountain, as yet without a name, seems to me like wild Dun-daviot; and then as with the eyes of a seer, it all comes before me again, that April day, with its terrible memories! Then,' he continued, with flashing eyes, as he pointed across the plain, 'then I seem to see the white battle-smoke rolling over the purple heather, and the far-extended lines of the hell-doomed Cumberland reaching from Bland's scarlet horse on the right to the false Lord Ancrum's blue dragoons upon the left—these long and steady lines of infantry, Barrel's, Munro's, the Fusiliers, the Royals, and all the rest, in grim array, three ranks deep, the colours waving in the centre, the bayonets glittering in the sun. On the other,' his voice failed him, and almost with a sob, he continued, 'on the *other* hand, I see the handsome Prince, the idol of all our hearts, on his white horse, half shimmering through the smoke and morning mist, and then the loyal clans in all their tartans, with target and claymore: Murray on the right, and Perth on the left, in the centre Athol, Lochiel, Appin, Cluny, and Lovat, Keppoch, Glengarry, and

cthers, with wild Lord Lewis and old Glenbucket in the rear. Then once again from yonder pine forest I seem to hear the war-pipes playing the onset, and a thrill passes over me. I feel my sword in my hand'—he dashed down his rifle and drew his claymore—'I draw down my bonnet; I hear the wild cheer, the battle-cry of *Righ Hamish gu bragh!* pass along the line, as with heads stooped and targets up, we burst like a thunderbolt through the first line of charged bayonets! In a moment it is dispersed and overborne—it is all dirk and claymore, cutting, hewing and stabbing. On yet, on—and whoop! we break through the second line; on yet, through the *third*, and the day may be our own! Its fire is deadly and concentrated; I am beside the aged and white-haired Keppoch, my chief—all our people have fallen back in dismay before the fire of musketry and the treachery of the Campbells, who turned our flank. Keppoch waves his bonnet; again I hear him cry, My God! my God! have the children of my tribe forsaken me? Again the bullets seem to pierce me, and we fall to the earth together—and so the wild vision passes away!'

"While pouring forth all this, the Highland exile seemed like one possessed, and in his powerful imagination, I have no doubt that while speaking, the present snow-clad landscape passed away, and in fancy he saw the moor and battle of Culloden all spreading like a bloody panorama before him. Until he sheathed his sword I was not without uneasiness lest he might fill up the measure of his wrath by cutting and carving on me.

"'At last it was all over,' he resumed quietly and sadly; 'and then came the butchery of the wounded by platoon firing and the desecration of the dead. Sorely wounded and faint with loss of blood, I found myself on the skirt of the field near the wall which the Campbells had broken down to enable the light dragoons to turn our right flank.

"'Weary with the battle of the past day, a soldier was leaning against the wall, screwing a fresh flint into the lock of his musket. On seeing me move, he mercifully gave me a mouthful of water from his wooden canteen, and bound up my head with a shred torn from my plaid. I then begged him to help me a little way out of the field, as I was the sole support of an aged mother, and must live if possible. The good fellow said it was as much as his life was worth, were it known that he had spared mine; but as he, too, had an old mother in the lowlands far away, for her sake he would run the risk of assisting me.

"'The morning was yet dark and we were unseen. He half carried, half dragged me for more than a mile, till we reached a thicket where I was in safety from the parties who were butcher-

ing the wounded. Some of these burned my mother's hut and bayonetted her on the threshold.

"I offered the soldier the tassels of my sporran or the silver buttons of my waistcoat as a reward, but he proudly refused them. I then pressed upon him my snuff-mull, on the lid of which my initials were engraved——'

"'And he took it?' said I eagerly.

"'He did, but with reluctance; and then I asked his name, that I might remember it in my gratitude——'

"'And he told you that he was John Girvan of Semple's foot—the 25th,' said I.

"'Yes—yes; but how know *you* that?'

"'Because that friendly soldier was *my father*. He served against the Prince at Culloden (*four* Scotch regiments did so that day), and often have I heard him tell the story of how the mull came into his possession, and of the brave Highlanders who adhered to old Keppoch when all the clans fell back before the mingled shock of horse and foot in front and flank!'

"'Your father!—that brave man your father? I thank God who has thus enabled me to repay to you the good deed done to me on that dark morning on Culloden Moor,' said the Highlander with deep emotion, as he shook my hand with great warmth.

"'Here is the mull,' said I, producing it,' and you are welcome to a pinch from it again.'

"'It is indeed like an old friend's face,' said he, looking with interest at his initials, D. M'D., graven on the silver top. 'I made and mounted it in my mother's hut in Croy. Woe is me! How many changes have I seen since that day thirty years ago, when last I held it in my hand? And your father, soldier—I hope that brave and good man yet lives?'

"Alas! no,' said I sadly; 'he entered the Royals fifteen years after Culloden, and volunteered as a sergeant, with the forlorn hope, at the storming of the Moro Castle. He fell in the breach, and the mull was found in his havresack by the men who buried him there.'

"The Highlander took off his cap and muttered a prayer, crossing himself the while very devoutly.

"'But for him,' said he, 'instead of being a lonely trapper here by the shore of Lake George, the heather bells of thirty summers had bloomed and withered over my grave on the fatal moor of Culloden; but God's blessed will be done.'

"After this unexpected meeting with one of whom I so often heard my worthy father speak when I was but a bairn, we became quite as old friends, and parted with regret when we reached the outposts of the Royal Scottish Emigrants, close to which he

guided me, and then took his departure to join General Montgomery, who deemed Donald Macdonald the chief of his marksmen.

"I never heard of him more; and as for the snuff-mull, I was robbed of it by some Germans, who cut the knapsack off my back as I lay wounded in the skirmish at Stoney Point, in the State of New York, in 1776; but this chance meeting with its original proprietor, shows us, dominie, what unexpected things may come to pass in the world. Life, as I said is full of strange coincidences, and we may meet with Quentin Kennedy or hear sure tidings of him, when least expected."

"I pray Heaven it may be so," sighed the dominie, over his empty toddy-jug, as he tied an ample yellow bandanna over his old three-cornered hat, and under his chin; and then assuming his cane prepared to depart.

"Jack Andrews has brought your pony round to the private door: take care o' the Lollard's Linn, for the night is dark; and now for the *deoch*—the stirrup-cup."

"Whilk the Romans ever drank in honour of Mercury, as I do now—that he may bestow a sound night's sleep," said the dominie, smacking his lips as the dram went down.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WAYFARER.

"On, on! through the wind and rain,
With the blinding tears and burning vein!
When the toil is o'er and the pain is past,
What recks it *all* if we sleep at last."

All the Year Round.

When we last saw him, we said that Quentin was going forth into the world to seek his fortune, though, perhaps, his chief idea or emotion was to get as far away as possible from the vicinity of Rohallion, its haughty lady, and the cold and crafty Master. As he passed through the ivied archway, he dashed aside the tears that his farewell with the old quartermaster had summoned.

"How often," thought he, "have I read in novels and romances, in dramas and story-books, of their heroes doing *this*—setting out on the vague and hopeful errand that was to lead to fame and fortune; but how little I ever expected to experience the stern reality, or believe that it would be my own fate! And now the hour has come—oh, it seems so strange now-a-days!"

Passing down the avenue, the stately trees of which were tossing their branches wildly in the gathering blast, he issued upon the highway, and proceeding along it without caring, and perhaps without considering, whether he went to the right or to the left.

Intense was the loneliness, and bitter the irritation of mind in which he pursued his aimless way, by the old and narrow road, which was bordered by ancient hedgerows where brambles and Guelder-roses were growing wild and untrimmed, and where the wind was howling now among the old beech-trees, as an occasional drop of rather warm rain that fell on his face, or plashed in the dust under foot, gave warning for a rough and comfortless night for a belated wayfarer.

Again and again he looked back to the picturesque, turreted, and varied outline of Rohallion, and saw its many lighted windows, *one* which he knew well, in the crowstepped gable of the western *wing*. It was the *sleeping*-place of Flora Warrender.

She would be there now—her head resting on her pillow, perhaps, sleepless and weeping for *him*, no doubt, and for the probable results of a quarrel, the end of which she could not foresee—weeping for the young heart that loved her so truly, so he flattered himself; and in the morning she would find that his room was tenantless, his bed unslept in, and that he was gone—*gone* no one knew whither!

Hope had scarcely yet risen in Quentin's breast; he felt but the stern and crushing knowledge that he was leaving his only home where all had loved, and where he truly loved all save *one*, to launch out upon an unknown world, and to begin a career that was as friendless as it was shadowy.

He had no defined plan, where to proceed, or what to essay. He naturally thought of the army; but, as he had ever anticipated a commission, he shrunk from enlisting, and thereby depriving himself of all liberty of action, and perhaps of forfeiting for ever the place which he felt himself, by birth and education, entitled to take in society.

Of business or the mood of attaining a profession, he was as ignorant as of the contents of the Koran, the Talmud, the Shasters, or the books of Brahma: and had he dropped from the moon, or sprung out of the turf, he could not have felt more lonely, friendless, and isolated in the world.

He was now passing the old ruined church, with its low and crumbling boundary-wall that encloses the graveyard, where, long ago, his drowned father had been reverently laid by the Rohallion Volunteers and the worthy old quartermaster.

How well Quentin knew the spot amid the solemn obscurity! he could see it from the time-worn foot-stile where he lingered

for a moment. *He* was lying beside the ancient east window, near the Rohallion aisle, where dead Crawfords of ages past, even those who had fallen in their armour at Flodden and Pinkey, Sark and Arkinholme, were buried. No stone marked the spot; but now the rough-bearded thistle, the long green nettle, the broad-leaved dock, and the sweetbriar, mingled mournfully over the humble last home of the poor dead wanderer.

Quentin felt his heart very full at that moment.

Did the father *see* his son to-night? Was he looking upon him from some mysterious bourne among the stars? Did he know the tumult, the sorrow, and the half-despair that were mingling in his breast?

Quentin almost asked these questions aloud, as, with a mind deeply agitated by conflicting thoughts, the poor fellow journeyed on.

A strong regard for the home he had left (of any *other* he had no memory now save a vague and indistinct dream), with painful doubts lest he had been ungracious, ungrateful, or unkind to any there, beset him, after the soft revulsion of feeling excited by the solemn aspect of the midnight churchyard.

Then came dim foreshadowings, the anxious hopes—a boy's certainty of future fame and distinction; but how, where, and in what path?

His romance-reading with Flora and the yarns of the quarter-master had filled his mind with much false enthusiasm and many odd fancies. He had misty recollections of heroes expelled or deserting from home under circumstances pretty similar to his own, who had flung themselves over awful precipices, when their bones were picked white (a doubly unpleasant idea) by the Alpine eagles or bears of the Black Forest: or who had thrown themselves upon their swords, or drowned themselves (the Lollard's Linn was pouring not far off; but the night was decidedly *cold*), yet none of these modes of exit, suited his purpose so well as walking manfully on, and imagining, with a species of grim satisfaction, the surmises and so forth at Rohallion, when the supper-bell rang and he did not appear; when Jack Andrews, with military punctuality, closed the old feudal fortress for the night, and still he was not to be found; and then the next day, with its increased excitement, was a thought that quite cheered him!

But there was Flora—sweet Flora Warrender, with all her winning little ways; and her image came upbraidingly before him despite the smarting of the wound given him by the Master, and the deeper sting of Lady Rohallion's words.

As glittering fancies rose like soap-bubbles in the sunshine·

as the *Châteaux en Espagne* rose too, and faded away into mud-hovels and even prisons, love and affection drew his thoughts *back*, and seemed to centre his hopes in and about Rohallion. Flora's face, the memory of past years of love and kindness experienced from Lady Winifred, and from the old lord, melted his heart, or filled it with regard and gratitude towards them, and he felt that, go where he might, Rohallion could never be forgotten. A verse of Burns that occurred to him, seemed but to embody his own ideas and emotions—

"The monarch may forget his crown,
That on his head an hour hath been;
The bridegroom may forget the bride,
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The mother may forget her child,
That smiles so sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And all that thou hast done for me."

From an eminence above the oakwood shaw, he turned to take his last view of the old dwelling-place; but he could only see its lights twinkling like distant stars, for the night was obscure and murky; the clouds were rolling in great masses; the wind came in fierce and fitful gusts from the Firth of Clyde, while the rain began to descend steadily.

Bodily discomfort soon recalled all his emotions of hate and anger at the Master, and with eyes that flashed in the dark, he turned his back, almost resentfully, on the old castle, and resumed his aimless journey.

"There is sometimes," says a writer, "a stronger sense of unhappiness attached to what is called being hardly used by the world, than by a direct and palpable misfortune, for though the sufferer may not be able even in his own heart to set out with clearness one single count in the indictment, yet a *general* sense of hard treatment, unfairness, and so forth, brings with it a great depression and feeling of desolation."

"Why was I orphaned in youth?" thought Quentin, bitterly, as this sense of unfairness and depression came over him; "why was I cast on the bounty, the mercy, of strangers? Why did I love Flora—why do we love each other so vainly, and why are we to be hopelessly separated?"

All these questions remained unanswered; but the blinding rain was now coming down in sheets, and he felt the necessity of seeking shelter without delay.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VAULT OF KILLIENZIE.

"Through gloomy paths unknown,
Paths which untrodden be,
From rock to rock I go
Along the dashing sea.
And seek from busy woe,
With hurrying steps to flee;
But know, fair lady! know,
All this I bear for thee!"

Ancient Poetry of Spain.

On passing the long thicket or copse, known as the oakwood shaw, a number of fires burning on the heath beyond, and sheltered by the oaks from the west wind, at once indicated to Quentin that a gipsy camp was there. Indeed, he could see their figures flitting darkly to and fro around the red fires, on which they were heaping wood that smoked and sputtered in the wind and rain. He could also see the little tents or wigwams which were simply formed by half circular hoops stuck in the earth, and covered by canvas or tarpaulin.

Their miserable ponies were picquetted on the open heath, where, with drooping ears and comfortless aspect, they cropped the scanty herbage or chewed the whin bushes. Aware that these people were to be sedulously avoided, and that he must neither risk the loss of his portmanteau, or the money so generously lent him by the quartermaster, he clutched his walking-cane, turned hastily aside, and passing up a lane between hedge-rows, proceeded towards a farm-house, the occupants of which he feared might know him; but he was resolved to risk recognition, for the weather was becoming pitiless, and he had no alternative.

A watchdog barked furiously and madly, straining on his chain and standing on his hind legs, open-mouthed, as Quentin approached the house, which was involved in darkness and silence.

The rain was dashing on the closed windows, washing the bleak walls and gorging the spouts and gutters, as he handled vigorously and impatiently a large brass knocker, with which the front door was furnished. After the third or fourth summons, a window was opened in the upper story, and by the light within the room Quentin could perceive the face and figure of the irate farmer, Gibbie Crossgrane, in a white night-cap and armed with

a gun or musket, for Gibbie was one of the Rohallion volunteers.

"Wha are ye, and what do you seek at this time o' night?" he demanded.

"Shelter——" Quentin began.

"Shelter!" shouted the other; "my certie! do you take this for a change-house, or an ale-wife's, that ye rap sae loud and lang?"

"I have lost my way, Mr. Crossgrane——"

"Then ye are the mair fule! But be off," he added, cocking his piece; "I warrant ye are nae better than ye should be. This is the third time I hae been roused out o' my warm bed this blessed night by yon cursed tingler bodies, that hae been fechting and roost-robbing about Kilhenzie a' day, so be off, carle, I say, or aiblins I'll shoot ye like a hoodiecraw, ye vagrant limmer."

With these threatening words, which showed that he was determined to consider his visitor one of the gipsies, he slapped the butt of his gun significantly, and sharply closed the window ere poor Quentin could explain or reply.

"Churlish wretch!" he sighed, as he turned away, and revenged himself by hurling a huge stone at the yelling watch-dog, which, like a cowed bully, instantly plunged into his kennel, where he snapped and snarled in spite and anger.

Aware of the futility of making any further attempt in this quarter, Quentin returned to the high road, when, passing the ruins of Kilhenzie, he conceived the idea of taking shelter in one of the remaining vaults, wherein he knew that Farmer Crossgrane was wont to store straw and hay for his cattle.

Though the memory of John the Master's wraith, the spectre-hound of the holly thicket and other dark stories somewhat impressed him at this hour, and awed him as he approached the ruined walls, he hastened to avail himself of their shelter, quickening his pace to a run as he passed the giant tree of Kilhenzie, on the branches of which, the quartermaster and dominie averred, so many men had taken their leave of a setting sun.

He went straight to an arched vault which he knew well, as it opened off the grass-grown barbican, and finding it, as he expected, full of dry straw, he burrowed among it for warmth, and placing his portmanteau under his head, strove to avoid all thoughts of the gloomy ruin in which he had a shelter, and to sleep, if possible, till dawn of day,

The old stronghold was a familiar place, endeared to him by the memory of many an evening ramble with Flora Warrender, with whom he had explored every turret, nook, and corner of it;

and with the dominie, too, whose old legends of the fiery Kennedies of Kilhenzie—with whom he always loved to connect his pupil—were alike strange and stirring.

"Ah, if I should indeed prove to be the Laird of Kilhenzie—I who lurk here like a beggar to-night!" said Quentin, and then the quaint figure of his tutor the dominie, with his long ribbed galligaskins drawn over the knees of his corduroy breeches, came vividly before him.

He thought of the stately Lady Eglinton, who had always ridiculed this ideal descent, and of her daughters, but chiefly his old playmate, the gentle Lady Mary, and wondered whether they would mourn when they heard of what had befallen him. But Quentin was fated never to see the fair Montgomerys more; for Lady Mary died in her youth, and Lady Lilias died far away in Switzerland, where she was interred in the same grave with her husband.

It was now, after his recent rude repulse at the farmhouse, that he felt himself indeed a wanderer and an outcast!

Wet and weary, he shuddered with cold; the loss of blood he had suffered rendered him weak and drowsy, and but for the brandy so thoughtfully given him by old John Girvan, he could not have proceeded so far on his aimless journey.

He strove hard, with his nervous excitement, to sleep, and to find in oblivion a temporary release from thoughts of the happy days of past companionship and of love-making—days that would return no more—moments of delight and joy never to be lived over again! Flora's voice, as low and sweet as ever Annie Laurie's was; her clear and smiling eyes, her ringing laugh, so silvery and joyous, were all vividly haunting him, with the memory of that dear and—as it proved—*last* kiss in the ancient avenue.

All these were to be foregone now, it too probably seemed for ever, and Cosmo, with his thousand chances, had the field to himself, nor would he fail to use them.

Despite his strong and almost filial love for Lord and Lady Rohallion, Quentin felt in his heart that he hated the cold and haughty Master as the primary cause of all his misery, and the memory of the degrading blow, so ruthlessly dealt by his hand, burned like a plague-spot on his soul, if we may use such a simile.

Gradually, however, sleep stole upon him, but not repose, for he had strange shuddering fits, nervous startings, and perpetual dreams of vague and horrible things, which he could neither understand nor realize.

Once he sprang up with a half-stifled cry, having imagined

that the hand of a strange man had clutched his throat! So vivid was this idea, that some minutes elapsed before he fully recovered his self-possession.

"The wound on my head and the consequent loss of blood cause these unusual visions," thought he, not unnaturally. "Oh, that I could but sleep—sleep soundly, and forget everything for a little time!"

The rain and the wind had ceased now, and he heard only the cawing of the rooks in the echoing ruin. He could see the morning star shining with diamond-like brilliance, but coldly and palely, through a loophole of the vault, and with a sigh of impatience for the coming day he was composing himself once more to sleep, when suddenly his hand came in contact with the fingers of *another*, protruding from the straw near him—the straw on which he was lying!

His first emotion was terror at being there with some person unknown, without other weapon than a walking-cane.

His next thought was flight from this silent companion, whom he addressed twice without receiving other reply than the echo of his own voice reverberating in the vault.

It had been no dream; a hand must indeed have been on his throat—a hand that if he stirred or breathed might clutch him again; but *whose* hand?

Prepared to make a most desperate resistance, he listened, but heard only the beating of his heart, and the drip, drip, dripping moisture from the ivy leaves without, or the occasional rustle of the straw within the vault. Fearfully he put forth his hand to search again, for a streak of dim light was glimmering through a loophole, and again his hand came in contact with the other. Cold, rigid, motionless, it was, he knew, with a thrill of horror, the hand of a corpse!

With an irrepressible and shuddering cry, Quentin sprang up, and as did so he could now see, half-hidden amid the straw on which he had slept, and literally beneath him, the dead body of a man—the features white, pale, and pinched; the hands half upraised, as if he had died in the act of resistance or in agony. A bunch of wooden ladles, porridge spurtles, and horn spoons that lay near, all covered with blood, showed that he was a gipsy, who had been slain in one of the scuffles which were of frequent occurrence between adverse tribes of those lawless wanderers, and that he had been concealed in the vault of Kilhenzie, or had crawled there to die. Quentin conceived the former to be the most probable cause for the body being there.

All that the foregoing paragraph has embraced Quentin's eye and mind took in with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, and snatching his portmanteau, he sprang out of the vault, rushed

down the slope on which the old castle stands, and shivering with disgust, affright, and the cold air of the damp morning, found himself again on the highway that led to Maybole.

The birds were singing and twittering merrily in the green hedge-rows and among the dew-dripping trees, as the August day came in. Already the roads were almost dry, and as a blue-bonneted ploughboy passed with a pair of huge Clydesdale horses afield, whistling gaily, Quentin shrunk behind a hedge, for his clothes, damped by the rain over-night, were nowise improved in aspect by the bed he had selected; and now on examining them, he perceived to his dismay and repugnance that they exhibited several spots of blood, and his hands wore the same sanguine hue. Whether these ominous marks had come from his own veins or from those of the corpse near which he had so unpleasantly lain, Quentin knew not, but in great haste he sought a runnel that gurgled by the wayside, and there with the aid of a handkerchief he removed the stains with as much dispatch and care as if they had been veritable signs of guilt and shame.

We have said that blood gouts had been found in the gipsy bivouac, and Farmer Crossgrane had mentioned incidentally that the vagrants had been fighting. They were notorious for the free and reckless use of their knives and daggers, so doubtless, the body lying in Kilhenzie was the result of a recent affray. Quentin now discovered that he had lost his walking-cane, and that in his flight from the ruin he had left it in the vault beside the dead man. He regretted this, as the cane was a present from Lord Rohallion, and had his initials graven on its silver head; but he could not overcome his repugnance sufficiently to face again his ghastly bedfellow, or to return, and so hastened from the vicinity of the old castle.

He had not, however, proceeded two miles or so, before the alarming idea occurred to him, that this cane, if found beside the dead man, might serve to implicate him in the affair; and through the medium of his active fancy he saw a long train of circumstantial evidence adduced against him, and in his ruin, disgrace, it might be death, a triumph given to Cosmo Crawford which even *he* could not exult in.

These terrible reflections gave the additional impulse of fear to urge him on.

The morning was sunny, breezy, and lovely; the sky a pure blue, and without a cloud; the light white mists were rising from the shady glens and haughs where the wimpling burns ran through the leafy copse or under the long yellow broom, when from an eminence Quentin took his last farewell of scenery that was endeared to him by all his recollections of childhood and youth, and heavy, heavy grew his heart as he did so. He could

see the glorious Firth of Clyde opening in the distance, and all the bold and beautiful shore of Carrick stretching from the high Black Vault of Dunure away towards the bluff and castle of Rohallion.

Dunduff and Carrick's *brown* hill had mist yet resting on their summits, and afar off, paling away to greyish blue, was Ailsa Craig, rising like a cloud from the water—the white canvas of many a ship, homeward-bound or outward-bound, merchantman, privateer and letter-of-marque, like sea birds floating on the bosom of the widening river. On the other side he saw the rich undulations that look down on the vast and fertile plains of Kyle and Cunninghame, and in the middle distance Maybole, amid the golden morning haze, the quaint little capital of Carrick, with its baronial tower and Tolbooth spire.

There he considered himself as certain of being recognized by some of the vintners, ostlers, or by Pate, the town piper, for the place had been a favourite turning point with him and Flora Warrender, in their evening rides; and he also knew that if he were *not* recognised, the smallness of his portmanteau suggested that the estimate which might be formed of him by Boniface, by waiters and others, would not be very high.

He therefore resolved to avoid that ancient Burgh-of-Barony altogether, and the carrier for Ayr coming up at that moment, he struck a bargain with him for conveyance thither. Remembering how Roderick Random and other great men had travelled by this humble mode of locomotion, he gladly took his seat by the side of the driver, a lively and cheerful fellow, who knew all the cottars and girls on the road, and who whistled or sang incessantly varying marches, rants, and reels, with Burns' songs, every one of which he knew by heart—and he knew Burns too, having, as he boasted, "flitted the poet from Irvine to Mossgiel in '84—just four-and-twenty years sinsyne."

He blithely shared his humble breakfast of sour milk in a luggie, barleymeal bannock and Dunlop cheese, with our hero, whose spirits seemed to rise as the morning sun soared into the cloudless sky, and he seemed to feel now the necessity of ceasing to mope, of becoming the maker of his own fate, the arbiter of his own destiny, and he determined, if possible, to "wrestle with the dark angel of adversity till she brightened and blessed him."

When left to himself, however, lulled by the monotonous rumble of the waggon wheels, he lay back among the carrier's bales, and gave himself up to day-dreams and his old trade of airy castle-building.

He had forty guineas in his pocket, he was sound wind and limb, and had all the world before him!

All tinted in rosy and golden colours, he saw the future scenes in which he was to figure—kings being at times but accessories and "supers" of the grouping. He held imaginary conversations with the great, the noble and the wealthy; he was the hero of a hundred achievements, but, whether on land, on sea, or in the air, he had not as yet the most remote idea; but they all tended to one point, for his fancies, ambitions, and hopes seemed, not unnaturally, to revolve in an orbit, of which Flora Warrender and Lady Rohallion—for he dearly loved her too—were the combined centre of attraction.

Full of himself and of the little world of fancy he was weaving, he cared not where he went or how the time passed, for he was just at that delightful and buoyant period of life when novels and tales of adventure fill the mind with sentiments and imageries that seem quite *realities;* thus, he felt assured that like some of the countless heroes, whose career he had studied at times in history but much oftener in fiction, he was destined for a very remarkable and brilliant future.

Travelling in the corner of a carrier's waggon, after sharing the proprietor's sour milk and home-baked bannocks, did not look very like it; but was not this simply *the beginning of the end?*

When again they met, how much would he have to tell Flora, commencing with the very first night of his departure, and that horrible adventure in the vault of Kilhenzie.

But how if she married the Master, with his sneering smile and cat-like eyes?

This fear chilled him certainly; but he felt trustful. Hope inspires fresh love as love inspires hope, for they must grow and flourish together; and so on and on he dreamed, until a sudden jolt of the waggon roughly roused him, and he found that it was just crossing "the auld brig o' Ayr," the four strong and lofty arches of which first spanned the stream when Alexander II. was king.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE QUEEN ANNE'S HEAD.

"Well, suppose life be a desert? There are halting-places and shades, and refreshing waters; let us profit by them for to-day. We know that we must march on when to-morrow comes, and tramp on our destiny onward."—*Thackeray.*

HAVING amply satisfied the worthy carrier, Quentin quitted the waggon, and proceeded through the bustling, but then narrow, unpaved, and ill-lighted streets of Ayr, towards one of the prin-

cipal inns, the Queen Anne's Head, the only one in the town with which he was familiar, as Lord Rohallion's carriage occasionally stopped there. It was a large, rambling, old-fashioned house, with a galleried court, ample stabling, low ceiled rooms; with dark oak panels, heavy dormant beams, and stone fire-places; wooden balconies projecting over stone piazzas, tall gables, and turret-like turnpike stairs; and a mouldered escutcheon over the entrance door showed that in palmer days it had been the town mansion of some steel-coated lesser baron.

Hotels were still unknown in the three bailiwicks of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunninghame; thus in the yard behind the Queen Anne's Head, the stage coach, his Majesty's mail (whose scarlet-coated guard bore pistols, and a blunderbuss that might have frightened Bonaparte), the carrier's waggon, the farmer's gig, and the lumbering, old-fashioned coaches of my Lord Rohallion, or the Earls of Cassilis and Eglinton, with their wooden springs and stately hammercloths, might all be seen standing side by side. Though war rendered the continent a sealed book to the English. Sir Walter Scott's poems and novels had not as yet opened up all Scotland to the tourists of Europe and Cockneydom. The kingdom of the Jameses could not be "done" then as now, by Brown, Jones, and Robinson, with knapsack on back (with Black's Guide and Bradshaw's Tables, tartan pegtops and paper collars), in a fortnight by rail and steam; hence a traveller on foot, and portmanteau in hand, was apt to be considered in the rural districts as an English pedlar or worse. Indeed, Scotland and England were then very little changed from what they had been in the days of William and Mary, and but for worthy old James, Watt they might have been so *still*

"I'll be extravagant—I'll have a jovial dinner and a glass of wine," thought Quentin, who, though pale and weary, had the appetite of a young hawk, notwithstanding all his doubts and troubles. "Which way?" he inquired of a surly-looking waiter, who stood at the inn door, with a towel over his arm; but this official, instead of replying, very leisurely surveyed Quentin from head to foot, and then glanced superciliously at his portmanteau.

His wetting over night, his repose among the straw, and the subsequent journey among the carrier's bales and butter firkins had not improved his external appearance. Quentin felt aware of this, and reiterated angrily,

"Which way—did you not hear me?"

"You've taen the wrang gate, my friend, I'm thinking," replied the waiter, shaking his head.

"Wrong way! What do you mean, fellow?"

"*Nae mair a fellow than yoursel',*" said the waiter, saucily,

"The 'Blue Bell,' doon the next wynd, or the 'Souter Johnnie, opposite the Tolbooth, will better suit ye than the 'Anne's Head. They are famous resorts for packmen and dustifute bodies."

"I mean to remain where I am. Show me to a bedroom, and order dinner for me in the dining-room," said Quentin, flushing up with sudden passion. "The best in the house, and lose no time!"

"Some military gentlemen are in the best chamber," urged the waiter, whom this manner did not fail to impress, as he lingered with his hand on the lock of a door.

"If the devil himself were there, what is it to me? Do as I order, or I will kick you into the street!"

The waiter, who, as tourists and idle travellers were then unknown in Ayr, was utterly at a loss to make out the character of this new guest, bowed and ushered him into a bedroom, after which, he hastened away, no doubt to report upon the dubious kind of occupant who had almost forced his way into No. 20.

Though the contents of Quentin's portmanteau were limited, he speedily made such an improvement in his toilet, that when he came forth he received a very gracious bow from Boniface, who had been hovering about the corridor on the watch; and he was ushered into the principal dining-room of the establishment, a long and rather low-roofed apartment, having several massive tables and oval-backed old-fashioned chairs, a gigantic sideboard, within the brass rail of which stood three upright knife and spoon cases, several plated tankards, salvers, and branch candlesticks of quaint and antique form.

The room was decorated with prints of Nelson's victories, the siege of Gibraltar, the battle of Alexandria, and other recent glories of our arms by sea and land; while over the mantelpiece was one of Gillray's gaudily-coloured political caricatures, which were then so much in vogue—for he was the H. B. and *Punch* of the Regency.

Two officers in undress uniform, with blue facings (their swords, sashes, and caps lying on the table beside them), were lounging over some brandy and water, and laughing at Gillray's not over-delicate print, while Quentin retired to a remote corner of the room, and smarting under the waiter's impertinence, now felt more lonely and depressed than he had done since leaving home. He could remember that his last reception in that very house had been so different, when, in Lady Rohallion's carriage, he and Flora Warrender had driven up to the door and ordered luncheon.

One of the military guests was a tall, weather-beaten, soldier-like man, about thirty-five years of age, a lieutenant apparently by the bullion of his epaulettes; the other was slender, fair-

haired, and rather plainly featured, and proved to be the ensign of his recruiting party, which was then beating up at Ayr. As the churlish waiter passed them after putting some wine before Quentin, the lieutenant asked, in a low voice—

"What is *he*?"

"Who, sir?"

"That young fellow in the corner."

"Too proud for a recruit—an officer, I think," said the waiter, with a grin.

"A sheriff's officer?—that boy, do you mean?"

"No, sir—in the army," whispered the waiter, with a still more impertinent grin, and retired before Quentin could hurl the decanter at his head, which he felt very much inclined to do.

He was seriously offended, but affected to look out of the window, while the two subalterns, turning their backs on him, resumed their conversation as if he had not been present.

"And so, Pimple," said the senior, "when you proposed for the Bailie's daughter you were deep in love—"

"Yes—very."

"And in debt and drink, too?"

"I was in love, I tell you," said the ensign, angrily.

"For the *twenty-fifth* time, eh?"

"Not exactly, Monkton; but you are aware that fathers have flinty hearts, and seldom see with—with—"

"With what—out with it, old fellow."

"Their charming daughters' eyes," sighed the ensign.

"True, or I should have been seen to advantage long ago. But an ensign under orders for foreign service is not the most eligible of sons-in-law."

"True—but in *my* case, at least," continued the ensign, who was quite serious, while his senior officer was purple with suppressed laughter, "in my case, as a young gentleman possessed of moderate fortune, moderate accomplishments——"

"And moderate virtue—eh, Pimple?"

"You are very impertinent, Monkton," remonstrated the other, upbraidingly.

"But truthful, my dear boy, very truthful," said the quizzing lieutenant, for half the conversation was mere "barrack-room chaff," to use a phrase then unknown; "and if old Squaretoes——"

"Who do you mean?"

"Mean? why this rich old flax-spinner, the father of your fair one. If he should come down handsomely, we fellows of the 25th would consider you quite as our factor—eh, Pimple?"

On hearing this number, which was so familiar to his ear, Quentin Kennedy turned to observe the speakers more particu-

larly, when a third officer, a very handsome man, about forty years of age, with a nut-brown cheek, a rollicking blue eye, and a hearty laugh, a square, well-built form, clad in full regimentals, scarlet-faced and lapelled with green and gold to the waist, and wearing large loose epaulettes, burst into the room, noisily and without ceremony. As he did so, he threw his arms round a very pretty chambermaid, who was tripping past with something from the sideboard, and kissing the girl, who was half pleased and half scared, he shouted in a tragi-comic manner, a passage from the *Merchant's Wife*, a now forgotten play :—

> "Woman, thou stol'st my heart—just now thou stol'st it,
> A cannon-bullet might have kissed my lips
> And left me as much life!"

"If the sour-visaged landlord catches you kissing any of his squaws"——suggested the lieutenant.

"It is a custom we learned in the Dutch service," replied the new comer, laughingly.

"Have you got the route for to-morrow, Warriston?" asked the lieutenant.

"All right," said the other, flourishing an oblong official paper; "it was brought by an orderly dragoon—here it is. His majesty's will and pleasure, &c., to civil (query, uncivil) magistrates and others, and so forth, to provide billets for the noisy, carriages for the drunken, and handcuffs for the disorderly, of three officers, three sergeants, and seventy rank and file, proceeding by Muirkirk and Kirknewton to Edinburgh—a seventy miles' march."

"Ugh!" groaned the lieutenant.

"So, Pimple, your love affair must be off like ourselves, by beat of drum to-morrow."

The ensign heaved a kind of mock sigh, and raised his white eyebrows.

"Now, waiter, quick with the dinner—the best in larder and cellar," said the captain to that churlish attendant, who laid a knife and fork for Quentin at the extreme end of the long table.

"Who is the solitary or exclusive person that is to be carved for there, half a mile off?" asked the captain.

The waiter glanced towards Quentin.

"Nonsense," said the captain of the 94th, "lay his cover with ours—absurd to dine alone at the end of this devilish long table. You'll join us, eh?"

"With pleasure," said Quentin, bowing.

"A glass of wine with you. What are you drinking?"

"Sherry."

They filled their glasses, bowed, and drank, after which Quentin came forward and joined them.

"I'm Dick Warriston, 94th. My friends, Mr. Monkton and Mr. Boyle, 25th.

"Mr. Kennedy," said Quentin, introducing himself, with a heightened colour.

Quentin soon learned from their conversation that the captain had been recruiting for the 94th, and the other two officers for the 25th, in Ayrshire, with considerable success; that they had obtained a sufficient number of men, and were under orders to march for the head-quarters of their respective corps by daybreak on the morrow. He also heard, incidentally, some of the little secrets of recruiting, and the tricks played by knowing sergeants to trepan men into paying smart-money, and so forth; that the lieutenant had been "rowed" with a threat of being summoned to head-quarters for enlisting men beneath the proper height, his sergeants having supplied them with false heels, five feet seven being the minimum for "the Borderers;" and next, that he had narrowly escaped a court-martial for sending some half-dozen O'Neils and O'Donnels (all Irish) to the regiment, as MacNeils and MacDonnels from the Western Isles.

The three officers, in their jollity, thoughtlessness, laughter, and general lightness of heart, formed a strong contrast to poor Quentin's dejection of spirit. He envied them, and asked of himself why was he not happy and merry too—why was he not one of them?

Richard Warriston, the senior, had begun life as a subaltern in General Sir Ralph Dundas's regiment of the Scots-Dutch, as they were named—the famous old Scots brigade of six battalions, which served their High Mightinesses the States of Holland from the days of James VI. to those of the French Revolution—in all the bloody wars of two centuries, bearing themselves with honour and never losing a standard, though they had captured many from every army in Europe. They volunteered, as the 94th Foot, into the British service about the end of the last century, and came back to Scotland clad in the old Dutch yellow uniform; hence Warriston's stories and memories were all of Holland and Flanders, Prussia and Austria, and many a strange anecdote he had to tell at times.

Desirous of showing the suspicious landlord and impertinent waiter how *other* persons viewed him, Quentin ordered another bottle of wine.

"The deuce!" he heard the captain whisper to Monkton; "we can't permit this mere boy to treat us to wine."

"*Two* bottles, and be sharp, waiter," said Quentin, whose pride the well-meaning officer had piqued.

"He is a regular trump," said Monkton, adjusting his napkin.

A gentleman—a phrase I prefer, added Warriston in the same undertone, as he proceeded to slice down a gallant capon; for he could perceive at once, by Quentin's bearing at the dinner-table—the truest and best test—that he knew all its etiquette and had been used to good society. As the wine circulated and reserve thawed (not that there was much of it, certainly, in the present quartett), Quentin asked Monkton if he remembered an officer named Girvan in his corps.

"Girvan—Girvan—remember him?—yes; an old quartermaster—rose from the ranks, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"He left us on a half-pay commission in the year I joined, during Lord Rohallion's lieutenant-colonelcy. (By-the-bye, his lordship lives somewhere hereabout; should leave our cards for him, but have no time.) Girvan was a queer old fellow, who always wore a yellow wig—do you know him?"

"Intimately. I have known him from my childhood," said Quentin, his eyes sparkling and heart swelling with pleasure, that he could speak of some one at home.

"Any relation of yours?" asked Monkton; and so weak is human nature that Quentin blushed that any one should think he was so, and then blushed deeper still that he was ashamed of his true and sterling old friend.

"Perhaps he is your father?" suggested the ensign, mischievously.

"Sir, I said my name is Kennedy; my father was a captain of the Scots Brigade in the French service."

"Ah—indeed!" said Warriston, becoming suddenly interested; "is he still alive?"

"Alas, sir, no!"

"Killed in action, likely?"

"He was drowned at sea, after an engagement with a French ship off the mouth of the Clyde."

"And where have you come from, that you travel thus alone?"

"I cannot say."

"Then where are you going to?" asked the ensign.

"I don't know," replied Quentin, sadly.

"Can't say and don't know!" said the captain of the Scots Brigade; "then my advice would be to stay where you are."

"That is not possible."

"You are an odd fellow—quite an enigma," said Monkton, laughing.

"Perhaps I am," replied poor Quentin, with a sickly smile.

"Do you know, my young friend, that I have been observing you closely for some time (pardon me saying so), but with some-

thing of friendly interest, and I perceive an air of dejection about you that shows there is something wrong—a screw loose somewhere," said Captain Warriston, kindly.

"Wrong?" repeated Quentin, flushing, and in doubt how to take the remark.

"Yes; I have seen so much of the world that I can read a man's face like an open book."

"And the reading of mine——"

"Is satisfactory; but there is something in your eyes that tells me you are in a scrape somehow—at home, perhaps?"

"Home!" exclaimed Quentin, in a voice that trembled, for the wine was affecting him; "I have *none!*"

The three officers glanced at each other, and the fair-haired ensign's white eyebrows went up rather superciliously.

"I find that I must talk with you, my young friend," said Warriston—"will you have a cigar?" he added, offering his case after the cloth was removed.

"Thank you—no; I am not a smoker."

In fact, Quentin had never seen the soothing "weed" in such a form, until his foe, the Master, came to Rohallion.

"Waiter, bring candles—another bottle, and then be off these decanters are empty—fill again; le Roi est mort—vive le Roi!"

"In short, Mr. Kennedy, you have run from college or home, I fear," said Monkton; "what have you been about—making love to some of your lady-mother's maids, and got into a double scrape, or what? See how he flushes—there has been some love in the case, at least."

"Were *you* never in love?" asked Quentin, who certainly did redden, but with annoyance.

"Who—I—me?—what the devil—in love!" and the bulky lieutenant lay back in his chair and fairly laughed himself crimson, either at the idea or the simplicity of the question. "I have long since learned that there is nothing so variable in the world as woman's temper."

"The Horse Guards excepted," said Warriston; "the great nobs there never know their own minds for three days consecutively; witness all the vacillation about who is to command the Spanish expedition."

"Then, Mr. Pimple," began Quentin, "have you ever——"

"Mr. Kennedy," said the ensign, angrily, "I'll have you to know, sir, that my name is Boyle—Ensign Patrick Boyle, at your service."

"So it is," said the lieutenant, choking with laughter, on perceiving that Quentin looked quite bewildered; "but we call him

Pimple at the mess for being only five feet and an inch or so He is not big enough to be a Boyle, though he is one of a tal. Ayrshire stock. Is it not so, Pat, old boy? Perhaps you are some relation of the famous chemist?"

"Which—who?"

"I mean Robert Boyle was seventh *son* of the Earl of Cork, and became *father* of chemistry. Now, don't think of calling me out, Pat, for, 'pon my soul, I wont go. The 25th couldn't do without us. You must know, Warriston, that Pimple was in the Royals before he joined us; but he had always a fancy for the Borderers. You used to pass yourself, in mufti, as a 25th man; didn't you, Pimple?—long before you had the honour to admire that blessed number on your own buttons—eh?"

Though hearty, hospitable, and jovial, to Quentin it seemed that Monkton had an irrepressible desire to quiz the ensign, even to rudeness, and the latter took it all good-naturedly enough till the fumes of the wine mounted into his head.

"But, to return to what we were talking of," said Warriston, earnestly and kindly. "Can I advise you in any way, my friend? Are you already a prodigal, who has neither a herd of promising pigs, nor the husks wherewith to feed them?"

"Excuse me entering much into my own affairs. My father, I have told you, is dead. I have no mother—no friends—to counsel me," he continued, in a tremulous voice, "and I know not whether to join the service or drown myself in the nearest river."

"The Ayr is not very deep," said Monkton, despite a deprecatory glance from his senior; "why don't you say hang yourself?"

"Well, then, or hang myself," said Quentin, bitterly.

"And the alternative is joining the service?"

"Yes."

"You pay his Majesty and his uniform a high compliment," said Warriston, with a hearty laugh, in which Quentin, seeing the ungraciousness of his remark, was fain to join; "but as for entering the ranks, you must not think of that. Why not do as I did, and many better men have done—join some regiment of Cavalry or Infantry, as a gentleman volunteer?"

A new light seemed to break upon Quentin with these words—a new hope and spirit flashed up in his heart.

"How, sir," he asked, "how, sir? Explain to me, pray."

"Zounds, man! it is very simple. A letter of recommendation to the officer commanding any regiment now under orders for the seat of war, a few pounds in your pocket to pay your way till under canvas or before the enemy, are all that is necessary."

"Thanks to a dear friend, I have money enough and to spare; but the letter——"

"We have too many volunteers already with both battalions of the Scots Brigade," said Warriston, reflectively.

"But you can give him a letter to our commanding officer," interposed Monkton.

"Why not give him one yourself, Dick?"

"Old Middleton would never believe in any person who was warmly recommended for the first vacant commission by such a fellow as I."

"Egad, you are perhaps right," said Warriston, laughing; "get me ink and paper, Pimple——"

"Boyle," said the ensign, sullenly.

"Beg pardon, Boyle, I mean—thanks. Here goes for all the virtues that were ever recorded on a rich man's tombstone." With great readiness Captain Warriston wrote a letter of introduction and recommendation for Quentin to the officer commanding the 25th Foot, in which he gave him as many good qualities as the sheet of paper could contain, and wrote of him as warmly as if he had known him from boyhood. It was unanimously approved of by all present—by none more than Quentin himself, and after it was duly sealed, he pocketed it as carefully as ever Gil Blas did his patent of nobility.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEW FRIENDS.

"Why unite to banish care?
Let him come our joys to share;
Doubly blest our cup shall flow
When it soothes a brother's woe;
'Twas for this the powers divine
Crowned our board with generous wine."—*Tannahill.*

"THE first skirmish, perhaps, and the first general action certainly, will see you an officer; you shall be one yet, my boy, and a gallant one, I hope," said Warriston, shaking Quentin's hand.

The weird sisters' prophecy was not more grateful to the ears of the Scottish usurper than these words were to Quentin Kennedy; but he asked—

"If I should be disabled before appointment?"

"Ah, the devil! don't think of that; you would get only a private soldier's pension."

"That is not very encouraging."

"'Tis better for the volunteer to be shot outright than merely mutilated. But remember, that many of our best officers have joined the army as simple volunteers. There was Lord Heathfield, the gallant defender of Gibraltar, began life as a volunteer with the 23rd at Edinburgh; and one of our Highland regiments, the 71st, I think, had as many as fifteen such cadets serving in its ranks during the American war, and splendid officers they have all become. I did not serve in America, for our corps was then in the Dutch service. The Prussian army under old Frederick was the Paradise of such volunteers, and I know one instance in which a soldier of my father's regiment was made a general in one year, by Frederick's mere caprice."

"A general!" exclaimed Monkton, who was somewhat soured by the slowness of his promotion.

"It was at the battle before Prague, and while my father, John Warriston of that ilk, then a very young man, commanded the senior battalion of the Prussian Foot Guards, that Marshal Daun forced Frederick to raise the siege and retire. As the Prussians fell back, their left wing became confused by the fury of the Austrian advance. Frederick's aides-de-camp were all killed, and he was compelled to gallop about, giving his own orders, accompanied by a single orderly, Strutzki, the old Putkammer Hussar, in whose arms he died thirty years after. The ground was rough and his horse was weary, so it stumbled suddenly and threw him at a place where the field was covered by the killed and wounded of my father's battalion, which was then retreating, but in good order. As Frederick gathered himself up, a soldier who lay near him wounded, exclaimed,—

"'Sire, sire, get a brigade of guns into position on yonder eminence, or it is all up with your left wing!'

"'How so, fellow?' asked the king, whose temper was in no way improved by his tumble.

"'Because there is an ambuscade in the valley beyond it.'

"'I have twice tried to make a stand, comrade.'

"'Try a third time, Father Frederick.'

"'Why?'

"'A third chance is ever the lucky one.'

"'Good; I'll throw forward the Putkammer Hussars, and let the Brigade of Seydlitz support them.'

"'But try the effect of a few round shot in the defile,' persisted the wounded man. 'A devil of a day this for us, Father Frederick! Macchiavelli, in his 'Art of War,' declares the invention of gunpowder a mere matter of smoke, not to be deemed of the smallest importance. Ach Gott! I wish he was

here before Prague with this Austrian bullet in the calf of his leg.'

"'What, my friend, you are a reader as well as a soldier?'

"'Yes, sire, I have had the honour to read all the works of your Majesty.'

"'A man of sense!' said Frederick, taking a pinch of rappee; 'your name?'

"'Peter Schreutzer, of Colonel Warriston's battalion of the Guards.'

"Frederick drew from one of his fingers a ring of small value, (he was not a man given to trinkets or adornment), and gave it to the soldier, saying:

"'If you escape this field of Prague, bring this ring to me yourself, comrade Peter.'

"Mounting his horse, he galloped after his retreating army, and overtaking a few pieces of artillery, he posted them on the height indicated by Schreutzer, and opened fire on the wooded defile—a measure which dislodged a great ambuscade of Marshal Daun's infantry, and saved from destruction the Prussian left wing, the retreat of which was nobly covered by the Warriston battalion.

"Three months after this, when Frederick was seated in his tent, surrounded by his staff and dictating orders, a private of the Guards limped in, supported by a stick, and kneeling presented him with a ring.

"'Ach, Gott, what is this?' said Frederick; 'Oho, 'tis my student of Macchiavelli; well, comrade, I followed your advice and saved my left wing.'

"'Thank God, who inspired me with the idea!' said Schreutzer.

"'For that day's work I name you a Captain in the Line, exclaimed the king.

"At Rosbach, where in the same year Frederick defeated the French, Peter gained his majority in the morning and his lieutenant-colonelcy in the evening. Then came the affair at Dresden, where the advice given by him at a council of war was so sound and skilful that he was appointed major-general. What think you of that, my young volunteer—in one year to have the private's shoulder-knot replaced by the aiguillette of a general officer?"

"It was talent, but strangely favoured by kingly caprice," said Monkton.

"Schreutzer succeeded my father in command of the Guards, when he fell under Frederick's displeasure and quitted the Prussian service in disgust. Remind me on the march to-morrow to tell you how that came about, for it is rather a good story."

"And now to bed," said Monkton, who had imbibed a con-

siderable quantity of wine; "at last we may put our 'beating orders' in the fire, for march is the word!"

"What are they?" asked Quentin.

"Warrants to raise men by beat of drum," explained the captain, politely. "They are originally signed by the royal hand, but copies are taken from them and signed by the secretary of state for war, and without them no officer can beat a recruiting drum anywhere. You have raised nearly a hundred men here, Dick, and must have made something of it."

"Much need," grumbled the lieutenant, making ineffectual attempts to buckle on his sword, as if he was going to bed with it. "I am Dick Monkton, of Monkton in Lothian, of course; but in name only, for those paternal acres are so covered by original sin in the shape of mortgages that never a penny comes to me; so I am compelled to live and be jolly on six shillings and sixpence per diem, less the infernal income tax; and being a fellow of a generous disposition, I am always losing my heart and my money among the fair sex."

"Good night, Mr. Kennedy," said Captain Warriston; "if you are still in the same mood of mind to-morrow, you may turn my letter to some account. The drum will beat at daybreak."

"Put your pride in a knapsack or wherever else it can be conveniently carried, my boy," said Monkton, making a fearful lurch over a chair; "volunteer and come with us to fight Nap and his Frenchmen." Then he began to sing, tipsily:

"'Since some have from ditches
And coarse leather breeches
Been raised to be rulers and wallowed in riches,
Prythee, Dame Fortune, come down from thy wheel;
For if the gipsies don't lie
I shall be a general at least ere I die!'

"Ah, damme, but we are not in the Prussian service, like that old cock, Peter Shooter, or what's his name?"

Monkton was becoming seriously tipsy, so Quentin, on receiving a warning glance from Captain Warriston, took his candle and retired to No. 20 for the night, feeling sensibly that he had imbibed more wine than he was wont to do after supper at Ronallion.

He could not sleep, however, till the night was far advanced, and the knowledge that the drum was to beat by daybreak kept him nervously wakeful, lest he might not hear it, and perhaps be left behind. The drum was to beat, and *for him!* There was a strange charm in the idea: it seemed to realize somewhat of his old day-dreams and romantic aspirations. Already he felt himself a soldier, and bound for service and adventure! How much would he have to relate when he wrote to the good old

quartermaster, announcing that he was off to join the army, and *his own* old corps, the 25th, whose memory he so treasured, though his name, alas! was long since forgotten in its ranks.

And there was Flora—dear, loving, gentle Flora. When was he to write to her, and through what channel? Ah, if he could calculate on promotion like that of Peter Schreutzer! He had only been absent from Flora a night and a day, just four-and-twenty hours, and already weeks seemed to have elapsed, (what would months—what would years seem?) while the arrival of Cosmo and long prior events seemed to have happened but yesterday. Under these circumstances, severance frequently causes the same inverted ideas of *time*, that a sudden death or other great calamity occasions.

At the moment Quentin was dozing off to sleep, and to dream of past pleasures or of future triumphs (the ensign being long since in deep slumber on a sofa), he heard his two new friends parting in the corridor after having had one bottle more.

"I say, Warriston, old boy, see me to my door, and just shove me in—there's a good fellow—here it is—thanks," stammered Monkton; "may you not have been rash in giving such a fi—fi—fiery old Turk as Middleton of ours, a letter for—for—damme, a perfect stranger—perfect stranger?"

"Not at all," he heard Warriston reply; the lad has a bearing I like, and on his own good and unerring conduct as a gentleman and volunteer must depend his chances of ever wearing these honourable badges on his shoulders. (He shook his large gold epaulettes as he spoke.) One o'clock—in three hours the drum will beat! I hope we shall have a fine day; last night the rain fell as if old Noah had hove up his anchor again. Good-night, Monkton—sleep if you can."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE YOUNG VOLUNTEER.

"When I was an infant, gossips would say
I'd when older be a soldier;
Rattles and toys I'd throw them away,
Unless a gun or a sabre.
When a younker up I grew,
I saw one day a grand review,
Colours flying set me dying,
To embark in a life so new.
Roll drums merrily—march away!—*Old Song.*

QUENTIN had been asleep—to him it seemed but five minutes, though two hours had elapsed—when he started as if he had

received an electric shock. The warning drum was being beaten loudly and sharply under his window, and soon after followed the long roll, whose summons admits of no delay even to the most weary soldier.

Half asleep and half refreshed, he sprang from bed; grey daylight was stealing faintly in, and all Ayr seemed yet a-bed, the shutters closed, the chimneys smokeless. The morning mist was curling in masses along the slopes of the uplands; the summits of the town steeples and the gothic tower of St. John were reddened by the first rays of the sun that was yet below the horizon, and the little drummer boy as he paced slowly to and fro, in heavy marching order, with a black glazed knapsack strapped on his back, and a white canvas havresack slung crosswise over his pipe-clayed swordbelt, seemed to be the only person abroad in the streets as yet.

"Rouse!" said a voice, which Quentin knew to be that of Captain Warriston, who knocked sharply on the room door; "pack your traps, Kennedy, as quickly as you can. My man will put your portmanteau on the baggage-cart. A cup of hot coffee awaits you in the dining-room. Never march with an empty stomach, unless you can't help it."

While dressing hurriedly, Quentin heard the worthy captain rousing his lieutenant, which seemed a process of some difficulty, and productive of considerable banter and vociferation. As for the ensign, he had never undressed or been in bed, so he was already awake, and accoutred with sword, sash, and gorget, and looked very pale and miserable as he swallowed his hot coffee in the twilight of the wainscoted dining-room.

The early morning air was chilly, and Quentin but half awake, felt his teeth chattering as he issued into the street. The reflection flashed on his mind that it was not yet too late to retrace his steps, and alter his intentions. But why do so? asked reason. What other course was open to him? On this morning, with his new friends and patrons—particularly Warriston, for whom he had conceived a great friendship—he felt his position was very different from what it was yesterday, when, without views, objects, or a defined future, he awoke among Gibbie Crossgrane's straw in the vault of Kilhenzie.

Already the soldiers of the recruiting parties, with their various recruits, were falling in. There were three sergeants, three corporals, three privates, three drummers, and three fifers of the 25th, the 90th (Lord Lynedoch's Greybreeks), and the 94th, with fifty-five recruits, all sturdy rustics, with cockades of tricoloured ribbon streaming from their bonnets, for that most hideous of head-dresses, the round hat, was almost unknown then among the peasantry of Scotland.

All seemed sleepy, heavy-eyed, and were yawning drowsily, as they shouldered against each other, and shuffled awkwardly while forming line and answering to their names, which were called over by Monkton's sergeant, a portly old halberdier, named Norman Calder.

"Now then, Master William Monkton, are we to march without you, or must I detail a fatigue party to tumble you out of bed?" cried Warriston, angrily, in the hall of the inn. "There goes the last roll of the drum, and all are present but *you!*"

"Ugh!" said the lieutenant, as he came forth adjusting his regimentals in the street, tying his sash, and buckling his sword-belt, and certainly not looking the better for his potations overnight; "as Scott of Amwell says, 'I hate that drum's discordant sound'—'pon my soul, I do! Such a restless dog you are, Warriston! Two hours hence would have done just as well for you, and immensely better for all, than this. Half-past four, a.m.—damme!" he added, glancing up at a church-dial which was glittering in the rising sun; "this is a most unearthly proceeding, and likely to be the death of poor Pimple. Good morning, Kennedy, my young volunteer; how do you like this kind of work?"

Quentin felt bound to say he enjoyed it very much.

"Bah! after being two hours in bed, having to tumble up in this fashion, is just as pleasant as having to go out with a dead shot in the honeymoon, or in the morning on which you have made an assignation with a pretty girl on your way home; or having a bill returned on your hands; a horse lamed when the starting bell rings, or when you are about to ride a steeple chase, or lead a charge; or any other thing that annoys you, by jingo!"

As Quentin had never experienced any of the five grievances enumerated by Monkton, he could only laugh, and ask—

"Then what about 'the lark at Heaven's gate'—has his voice no charms?"

"I'd rather hear his morning reveille when going home to my quarters."

The scene had now become very animated. The soldiers, fifteen in number, were all in heavy marching order, with only their side-arms, however, and were all sturdy, weatherbeaten fellows, with whom Quentin found himself rather an object of interest, as he had given Sergeant Calder a couple of guineas to enable them all to drink his health.

Many of the townspeople were crowding round to see them depart; and many a repentant recruit now bade a last farewell to sobbing parents, to brother, or sister, or sweetheart, all deploring the step which they deemed would lead him to ruin

and death, for there were no marshal's batons to be found in the knapsacks of the 25th or 94th, as in those of "the Corsican Tyrant," whose name was as that of a bogle for nurses to scare their children with.

While Warriston, an indefatigable officer, bustled about, getting the motley party into something like military order, and detailed a corporal and three men to take charge of the impressed cart which was to carry their baggage, with some of the soldiers' wives and children, his lieutenant lounged at the door of the Queen Anne's Head, smoking a pipe, with his shako very much over one of his wicked eyes, as he joked and bantered those about him.

"Come, landlord," said he to the sulky boniface, who made his appearance with a red Kilmarnock nightcap on his head; "give us a farewell smile, do, there's a good fellow; I'll take a kiss from your wife, too, on credit (I'm her debtor a long way already), and you may put both in the bill when we next halt here. Gad, Kennedy, these people hate the sight of a billet-order as the devil hates holy water. Those who grudge the British soldier a night's lodging should have a trial of a few Cossacks or Austrians; but it all comes of the levellers, the opposition, and the democrats, damme! So Pimple, my boy, have a dram—you have had your run of flirtation with the flax-dresser's daughter, and yet have got off without having to propose for the passée heiress, or go out about sunrise with the incensed parent."

"Yes," replied the ensign, playing with the tassels of his sash, and assuming a would-be gallant air; "close run, though —once thought I was nearly in for it."

"Ah, you're safe now; but what says the couplet?"

"What couplet? I don't know."

"It says that to you, my friend,

> "From wedlock's noose thus once by fate exempt,
> The next may prove, alas! a noose of hemp!"

The ensign was about to make an angry retort, when Warriston gave the command,

"Threes right—quick march! come, come, move off, gentlemen." The sharp drums and shrill fifes struck up merrily in the echoing streets (it was the unvarying 'Girl I left behind me'); a lusty cheer from the departing recruits was loudly responded to by the people around and from those at many a window. Others followed, loud, long, and hearty, and catching the spirit of enthusiasm from those about him, Quentin felt every pulse throb, every nerve and fibre quicken, as his heart became light and joyous, and as Warriston drew his arm through his own,

and falling into the rear of the party, they departed from the inn.

How different were Quentin's emotions now, when compared to the sense of dejection and desolation, with which, portmanteau in hand, he had entered that ancient caravanserai yesterday!

"Now for your first day's march, Kennedy," said the captain; "never mind the *past*—it is gone for ever, and is useless now."

"Unless it afford me some hint to guide me for the future."

"Right," said the captain; "faith! boy, I like your spirit and reflective turn."

The cheers of the people and the rattle of the drums, as the party marched over the new bridge of Ayr, defied every attempt at conversation. All viewed the departing band with interest, for, ere long, they would be all sent to the seat of war, and be before the enemy; and of those blue-bonneted recruits who were leaving the banks and braes of Ayr, and old Coila's hills and glens, few or none might ever return. But there was then a high spirit in all the British Isles.

The long dread of invasion from France, political and religious rancour, with years of continued victory by sea and land—the glories and the fall of Nelson and Abercrombie, the brilliant but terrible career of Napoleon following close on the atrocities of the French Revolution—all conspired to fill honest Mr. Bull's heart with a furore for military fame; he ceased to smoke the pipe of peace, and the worthy man's funny red coat and warlike pigtail were never off. Gillray's coloured caricatures of French soldiers in cocked hats and long blue coats, and of their "Corsican tyrant," in every ridiculous and degrading situation that art could conceive or malevolence inspire, filled every print-shop; and the press, such as it was, groaned alternately under puffs of self-glorification and scurrilous abuse of France and its emperor, with a systematic expression of true British contempt for anything foreign and continental. Thus the whole country swarmed with troops of every arm, and all Britain was a species of garrison, from London to Lerwick, and from Banff to Bristol.

They had been some hours on the march before Quentin thought of obtaining a very requisite piece of information—to wit, their destination, when he was informed by Captain Warriston that the three recruiting parties were to embark at Leith on board an armed smack or letter-of-marque, for Colchester barracks in England, where the three Scottish regiments were stationed.

"After I travel so far," said Quentin, "I do sincerely hope the commanding officer will approve of me."

"Rest assured that he will," replied Warriston, confidently; "he is a plain, sometimes rough old soldier, but he knows me well."

"Who is colonel of the regiment?"

"Lieutenant-General Lord Elphinstone is our colonel," said Monkton; "and our lieutenant-colonel being aged—an old Minden officer, indeed—has permission to sell out. Jack Middleton, the major, is in command at present, and as he is too poor to purchase, he is revenging himself upon the regiment."

"How?" asked Quentin, with surprise.

"Though our corps is a crack one (what corps is not so in its own estimation?) he harangues us daily on the bad discipline and disorder in which his predecessor has left us; so all have gone to school again, from the oldest captain down to the youngest fifer."

"Indeed," said the bewildered volunteer; "that is very hard!"

"So it is, damme! but old fellows who smelt powder against Washington at Brandywine, and under the Duke in Holland, at Alkmaar and Egmont-op-Zee, are now at the goose-step and pacing-stick; and woe to the private who fails to have the barrel and lock of his musket bright as silver, and his pouch bottled to perfection, so that he might shave or dress his pigtail in it. We have punishment parades, extra drills, kit-inspections, drums beating, bugles sounding all day, and often check-rolls thrice in the night, and orderlies flying all over the barracks like madmen, and all because old Jack Middleton has not enough of tin to purchase the lieutenant-colonelcy. There is little Pimple—by Jove! he'll not be in Colchester a week before the major frightens him into the measles."

"Who is to succeed the lieutenant-colonel?" asked Warriston, who laughed at the subaltern's angry description of the state of matters at head-quarters.

"The Horse Guards, those Fates who sit on high over the British soldier, alone know. Some good kind of fellow, I hope, before I rejoin; for rather than serve under old Middleton (excuse me, Warriston, as he is a friend of yours,) I'd send in my papers—go recruiting for the 2nd West India at Sierra Leone, or join that fine body of men, the York Rangers!"

"What are they?"

"A condemned corps, named for the good duke; but whose officers, damme, sleep at night with loaded pistols under their pillows, for fear of their own men."

"This is not very cheering for you, Kennedy," said Warriston, laughing heartily; "but you must not mind all Monkton says."

"No matter; I have given my word, and go I shall."

It was evident that Monkton was a little soured, for he alternately vowed himself tired of the service and then an enthusiast for it, and his corps in particular; but he was rather blue-

devilled this morning, and uncheered by the blue sunny sky and golden cornfields, the songs of the birds and mild morning breeze; he swore at the long dusty road, and grumbled at the slowness of his promotion, and that by circumstances beyond his control, after fifteen years' service and having seen much fighting, he was only a lieutenant still; "but you will learn, ere long, Kennedy," he added, "that the lieutenants are the salt of the service, and do all the actual work. Middleton will judge of you, not from others, but from yourself alone. The battalion will likely go abroad under his orders; a month more may see us before the enemy, and you in possession of your epaulettes, if some poor sub—say Pimple here—is knocked on the head."

"Thank you," said Boyle; "why not suggest yourself—one sub is the same as another."

"Not at all—not at all; it would be no use. They never hit me seriously in Flanders or Denmark, and they wont do it in Spain or North Holland."

"My old friend Middleton must have changed sorely to have become the Tartar and martinet you describe him," said Warriston; "if so, he would have suited old Frederick of Prussia to a hair."

"You told us to remind you of a story which was worth telling."

"About Frederick and my father?"

"Exactly," said Quentin.

"And how he and I came to be in the Dutch service. Well, the story has something droll in it, and though some may have heard the affair, as it found its way into the newspapers, I shall give you the version which I gave to Mr. Thomas Holcroft, when he was preparing that very light and most readable work on the Life, Times, and Works of the Great Frederick, in thirteen huge royal octavo volumes."

"Then it is to be found there?"

"On the contrary, he omitted it, not considering it quite a feather in his hero's cap."

"And the story——"

"Occurred in this way."

But the story with which Warriston beguiled a few miles of the morning march deserves, perhaps, a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PRUSSIAN GRENADIER.

"There was a criminal in a cart
A-going to be hanged;
Respite to him was granted,
And cart and crowd did stand,
To know if he would marry a wife
Or rather choose to die;
'T'other's the worst—drive on the cart!'
The criminal did reply."—*Old Ballad.*

You have all heard, I presume (the captain began), of the singular predilection which the late King of Prussia had for tall swinging grenadiers, how he raked all Germany and Pomerania to procure them, and had them formed into corps and companies sparing nothing in their equipment to add to their vast stature and warlike aspect—giving them the highest of heels to their boots, the tallest bearskin caps, and the longest and largest feathers that could be worn with safety to the neck and vertebral column. Those cross-belted Goliaths were quite a passion with him, and the first battalion of his Foot Guards, which my worthy father had the honour to command, was, no doubt, the most gigantic regiment in the Prussian army, perhaps in Europe; and to see its twelve companies of giants marching past in review order, and in open column, on that little meadow near Halle, which, from the time of the old Dessauer,* has been the training ground of the Prussian infantry, was truly a sight to marvel at and remember.

The Battalion Von Warriston was, to Frederick the Great, his pet band—the flower and pattern corps of his carefully-trained and well-developed army!

Now it chanced that one day, about the year 1780, he had been riding in the environs of Berlin, attended only by Strutzki, his old Putkammer orderly, with the gunpowder-spotted visage. As he pottered along on his old shambling horse, with a pair of large spectacles on his nose—the royal nose, I mean—one eye was fixed on his bridle and the other on Herr Doctor Johann Georg Zimmerman's then famous but dreary work on Solitude, with his flap pockets stuffed with letters from Voltaire and Hume, general orders, proof-sheets of plays, and other rubbish, he sud-

* Prince Leopold, of Anhalt Dessau, born there in 1676, the bravest of three generations who held the highest rank in the Prussian army.—*General Seydlitz's Life.*

denly saw something in the opinions of the Herr Doctor which displeased him, and jotting off a note on the subject, he despatched it by Strutzki.

Then resuming his meditations he rode on alone into the fields, smoking a pipe which had belonged to his old and faithful comrade, Seydlitz, and which he had picked up on the field of Rosbach, when that general gave his usual signal for the Hussars to charge by flinging his pipe into the air.

In a lonely place he came suddenly upon a peasant girl who possessed remarkable beauty, but that which he greatly preferred, astonishing stature. She was fully six feet, and so splendidly proportioned that Frederick reined up his horse and slung his pipe at his button-hole to observe her, which he could do for some time unobserved, as she was busy twining creepers and flowers over the front paling of a cottage named the Wilde Katze, a wayside tavern.

"Bey'm Henker!" thought he, "could I but get you married to one of my grenadiers, my long-legged Fräulein, what sons you might have! What recruits—what a progeny of giant children to recruit the next generation of my guards!"

The tall girl now perceived the king observing her, and curtseyed and laughed, for she had no idea of his rank. His horse furniture was shabby, and his own appearance was far from being stately or imposing. He stooped about the shoulders, and had a snuffy drop at the end of his nose. Over his uniform and decorations he wore a greasy old military surtout-coat of blue cloth, lined with white merino, its buttons, sleeves, and all of the plainest kind; an old battered cocked-hat, with what had once been a white feather binding the edge of it, and its rim being perforated by musket-shot; a pair of common dragoon pistols in holsters without flaps, and a pair of rusty spurs on long jack-boots that had never been blackened since they left the maker's hands, though they were greased by Strutzki every morning.

"What is your name, my handsome Fräulein?" he inquired, while lifting his hat.

"Gretchen Viborg," replied the tall beauty.

"Are you married?" he asked with increasing suavity.

"No, mein Herr."

"But anxious to be, doubtless?" said Frederick, perpetrating a wink.

Then the girl, supposing that this funny old man was about to make some proposal to her, burst into a fit of laughter, in which the king good-humouredly joined, and then asked,

"How old are you?"

"Nearly twenty, mein herr."

"Good. Are you the keeper of the Wilde Katze?"

"No—my father is."

"Would you like to earn easily a rix-dollar!"

"That will I do readily, mein herr," said the girl, coming briskly forward, for a rix-dollar was then about the value of four of our guineas.

"Then you must deliver a note for me?"

"Where?"

"In the city."

"And to whom, mein herr?"

"To the Colonel von Warriston at the palace near the Weisse Saal."

The girl, little suspecting what was in store for her, curtseyed and signified her readiness, while the king, drawing forth his tablets, and using his holster for a desk, wrote to my father in this manner:—

"My dear Colonel von Warriston,

"On receipt of this order, you are to marry *the tallest* of your grenadiers to the bearer thereof, taking particular care to have the ceremony performed in your own presence; and for the execution of this, I hold you responsible.

"Friedrich."

"P.S.—If he refuse, to pandau with him, until further orders."

"Can you read, Fräulein?" asked he, while holding this remarkable order.

"No, mein Herr."

"Good; then there is the less use for a seal, which I have not here." He placed the note and the rix-dollar in the large fair hand of the girl, and added, "I have noted this place—the Wilde Katze in my tablets, and I trust to your honesty and fidelity, Gretchen, in delivering my note without delay, as the matter is of great consequence to me, and may not prove unpleasant to yourself." And giving her a look that somehow impressed her, he put spurs to his old charger, and shambled off.

As ignorant of the contents of the letter as of the exalted rank of its writer, Gretchen Viborg was hurrying along the road towards Berlin, when she suddenly remembered that she had to keep an appointment with her lover, a remarkably jealous little fellow, who had a mill on the Spree—an assignation which the delivery of this note would completely mar! While pausing to consider this dilemma, honesty impelling her forward, and love or fear staying her steps, she met an old crone who was employed by her at the Wilde Katze, to till the ground, carry wood and do

other out-door work; and supposing it was all one *who* delivered the note, provided that it safely reached its destination, she offered her a ducat to bear it to the palace near the White Hall.

Now this old crone could read; she scanned the note, saw the whole bearings of the case, and knew who the writer was in an instant. She grinned a horrible grin of intense satisfaction, undertook the mission, and already beheld in prospect her victim —the tallest grenadier!

This cunning hag was past fifty years of age, and one of her legs was shorter than the other leg at least by half an inch; she stooped in gait and was not much more than four feet high, and was remarkably hideous, even for a continental woman, her face being a mass of wrinkles, her pointed chin covered with wiry sprouts of grey hair, while her teeth were reduced to a few yellow fangs; thus, great was my father's astonishment, when he perused the note which she gave him faithfully at the palace-gate, just as he was mounting his charger to join the evening parade of his boasted battalion of the Guards.

He was too familiar with the handwriting of the great Frederick to doubt for a moment the authenticity of the note; but he could by no means reconcile its singular contents with the extreme years and appalling aspect of the old witch who brought it, and he surveyed them alternately for some time, in utter bewilderment, till the "P.S." about Spandau, that formidable state prison in Brandenburg, made him dread a trip there in person, if the king's orders were trifled with or delayed; so turning with repugnance from the woman, who continued to grin and drop endless curtsies by his side, he summoned the sergeant-major.

"Who is the tallest of our grenadiers?" he asked.

"Otto Vogelwiede," replied the sergeant, with a profound salute.

"How tall is he?"

"Six feet, eight inches and a quarter."

"Is he on parade with his company?"

"No, Herr Colonel—on duty."

"Where?"

"With the guard at the Zeughaus." (This was the arsenal on the narrow bridge over the Spree.)

"Have him relieved by the next file for duty, and brought here immediately."

Private Vogelwiede, a sturdy Silesian campaigner, who had been wounded at Cunnersdorf, and had served under my father in all the great battles of the Seven Years' War, soon appeared at the palace, with a mingled expression of surprise and alarm on his large visage, supposing that some misdemeanour was to

be alleged against him; but this soon changed into downright horror, when my father, with a manner oddly indicative of half comicality and entire commiseration, read the king's peremptory order, and pointed to the blooming bride.

"Sturm und Gewitter!" swore the luckless grenadier in great wrath; "do you mean to say, Herr Colonel, that I am to marry this old bag of bones—this very shrivling?"

"My poor Vogelwiede, it is marry, or march to Spandau."

"Ach Gott, what an old vampire it is!" said Vogelwiede, shuddering.

"I am utterly bewildered, comrade," said my father.

"In mercy to me, Herr Colonel, tell me *what* I have done that I am to be punished thus?"

"I can't say, my poor fellow, that I understand the affair in any way; but we all know our father Frederick, and that the dose, however nauseous, must be swallowed. You must either be chained to her, or to a thirty-six pound shot in Spandau—a companion you will not get rid of, even by day."

"Der Teufel! der Teufel!" groaned the grenadier, who was actually perspiring with the idea of the whole affair, while the old woman, with her grey hairs, yellow fangs, and grimy wrinkles, grinned like some gnome sent by the Ruberzahl, or a witch from the Blocksberg; and to him it seemed as the sentence of death when my father said,—

"Send for the chaplain of the brigade, and desire him to bring his prayer-book and surplice."

"Oh, Colonel, remember Cunnersdorf, and how when a boy I held Fieldmarshal Keith dying in my arms at Hochkirchen—I was his favourite orderly," urged poor Vogelwiede, melted almost to tears; but it was espouse or Spandau, and he was married in the military chapel, to his own intense misery, to the utter bewilderment of his comrades, who knew not what to make of the affair, and to the exulting joy of the hideous old crone.

Six months after, Frederick returned from the reviews at Halle to Berlin, and desired my father to bring before him the couple who had been married by his orders.

"Ach Gott!" he exclaimed, on seeing the grinning hag and the miserable grenadier, who already looked grey and worn; "what the devil is this you have done, Herr Colonel?"

"I obeyed your majesty's singular command," replied my father, haughtily.

"Is this the woman to whom you have married Otto Vogelwiede, the premier grenadier of my Guards?"

"'Tis the woman who bore your Majesty's somewhat peremptory order, as all the corps can testify."

"Der Teufel! she is no more to compare to the one who received it, than a cup of Dresden china is to a bowl of Bunzlau clay! But I shall find her out yet, and married she shall be to the next tallest man in the battalion, so sure as Heaven hears me! and as for you, Colonel—dummer Teufel—as for you——"

"No more dummer Teufel (blockhead) than yourself, Frederick of Prussia!" exclaimed my father, furiously. "This to me? Have you forgotten my services, and that day at Amoneburg, when side by side we built up breastworks of the fallen dead, and fired over them?"

"I have not, Herr Colonel; but potztausend!——"

"Remember that I am the well-born Warriston von Warriston, which in plain Scottish means *of that ilk*, and I shall not be sworn at even by a king of Prussia."

Frederick danced with rage in his old jackboots, and dashed his Rosbach pipe upon the floor, exclaiming——

"Out of my sight, sir! Begone to your Bergschotten.* I have done with you!"

Whether Gretchen Viborg was married to the next tallest grenadier, or to the miller on the Spree, I know not, for that very day my father doffed the uniform of which he was so proud, the trappings of the 1st Guards—the same uniform in which Frederick was buried six years after at Potsdam, and resigned his commission, in which he was succeeded by Peter Schreutzer, the king's new favourite. Entering the service of the States General, he was made Colonel-in-Chief of their Scots Brigade, then consisting of six battalions, in one of which I obtained a cadetship; so you may perceive the strange chain of events by which—because Gretchen Viborg had to meet her miller, and her note found another bearer—I ultimately find myself a captain in his Britannic Majesty's 94th Foot, and in the service of my native country."

We shall have other marches of more importance to detail than the first essay of our young volunteer, who, though cheered from time to time by the merry music of the drums and fifes (which, in fact, are more inspiring and martial than any brass band can ever be), found the route weary enough by the pre-macadamite roads of those days, which were somewhat like the dry beds of mountain burns. So marching was rough and weary, yet Quentin never flinched, as they proceeded by the dark, heathy, and solitary hills of the Muirkirk-of-Kyle, by Carnwath, where a party of the Gordon Highlanders, under Logan of that ilk, joined them, and by Kirknewton, where, from an eminence, over which the roadway

* Scots Highlanders; this is a true anecdote of Frederick's caprice.

wound, he saw, for the first time, the wooded expanse of the beautiful Lothians, with the swelling outline of Arthur's Seat, the blue Firth, widening to a sea, the fertile hills of Fife, the lordly Ochil mountains, and those of thirteen counties, stretching far away even to the distant Lammermuirs, and in the middle distance, grey, dim, and smoky, the "Queen of the North, upon her hilly throne."

Then the soldiers hailed her with a cheer and a roll on the drums, announcing that there ended their last day's march.

CHAPTER XXVI.

COLCHESTER BARRACKS.

"Hail, sweet recruiting service, pleasing toil,
Ball-room campaigns, tea-parties, dice and Hoyle!
Ye days when dangling was my only duty,
Envied by cits, caressed by every beauty;
Envied by cits, so scared by every glance,
Shot at their daughters, going down the dance."

Military Magazine, 1812.

FAITHFUL to his promise, before embarking, Quentin Kennedy wrote from Edinburgh to his friend the old quartermaster, informing him of the step he had taken, of the lucky chance that had turned up for him in the Queen Anne's Head at Ayr, and that he was off to join the army as a simple volunteer; but being resolved to owe all to himself and to his own spirit, courage, and energy, and to prevent his old friend, Lord Rohallion, from doing anything, strange to say, he did not mention what regiment of the line he had chosen, though he knew well that the mystical No. 25 would have made the hearts of the veteran general and the quartermaster leap within them, while poor old Jack Andrews would be certain to get helplessly groggy in honour of the occasion.

He sent no messages or memories to any one, for the letter was indited amid the hurly-burly of Poole's gay and then well-known military coffee-house in Prince's-street, nearly opposite the North Bridge; and Captain Warriston, who was standing fully accoutred with a group of other officers of various Scottish regiments, all talking, laughing, and smoking, urged him "to be sharp," as they had not a moment to lose before the mail started, and that the smack, *Lord Nelson*, had her topsail loose; so he sent no remembrance to his dear Flora Warrender, though he sealed his letter with a sigh, and his soul seemed to go with it to her.

Sailing in an armed Leith ship, without convoy, Captain War-

riston's detachments of recruits, after beating against a head wind for two weeks, but without encountering a storm, a gale, or an enemy's ship of war, made the coast of Essex, landed at Harwich, and marched to Colchester Barracks, where each subaltern reported himself to his commanding officer, and handed over his detachment of recruits, doubtless glad to be rid of them.

How often were the last scene with Flora, those last words and those last kisses, under the old sycamores in the avenue, rehearsed over and over again.

"Ah," thought he, "could I but persuade myself that she will not entirely forget me; that some tender recollections, some soft memory of the poor lonely and friendless lad, who loved her so well, will remain in her heart, now that I am far away—gone she knows not where, but gone for ever! For ever!—then what will love or memory avail me?"

The novelty of his situation, the sudden and remarkable change of scene, the short sea voyage, the crowded and somewhat noisy barracks of Colchester, then filled with troops, preparing by hourly training, prior to their departure for the seat of war; squads undergoing manual, platoon, and pacing-stick drill, others worked up in companies, battalions, and brigades, the general bustle and light-heartedness of all around him; the new occupation, new faces and new episodes, all so different from his former monotonous life in that old castle by the Firth of Clyde—a life that seemed like a dream now—soon weaned Quentin from his sadder thoughts; and he was startled to find that, after a time, instead of brooding over Flora's image and idea perpetually, he could only think of her occasionally, and ere long, that he began to take an interest in the crowds of ladies who came to view the evening parades, to promenade with the officers who were not on duty, and to hear the bands play. "Love sickness, according to our revised medical code, is nothing more than a disarranged digestion," says a writer; so, in this year of the world—five thousand and odd, according to Genesis, and Heaven knows how many more, according to geology—no one dies of love, and, in the jovial barracks of Colchester, our friend Quentin showed no signs of the malady.

But we are anticipating.

The battalion of the 25th, or the King's Own Borderers, to which he was attached, occupied a portion of the stately and spacious barracks, which were built for the accommodation of ten thousand infantry, and had a fine park of artillery attached to them. These have all been since pulled down by an absurd spirit of mistaken economy, so that there are barely quarters for a single regiment in the town.

On the day after his arrival, anxious to create a good impression, he made a most careful toilet, and with a throbbing heart was introduced by Monkton to the officer commanding, the irritable Major Middleton, of whom he had heard so much, and to whom he presented the letter of introduction and recommendation given by his good friend Captain Warriston, who unfortunately was compelled to be absent elsewhere.

The major was a fine-looking old man, who had entered the service from the militia somewhat late in life, and hence the extreme slowness of his promotion, for he was now near his sixtieth year. He had a clear, keen, and bright blue eye; a suave, but grave and decided manner, with a deep and authoritative tone of voice. He still wore his thin hair queued, though after being reduced to seven inches in length, by the general order of 1804, by another order in 1808, the entire army was shorn of those appendages.

Fearing a mutiny, or something like it, the obnoxious mandate was countermanded the next day, but, Ichabod! the glory had departed. The regimental barbers had done their fatal work, and not a pigtail remained in the service, from the Life Guards to the Shetland Volunteers, save among a few privileged men of the old school, who stuck to it in defiance alike of taste and authority; and one of these was Major Middleton, who now appeared in full uniform, with his snow-white shirt-frill peeping through his gorget,—a badge retained till 1830—and a spotless white waistcoat covering the comely paunch, while his queue, seven inches long, with its black silk rosette, wagged gracefully at the back of his fine old head, which was powdered by time to a whiteness his servant could never achieve with the puff.

He cordially shook hands with Quentin and with Monkton, and welcoming the latter back to head-quarters, bowed them to chairs with great formality, his sword and pigtail going up and down like pump-handles the while, and then with his sturdy back planted against the chimney-piece, he proceeded to read over the letter of Warriston, Quentin in the meantime undergoing the pleasant process of being occasionally eyed askance with those clear, keen eyes—and a steady glance they had—the glance of one who had often been face to face with death and danger, in the East Indies and the West, in America, and wherever conquests were to be added to Britain's growing empire.

"My old friend Warriston recommends you highly, Mr. Kennedy—very highly indeed," said the major, as he folded the letters and again shook Quentin by the hand; "but I hope that the step you are taking has the full concurrence of all who are interested in your welfare?"

With a heightened colour, Quentin begged the worthy major to be assured that it had.

"I need not tell you, my young friend, that no ordinary bravery is required of the gentleman volunteer, for something more dashing than mere service in the ranks is necessary to win the notice of those in authority and to obtain a commission in His Majesty's service. I trust, therefore, that you have weighed well and examined your mind, and are assured that you possess the qualifications necessary for the profession—I may well say, the perilous career—on which you are about to enter."

"Qualifications, sir?" stammered Quentin, who was somewhat oppressed by the major's exordium, and began to think of Dominie Skaill's Greek and Latin roots.

"Yes; for the task before you requires a daring spirit, and a most stoical indifference to privation, to suffering, and to death, as you will have to bear a voluntary part in every dangerous or arduous enterprise, on every desperate duty; and have to volunteer for every forlorn hope and reckless adventure."

"I have weighed well, major, and I shall shrink from nothing! I long only for the opportunity of showing that I shall be—shall be what my father was before me," said Quentin, with flashing eyes and quivering lips, while he felt that these were not the kind of men to boast before.

The old major regarded the lad attentively, and said—

"Give me your hand again; I like your spirit, and hope ere long to wet your commission and welcome you as a brother officer. I enforce the strictest obedience, and some term me severe, yet I hope you will like me; for, if pleased with you, your future prospects shall be my peculiar care."

"I thank you, sir," said Quentin, with a very full heart.

"I like to regard the regiment as one large family; and when we consider the manifold dangers we dare, and the sufferings we endure together, all soldiers—officers and men alike—more than any *other* human community, have reasons for strong mutual attachment, and for feeling themselves indeed brothers. There are some of the brotherhood, however, over whom I have, at times, to keep a tight hand—yourself, for instance—Dick Monkton, eh?"

"True, major, the adjutant has come to me in his harness more than once for my sword; but, like a good fellow, you always sent it back again," said Monkton, laughing.

"Two remarks of the great General Monk should always be borne in mind by those who enter the service," said the major, who seemed a well-read and intelligent officer; "and in youth I

learned them by rote, and so have never forgotten them since. 'War, the profession of a soldier, is that of all others which, as it conferreth most honour upon a man who therein acquitteth himself well, so it draweth the greatest infamy upon one who demeaneth himself ill; for *one* fault committed can *never* be repaired, and *one* hour causeth the loss of that reputation which hath been thirty years acquiring!' Elsewhere he says, 'A soldier must be always ready to confront extremity of danger by extremity of valour, and overtop fury with a higher resolution. A soldier ought to fear nothing but *God and Dishonour*, and the officer who commands should feel for him as a parent does for his child!' And now, to become more matter of fact, Monkton will tell you, Mr. Kennedy, all about a volunteer's outfit; the plainer, and the less there is of it, the better."

"Thanks, sir; you are most thoughtful."

"You shall have to carry the arms and accoutrements of a private, and a knapsack too, perhaps, under some circumstances, till luck turns up a commission for you. In all respects you will be treated as a gentleman; but doing the duty and yielding the implicit obedience of a private soldier. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, sir," replied Quentin, cheerfully.

"As for the knapsack," said Monkton, "its weight matters little if your heart be light, my friend."

Quentin smiled, as if he meant to confront fortune boldly, and the future too.

"We are now under orders to hold ourselves in readiness for foreign service, and a fortnight at farthest will see the regiment on board ship."

"For where?" asked Monkton.

"The continent of Europe."

Quentin was glad to hear this, as he knew that his funds would not last him long in Colchester, and if reduced to his volunteer pay of one shilling per diem, current coin of the realm, what would become of him then?

"You shall dine with me at the mess to-day as my guest, Mr. Kennedy," said the major, "and I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to the corps."

"And as my guest to-morrow, Quentin," said Monkton; "it is the last time we shall have our legs under its blessed mahogany, as it is to be broken up."

"What—the table?"

"No, the mess. Adieu till the drum beats, major."

With Monkton, Quentin quitted Middleton's quarters, extremely well-pleased with his interview, convinced that the

lieutentant must have quizzed him about the major's alleged severity, and now with satisfaction feeling himself in some manner a member of the corps and of the service, a part, or portion of the 25th Foot.

His uniform, a plain scarlet coatee, faced, lapelled, and buttoned like that of an officer, with two little swallow-tails nine inches long (then the regulation), though destitute of lace or epaulettes, with his other requisites, made a sad hole in his little exchequer; and, as he sat in his room that night, and counted over the fifteen that remained of the good quarter-master's guineas, he felt something like a miser, and trembled for the future.

However, fifteen guineas were more than a subaltern's pay for a month; he was only to be two weeks in barracks, and when once in camp, a small sum with rations would go a long way. He had a subaltern's quarters assigned him, with an officer's allowance of coal, candle, and barrack furniture—to wit: one hard wood table; two ditto chairs, of the Windsor pattern; an elegant coal-box, like a black iron trough, bearing the royal arms, and the huge enigmatical letters B.O., of which he could make nothing; a pair of bellows, fire-irons, fender, and an iron candlestick, unique in form and colour.

These, with a pallet, formed his principal household gear, and for two at least of the remaining fourteen days he would have the luxury of the festive mess, the perfection of a dinner table; and thereafter, as he had been told, it would be broken up, its rich old plate and appurtenances consigned to iron-bound chests, and left behind in the barrack stores, and many who dined therewith might never meet around that jolly table more, for war and peril were before them, and the dust would be gathering on the forgotten mess chests, as the grass would be sprouting on the graves of the slain.

But little thought "The Borderers" of that—for the soldier luckily for himself, is seldom of a very reflective turn—when the orderly drum and fife struck up "The Roast Beef" in front of the mess-house to announce that dinner was being served; and there Quentin hurried, in company with the major and Monkton.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LOST LETTER.

"And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear:
And he that speaks doth grip the hearer's wrist,
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes."
Shakespeare.

As Quentin's heart foreboded, the Master of Rohallion made the best use of his time with Flora Warrender; but without much avail. Late events had engendered in her breast a spirit of obstinacy and antagonism to his proposals, together with a desire for freedom of thought and liberty of action that proved very damaging to the cause of Cosmo, and in a fit of spleen he departed for a week or two, to visit Earl Hugh at Eglinton; for though by no means a marrying man, the Honourable Cosmo, as we have stated, conceived that, in the present state of his finances, he might get through the world,—"battle the watch," as he phrased it,—pretty well, if he obtained the lands of Ardgour, the accumulated rents of which had been so long under trust, and would prove to him a very lucky accession, even though encumbered by Flora Warrender as a wife or appendage. But on obtaining the command of a regiment of the line, with all the perquisites which then attended that appointment, he did not despair of ultimately getting rid of his *bêtes noires*, the children of Judah.

Thus his cold hauteur and nonchalance on one hand, and Lady Rohallion's steady resolve on the other to bend her to their will, together with sorrow for Quentin, whom she viewed as a victim, rendered Flora Warrender inexorable in her opposition, and, as Lord Rohallion said, their own mismanagement still continued to spoil the whole affair.

After an absence of some days Cosmo returned, and resolved to make a last effort with Flora, and thought to pique her by praises of the fair daughters of Earl Hugh, the Ladies Jane, Lilias, and Mary; but this artifice was so shallow that she merely laughed when she heard him, while poor simple Lady Rohallion feared that his heart had really been affected in another quarter.

"And so you really admire Lady Lilias Montgomery, our old friend's daughter?" she asked, as they sat in the bay window of the old yellow drawing-room.

"I always did so," replied the Master; "there is certainly an exquisite air of refinement about the girl, and she has a splendid seat on horseback."

"Her air is peculiar to all the Montgomerys; I remember me well of Earl Alexander, who was shot by the villain Mungo Campbell, and he had the air of a prince! But what do you think of Lady Lilias?"

"Think?" pondered Cosmo, dreamily, as he lay back in a satin fauteuil, and gazed on the far-stretching landscape that was steeped in sunny haze.

"Yes," said his mother, anxiously.

"I think she has *not* the lands and rental of Ardgour, or their equivalent."

"Cosmo, Cosmo," said Lady Rohallion, with asperity, "I would have you to love Flora for herself, and herself only."

"My dear mother, you old-fashioned folks in Carrick here are sadly behind the age; but I am booked for foreign service, and a wife would only prove a serious encumbrance after all."

"Flora Warrender may change, or, what would be better, she may know her own mind before, or long before, you come back."

"Perhaps," sneered Cosmo; "love of change or change of love effects miracles in the female heart at times. Till *then*, we must content ourselves with drawing stakes, while I march off, not exactly with the honours of war, but with the band playing 'the girl I left behind me'—very consoling it is no doubt, damme!"

"Do you really love that girl, Cosmo?" asked the old lady, looking up from a mysterious piece of needlework, with which she always believed herself to be busy, and mistaking Cosmo's wounded self-esteem for a softer sentiment.

"Love her—yes, of course I do—that is, well enough, perhaps to marry her, as marriage goes now-a-days; but" (and here he spoke with concentrated passion) "I *hate* the beggar's brat who has come between her and me!"

"Oh, Cosmo, don't say so, I implore you!" said Lady Rohallion, sighing bitterly; "after all the past, and with the doubt and mystery that overhang his future, I cannot bear to hear our lost Quentin spoken of thus."

"Poor chick—our lost darling!" said Cosmo; "but after seventeen years spent in the Household Brigade, to be outmanœuvred by a country Dolly such as Flora and a fellow like this Quentin of yours, is simply and decidedly absurd!" he added, with fierce grimace, while his father, who entered at that moment and overheard him, laughed heartily at his chagrin.

And now about this time John Legate, the tall spindle-shanked

running footman, brought, among other letters from Mayhole, one for the Master, endorsed "on His Majesty's Service," and another for Mr. John Girvan, so worn, frayed, and covered with postage-marks, that the good man was quite puzzled by its appearance, and thrice wiped his spectacles to decipher all the names and dates, until the dominie, who was seated by him, beside a friendly jug of toddy, suggested that candles should be procured, as the twilight was deepening into night, and the interior of the missive would resolve all their doubts and expectations.

It was opened, and proved to be from Quentin Kennedy—from Quentin, and dated at Poole's Military Coffeehouse, Edinburgh, more than a month back! He had addressed it simply to the Castle of Rohallion, and it had gone by mail and stage over all Britain, until some chance hand, endorsing "try Ayrshire," sent it to its destination.

"Awa soldiering as a volunteer! Wae is me, wae is me, but this is pitiful, exceedingly pitiful!" exclaimed the dominie, lifting up his hands and eyes; "think of my wasted latinity!"

"Dominie, you are a gowk! I like the lad's spirit, and respect it," said the quartermaster, whose eyes were so full that he could scarcely peruse the letter; "but he's ower young for such hard work. I mind well of what I had to go through in my time in Germany and America."

"Ower young, think ye?"

"But he is hardy and manly."

"According to Polybius, in his sixth book, the Romans could be soldiers, indeed, *had* to be soldiers, in their seventeenth year."

"Bother your Romans! fill your jug—a steaming brimmer, and drain it to Quentin's health and success, and his safety too."

Then standing up erect, the quartermaster drained his jug at a draught, a process promptly followed by the dominie; but after what they had imbibed already, it had the effect of rapidly multiplying the lights and other objects, and also tended to make their utterance thick and indistinct.

"I must away to my lord wi' this braw news," said Girvan; "the puir lad! he didna deceive me after all, but wrote when he had time. And this Captain Warriston who befriended Quentin—(God bless him, say I!)—befriended him, dominie, because he was a soldier's son. Ah, dominie, dominie!—that is the *free-masonry of the service*, which makes all in it brothers—the true spirit of camaraderie! Another jorum to the health of this captain, whoever he be."

"Bring forth the *amphora*—the greybeard o' whisky; but John, John," said the dominie, shaking his old wig sententiously, "what saith Habakkuk?"

"How the deevil should I ken? and it is but little I care," added the irreverent quartermaster.

"He saith, 'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth a bottle to him, and maketh him drunken,'" said the dominie, balancing himself by turns on each leg; and opening and shutting each eye alternately.

"Drunken, you whaislin precentor?"

"Yea, as thou, wicked quartermaster, hast made me, and when we are close on the hour 'o' night's black arch the keystone,' as Muir Burns has it."

"Never mind, dominie, the night is dark, and nacbody will see you," stammered Girvan; "stick your knees into the saddle—gie your powny the reins, and he'll take you straight home, as he usually does. But I must away to my lord with this news; and so good-night. Now, dominie, steady—eyes front, if you can!—hat cocked forward, cockade over the left eye—queue dressed straight with the seam of the coat—head up, little finger of each hand on the seam of the breeches—left foot thrown well out—pike advanced—forward, march! and hip, hip, hurrah for Quentin, the volunteer!"

And arm in arm the two old topers quitted the "snuggery," the dominie to go home in care of his pony, and his entertainer to seek Lord and Lady Rohallion before they retired for the night.

That sure tidings had come of Quentin's safety occasioned the noble and worthy couple sincere joy.

"So, so," said the old lord; "it is as I feared—the poor lad has joined the service."

"As a volunteer," added Girvan, with great empressement.

"As a poor, friendless volunteer, Winny; think of that, when one line from me to the Duke of York would give him an ensigncy. We have cruelly mismanaged this boy's prospects! I could that we knew the regiment he has joined; but, strange to say, he omits to mention it."

In his joy and hurry, the quartermaster had never thought of the omission.

"This officer, Warriston, whom he mentions, must be a right good fellow, and his name may be a clue. We shall search the Army List to-morrow, John; till then, good-night."

Tidings that a letter had come from Quentin at last, spread through the castle like wild-fire, and it was the first news with which Flora's maid greeted her, when, an hour before the usual time, she tapped on her bedroom door, and, as the reader may imagine, the abigail was despatched at once to the quartermaster for a sight of the all-important letter, which she took care to

read before it reached the hands of her impatient young mistress. Flora read it over twice or thrice, examining all the successive postmarks which indicated its devious wanderings. In the text there was no mention of her. She was disappointed at first, but after reflecting, she deemed that his silence was delicate and wise.

There were great and genuine rejoicings in the servants'-hall, where the gamekeepers, grooms, the gardeners, Mr. Spillsby the butler, John the running-footman, the housemaids, and Old Andrews, made such a clatter and noise that they kindled the somewhat ready wrath of the Master, who rang his bell furiously to "still the infernal hubbub," as he lay a-bed reading his missive, which was not quite to his taste; and, as for the veteran Jack Andrews, he got most disreputably tipsy by imbibing a variety of drams to Quentin's health in Mr. Spillsby's pantry; and, in short, the quartermaster's letter proved a nine days' wonder in Rohallion.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LAST REJECTION.

"Ae fond kiss and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee;
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?"—BURNS.

IGNORING the source or cause of the excitement among the household, Cosmo lounged into the breakfast-parlour, where the silver urns were hissing amid a very chaste equipage, and where the September sun was shining in through clusters of sweet briar and monthly roses, and as he seated himself he handed to his father a long official-like document, at the sight of which his mother changed colour, and even Flora, who looked charming in her smiling radiance, lace frills, and morning dress of spotted white muslin, lifted her dark eyelashes with interest.

"What's the matter, Cosmo?—your leave cancelled?" asked Rohallion.

"Oh no, my lord—nothing so bad as that."

"A summons from head-quarters, I see."

"Something very like it," drawled Cosmo; "read it to the adies. Spillsby, some coffee—no cream."

The letter ran briefly thus:—

"Horse Guards, &c. &c.——

"Sir,—I have the honour to acquaint you, by direction of His Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, that it is now in his power to appoint you to one of the second battalions lately raised for the line and for immediate foreign service, provided that within a fortnight you are prepared to assume the command, in which case your name shall appear in the next Gazette.

"I have the honour to be, &c. &c.——

"Major the Hon. C. Crawford,
&c. &c."

"A fortnight!—are we to have you only for a fortnight, my dear, dear Cosmo?" exclaimed Lady Rohallion, all her maternal tenderness welling up at once.

"You will not, I fear, have me so long, my dear mother," said he; "and you, Flora, he added in a low voice, as he purposely held his plate across her for a wing of grouse; "and you——"

"Give you full leave to go, with my dearest wishes, and your heart unbroken. Come, Cosmo," she added in the same low voice, and with a soft smile; "let us part friends, at least."

Cosmo's eyes seemed to shrink and dilate, while a cold and haughty smile spread over his otherwise handsome features, as he turned quietly to discuss his grouse, and said to the butler,—

"Spillsby, tell the groom to have a horse saddled for my man—take Minden, the bay mare—as I must despatch a letter to Maybole within an hour."

Breakfast was hurried over in silence and constraint; then Cosmo, kissing the brow of his mother, who was already in tears,—for the only real emotion that lingered in the Master's heart was a regard for his mother—played with the silk tassels of his luxurious dressing-gown, and lounged into the library to write his answer to the military secretary, and profess himself to be completely, as in duty bound, at the disposal of His Royal Highness, and proud to accept the command offered him.

He soon penned the letter, and sealed it with the coronet, the shield *gules* and fess *ermine* of Rohallion, muttering as he did so,—

"The line—the line after all; a horrid bore, indeed, to come down to that!"

He threw open his dressing-gown, as if it stifled him, almost tearing the tasselled girdle as he did so, and planting his foot on the buhl writing table, lounged back in an easy-chair, where he strove to read up Sir David Dundas's "Eighteen Manœuvres," and fancied how he would handle his battalion without clubbing the companies or bringing the rear rank in front; by taking them

into action with snappers instead of flints, as old Whitelock did at Buenos Ayres, or committing other little blunders, which might prove very awkward if a brigade of French twelve-pounders were throwing in grape and canister at half-musket range.

Soothed by his pipe, and by the silence of the place, and by the subdued sunlight that stole through the deep windows of that old library, so quaint with its oak-shelves of calf-bound and red-labelled folios and quartos, its buhl cabinets, and square-backed chairs of the Covenanting days, its half-curtained oriel window, through which were seen the ripe corn or stubble fields that stretched in distance far away to the brown hills of Carrick. Soothed, we say, by all this, Cosmo dawdled over the pages and the diagrams of the famous review at Potsdam for some time before he became conscious that Flora was seated near him, busy with a book of engravings.

Then begging pardon for his pipe and his free-and-easy position, a bachelor habit, as he said, he arose and joined her. Leaning over the back of his chair, as if to overlook the prints, while in reality his admiring eyes wandered alternately and admiringly over her fine glossy hair, the contour of her head, and little white ears (at each of which a rose diamond dangled), and her delicate neck, which rose so nobly from her back and beautifully curved shoulders, he said in a low voice, and with considerable softness of manner, for him at least,—

"'Pon my honour, friend Flora, I believe you really begin to love me, after all."

"How do you think so, or why?" she asked, looking half round, with her bewitching eyes full of wonder and amusement.

"Because we always quarrel when we meet, and that is called a Scots mode of wooing, isn't it?"

"So our nurses used to say, long ago."

"And were they right?"

"Now, dear Cosmo, let us talk of something else, if you please," she urged pleadingly.

"Why so?"

"A dangerous topic has a strange fascination for you."

"Dangerous?"

"Unpleasant, at least," said Flora, pettishly.

Cosmo flung the "Eighteen Manœuvres" of Lieutenant-General Dundas very angrily and ignominiously to the extreme end of the library, and folding his arms stood haughtily erect before Flora, whose bright eyes were fixed on his, with a smiling expression of fear and perplexity combined.

"Can it be possible," he began, "I ask you, can it be possible, Miss Warrender——"

"Oh, you are about to address me officially—well, sir?"

"Can it be possible, Flora, that you still love this unkno protégé of my foolish mother—this nameless rascal, who has run away, heaven knows where? By-the-bye, I wonder if Spillsby has overhauled the plate chest since he went!"

Flora was silent, but his *brusquerie* and categorical manner offended her, and filled her eyes with tears.

"This weeping is enough," continued the exasperated Cosmo, who, though he had no great regard for Flora, felt his self-esteem—which was not small—most fearfully wounded; "you *do* love him."

"And what if I do?" she asked, very quietly, but withal rather defiantly.

"Very fine, Miss Warrender—very fine, 'pon my soul! That old jade, Anne Radcliffe, with her 'Romance of the Forest,' her 'Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne,' and this new Edinburgh fellow, Scott, with his 'Marmion,' and so forth, have perfected your education. Your teaching has been most creditable!"

"This taunting manner is not so to you," replied Flora, resuming her inspection of the book of prints.

"Oho! we are in a passion again, it seems?"

"Far from it, sir—I never was more cool in my life," said she, looking up with a wicked but glorious smile.

"And where has this runaway gone? His friends in the servants' hall heard something of him last night or this morning, if I may judge from the pot-house row they made."

"He has gone into the army," replied Flora, with a perceptible modulation of voice.

"The army!" replied Cosmo, really surprised; "enlisted—for what?—a fifer or triangle boy?"

"No," replied Flora, curling her pretty nostril, while her eyes gleamed dangerously under their long thick lashes.

"For what, on earth, has he gone then?"

"A gentleman volunteer."

"A valuable acquisition to His Majesty's service!" said Cosmo, laughing, and, greatly to Flora's annoyance, seeming to be really amused; "do you know, friend Flora, what a volunteer is?"

"Not exactly, sir," said Flora, again looking down on her book of prints with a sigh of anger.

"Shall I tell you?"

"If you please."

"We never had any in the Household Brigade—such fellows are usually to be found only with the line corps."

"Ah—with corps that go abroad and really see service—I understand."

"Miss Warrender, the Guards——"

"Well, *what* is a volunteer?" asked Flora, beating the carpet with a very pretty foot.

"A volunteer is a poor devil who is too proud to enlist, and is too friendless to procure a commission; who has all a private's duty to do, and has to carry a musket, pack, and havresack, wherein are his ration-beef, biscuits, and often his blackball and shoebrushes; who mounts guard and salutes *me* when I pass him, and whom I may handcuff and send to the cells or guardhouse when I please; who is not a regular member of the mess and may never be; who gets a shilling per diem with the chance of Chelsea, a wooden leg, or an arm with an iron hook if his limbs are smashed by a round shot; who is neither officer, non commissioned officer, nor private—neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring (to use a camp phrase). Oh, Flora, Flora Warrender, can you be such a romantic little goose as to feel an interest in such a fellow as I have described?"

Mingling emotions, indignation at the Master's insulting bitterness, pity for Quentin, and pure anger at the annoyance to which she was subjected, made Flora's white bosom heave as she quietly turned her eyes, with a flashing expression, however, upon the cat-like regards of the sneering questioner, and said,—

"Who are you, sir, that would thus question or dictate to me?"

"Who am I?" he asked, while surveying her through his glass with amusement, perplexity, and something of sorrow in his tone.

"Yes, sir—who are you?"

"I am, I believe, Cosmo, Master of Rohallion, and Colonel to be, of a very fine regiment; so I can afford to smile at the pride and petulance of a moon-struck girl."

"Oh, how unseemly this is! Whatever happens, let us part friends," said she politely, perhaps a little imploringly.

"So be it," said he, kissing her hand as she retired.

"Now, the sooner I am off from this dreary paternal den the better. Away to London at once. Andrews!—Jack Andrews," he shouted, in a tone almost of ferocity; "show me the last newspapers." They were soon brought, and Cosmo's sharp eyes ran rapidly over the advertisements. "Let me see," he pondered, "travelling by mail is intolerable; one never knows who the devil one may be boxed up with for a week, a fever patient or a lunatic, perhaps! The smacks are crowded with all manner of rubbish, travelling bagmen, linesmen going home on leave, sick mothers and squalling babies. What is this? The good ship *Edinburgh*, pinck-built, near the new quay at Leith, sails for

England without convoy—carries six 12-pounders—master to be spoke with daily at the Cross—to be *spoke* with. Faugh! what says the next advertisement? 'A widow lady, who is to set out for London next week in a post-chaise, would be glad to hear of a companion. Enquire at the *Courant* office, opposite the Old Fishmarket-close, Edinburgh.' Egad! the very thing—widow lady—hope she's young and good-looking. I'll answer *this*!"

Such advertisements in the London and Edinburgh papers were quite common in those days, when travelling expenses were enormous.

He replied to it, and departed from Rohallion in a great hurry soon after. Whether with a fair companion or not, we are unable to say.

We hope so, and that on the journey of about four hundred miles to London, the amenity of the fair widow consoled him for the final rebuff he met with from Flora Warrender.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MESS.

"He is more fortunate! Yea, he hath finished;
For him there is no longer any future.
His life is bright; bright without spot it was,
And cannot cease to be.
O 'tis well with him,
But who knows what the coming hour,
Veiled in thick darkness, brings for us!—*Wallenstein.*

THE mess-room of the 2nd battalion of the 25th Foot, in old Colchester Barracks, was a long room, and for its size rather low in the ceiling, which was crossed by a massive dormant beam of oak. Good mahogany tables occupied the entire length of the room, with a row of hair-cloth chairs on each side thereof. It was destitute of all ornament save a few framed prints of the popular generals of the time, such as the Duke of York, so justly known as "the soldier's friend;" Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who fell in Egypt; Sir David Dundas, the hero of Tournay; Sir David Baird, flushed with triumph and revenge, leading on his stormers at Seringapatam; the sad and gentle Sir John Moore, and others.

The room was uncarpeted, but the number of tall wax candles, in silver branches, on the long table, and in girandoles, on the mantlepiece and side board, together with the quantity of rich plate that was displayed, and the brilliance of the assembled com-

pany, about thirty officers in full uniform, their scarlet coats all laced and lapelled to the waist with blue barred with gold, and all their bullion epaulettes glittering, had a very gay appearance; thus the general meagreness of the furniture passed unobserved.

At mess the coats were then worn open, with the crimson silk sash inside and over a white waistcoat. Nearly all the seniors still indulged in powdered heads, while the juniors wore their hair in that curly profusion introduced by George IV., then Prince of Wales. A few who were on duty were distinguished by the pipe-clayed shoulder-belt and gilt gorget, which was slung round the neck by a ribbon which varied in every corps according to the colour of its facings.

Amid much good humour and a little banter, they seated themselves, and the president and vice-president—posts taken by every officer in rotation—proceeded to their tasks of dispensing the viands.

Quentin was seated next his host, Major Middleton, about the centre of the table, and he surveyed the gay scene with surprise and pleasure, though looking somewhat anxiously for the face of his kind friend Warriston, who was to be a guest that evening, but was still detained on duty.

To him much of the conversation was a perfect mystery, being half jocular and half technical, or that which is stigmatized as "shop." It chiefly ran on drills, duties, and mistakes—how badly those 94th fellows marched past yesterday, and so forth; while the standing jokes about Buckle's nag-tailed charger, Monkton's old epaulettes, Pimple's last love affair, and the old commandant's state of mind on discovering that Colville had a fair visitor in his guard-room, seemed to excite as much laughter as if they had all been quite new, and had not been heard there every day for the last six months.

Some rapid changes would seem to have taken place at the headquarters of the 2nd battalion. The old colonel of whom Quentin heard on the march from Ayr, had sold out, and a Major Sir John Glendinning come in by purchase. One Gazette contained a notice of this, and a second announced the death of Sir John in a duel with an officer of the Guards. The lieutenant-colonelcy was thus again vacant, and all present, even Monkton, hoped the step would be given in the regiment, that old Major Middleton would get the command; thus all would have a move upward, and who could say but Quentin Kennedy might obtain the ensigncy which would thus be rendered vacant? But poor Middleton had served so long, and had seen so many promoted over his head, that he ceased to be hopeful of anything.

Some of the youngsters drank wine again and again with our

young volunteer, a spirit of mischief being combined with their hospitality. To "screw a Johnny Raw" was one of the chief practical jokes at a mess-table then, as it is at some few still; but Middleton's influence soon repressed them.

The cloth removed, the regimental mull, a gigantic ram's head, the horns of which were tipped with cairngorms and massive silver settings, was placed before the president, and was passed down the table from left to right, according to the custom of all Scottish messes. The mull was the farewell gift of Lord Rohallion, and the gallant ram was the flower of all that he could procure in Carrick.

The proposed expeditions to Spain and Holland soon formed the staple topics for discourse and surmise; but none present had the slightest idea on which of these the regiment might be despatched.

When Quentin looked round that long and glittering mess-table, and saw so many handsome, pleasant, and jovial fellows, all heedless and full of high spirits, who welcomed him among them, spoke cheeringly of his prospects and drank to his success, he felt a pang on reflecting that he must owe it to the death in battle of *one* at least among them!

There was a plenty of laughter, fun, and joking. Many of those present were more or less dandies; but the military Dundreary, the—to use a vulgar phrase—"heavy swell," who affects the style of Charles Mathews in "Used Up," was unknown in the days of the long, long war with France, for men joined the army to become soldiers indeed. Their predecessors were usually killed in action, and they had the immediate prospect of finding themselves before the bravest enemy in the world.

The solemn regimental snob, or yawning yahoo, whose private affairs became so "urgent" in the Crimea; the parvenu Lancer or lisping Hussar, cold, sarcastic, and unimpressionable, are entirely the growth of the piping times of peace, and to them the stern advice of the old officer of other times, "Be ever ready with your pistol," is meaningless now.

"I joined the service as a volunteer," said Rowland Askerne, the burly captain of the Grenadiers—as his massive gold rings announced him—turning to Quentin.

"Were you long one?"

"Longer than I quite relished," replied Askerne, laughing.

"Indeed!" said Quentin, anxiously.

"Yes—four years; and long years they seemed to me."

"On foreign service?"

"Of course; and pretty sharp service, too, sometimes. I carried a musket with Middleton's company at the capture of Corsica, in

'95, and again with the Gordon Highlanders on the recent expedition against Porto Ferrajo, in Elba, where I had the ill-luck to be the only man hit. A French tirailleur put a ball through my left leg, but he was shot the next moment by my covering file, Norman Calder, now a sergeant. Some of the Irish in '98 proved better marksmen than the French; they knocked a number of ours on the head, so I won my epaulettes fighting against the poor fellows under General Lake, at Vinegar Hill. I had many a heart-burning before they promoted me (by *they* I mean the Horse Guards); and I swore that when the day came that they did so, I would tread on my sash and turn cobbler; but I had not the heart to quit, so I wear my harness still—a captain only—when I should be a lieutenant-colonel by brevet, at least; but Middleton's case is a harder one than mine, for he has been longer in the service."

"We are most likely bound for North Holland," said the adjutant; "and there many an evil will be ended."

"The French are in great strength there, and hard knocks will be going," added Monkton. "Many among us are fated perhaps to find a last abode among the swamps of Beveland; so, if you escape, Kennedy, you must certainly gain your pair of colours, with five shillings and threepence per diem—less the income-tax—to spend on the luxuries of life—damme!"

"Glad to hear we are to be off so soon, Monkton," said a smart, but somewhat blasé-looking young lieutenant, "for we have a most weary time of it here in Colchester. The course of drill—drill, always drill—with club, sword, or musket, and the whole routine of barrack duty, with inspections and guards, are decidedly a bore!"

"What the deuce would you have, Colville?" asked the adjutant, bluntly. "What did you come here for?"

"I came to be a soldier," replied the "used-up" sub, with a suave smile.

"To be a soldier?"

"Yes—not to doze life away by marching to and fro at the goose-step, in that gravelled yard, or by lolling over the window in shirt-sleeves, to save my shell-jacket. Where are all the castles I built——"

"To storm, eh?" asked Buckle, glancing uneasily at the commanding officer, who was forming his walnut-shells in grand-division squares, for the edification of the second major.

"Yes—I had hoped to have achieved something decidedly brilliant ere this."

"Console yourself, Colville, and pass the port. Ah, you consider yourself sharp—up to every sort of thing—a common delu-

sion with young fellows of your age; but ten years more soldiering, and the rubs of life between your twenties and thirties, to say nothing of those afterwards, will cure you of thinking so. Believe me, Colville, wherever we go, we shall find plenty of desperate work cut out for us all. Well, Monkton, in recruiting, you could not pick up an heiress—eh?"

"No. Heiresses are not to be found under every hedge."

"In Scotland, especially."

"I have considered the matter maturely, my dear friend," said Monkton, in his bantering tone, "and have come to the sage conclusion that, if a man marries, with his pay only, he had better hang; if, otherwise, and his wife have a long purse, and expectations, to enhance the charms of her blushes and orange-buds, let him send in his papers, and quit; so the service loses your Benedict any way."

"Purse, or no purse," said Colville, "as Paragon says in the comedy we acted at York, 'when you see *my* wife, you shall see perfection, though I never met the woman I could conscientiously throw myself away upon.'"

"Pimple, we hear, has been romantically tender on a flax-spinner's daughter; and that the route came only in time to save him from the arms of Venus for those of Bellona, and he is burning now to forget his loved and lost one amid the smoke of battle," said Colville, with a tragic air. "Ah, there were great men even before old Agamemnon."

"But Pimple shall show us, by his glorious example, that we have at least one greater since."

"Let me alone, Colville, and you also, Monkton," said Boyle, becoming seriously angry; "I hope to do my duty with the best among you."

Attention was speedily drawn from the irritation of the little ensign by the entrance of Warriston, who apologized briefly for being late, having been detained on duty at the quarters of his own regiment; then drawing a chair near his friend Middleton, he handed to him the last number of the *London Gazette*, pointing to a paragraph therein, and leisurely filling his glass with claret, passed the decanters.

When Middleton read the passage referred to, a crimson flush passed over his features, and he crushed up the paper as if an emotion of rage and pain thrilled through him.

"What is the matter, major?" asked half-a-dozen voices; "nothing unpleasant, I hope?"

"The lieutenant-colonelcy has been given *out* of the regiment," replied Middleton, with his brows knit, while his hand still crushed up the paper; then, as if remembering himself, he smiled, but very disdainfully.

"He must have seen much service to be appointed over *your* head," said Monkton.

"Service—yes, the Guards fight many bloody battles about Hounslow, Hyde Park, and the Fifteen Acres," replied the justly exasperated field-officer. "Here is my advancement stopped by the promotion of a fellow who has some petticoat interest about Carlton House, whose cousin is groom of the backstairs, and who has been compelled to 'eschew sack and loose company;' so he comes from the Household Brigade to the Line, and may go from the 25th to the devil, perhaps."

"Be wary, my good friend—be wary," said Warriston, glancing round the table hastily.

"And *who* is he?" asked several, full of curiosity.

"The son of a general officer—the Master of Rohallion."

On hearing this name, Quentin felt as if petrified! Here, even here, his evil spirit seemed to be following him!

"It is an old name in the regiment," said Monkton.

"Yes," replied the major; "his father was a gallant officer; I was his subaltern in America; but here it is;" and he read, "'25th Foot; to be Lieutenant-Colonel, Major the Honourable Cosmo Crawford, from the 1st Guards, *vice* Sir John Glendinning, deceased;' so he comes over us, in virtue of that court rank which is one of the worst abuses of our service."

"Promotion is always slow among the Household troops, so they indemnify themselves at the expense of the line," said Warriston, in answer to a question of Quentin's; "every rank among them having a grade above us; but take courage, my good old friend, this kind of thing is not likely to happen again."

With a smile that grew scornful in spite of himself, the worthy old major strove to conceal the bitterness of his heart, though all present condoled with him on his disappointment and hard usage by the powers that be; and for reasons known to himself alone, none shared his chagrin more than Quentin Kennedy.

He had been formally enrolled as a member of the regiment, and had ordered his equipments for it; his name, as a volunteer, had been sent by Middleton to Sir Harry Calvert, the Adjutant-General, at the Horse Guards, that he might obtain the first vacant ensigncy (*subject to the approval of the commanding officer*), and that he might have his passage abroad provided, either by the commissariat department, or by the commandant at Hillsea, near Portsmouth. His own honour, and all the circumstances under which he stood, prevented him from quitting; but *now*, what hope had he of comfort or prosperity in remaining? His very chances of advancement depended on the veto, whim, and caprice of this Master of Rohallion, his bitterest enemy! Of what avail would now be the endurance of campaigning, the

hardship of serving as a volunteer, and risking all the perils of war?

Perhaps Flora Warrender may come with him as his bride, was the next idea; and it added greatly to the bitterness of the others.

That night Quentin slept but little, and he seemed barely to have closed his eyes when he heard the drum beating the assembly.

Then he sprang from bed just as the grey dawn was breaking, and proceeded hastily to dress, remembering to have heard last evening that, at daybreak, the regiment was to have a "punishment parade," which, to his uninitiated ears, had a very unpleasant sound.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PUNISHMENT PARADE.

"Most worthy sergeant, I have seen thee lead,
Where men among us would be slow to follow;
Udsdaggers, yes! By trench and culverine,
Where men and horses too, lay foully heap'd
On other; and hath it come to this, good sergeant?
Beshrew my heart!—a prisoner and afeared!"—*Old Play.*

PLAIN though it was, being destitute of lace or epaulettes, poor Quentin was very proud of his volunteer uniform, and being eminently a handsome young man, he looked very well in it. The coarse buff crossbelts, the pouch, and bayonet, and, more especially, the Brown Bess he had to carry, did not suit his taste quite so well. He had imagined that he would have to shoulder a kind of Joe Manton, or something like a smart Enfield rifle of the present day, with a "draw" of ten pounds or less on the trigger, instead of a long blunderbuss like the regulation musket of those days, weighing fourteen pounds, with its enormous butt plate of brass and so forth.

Thanks to the teaching of the old quartermaster, he proved himself so apt a pupil under the sergeant-major and old Norman Calder, that within a week he was reported as "fit for duty," as Monkton said, "doing as much credit to his preceptors as to the cabbage-stalk," for so he designated the army tailor.

But we are anticipating.

His first parade was an inauspicious one, in so far as it was for *punishment*.

A sergeant of the regiment had been recently tried by a regi-

mental court-martial for permitting spirits to be brought by a woman to the main guard-house at night, while he was in command, and by these means certain prisoners became intoxicated and riotous. He alleged that he was asleep on that luxurious couch, the guard-bed, after posting his sentinels, and that the fault lay with his corporal and others; but the plea was urged in vain—the corps was under orders for foreign service—an example was necessary; so he was now to receive the award of his dereliction of duty, and as the drum-major had received some special instructions over night, all knew that it involved the application of the now (happily) almost obsolete instrument—the cat!

The degradation of a non-commissioned officer is always a painful duty; but when flogging is added thereto, it is doubly painful to the witnesses, and maddening to the culprit.

"I told you old Middleton was a Tartar," said Monkton, as he and Quentin hurried downstairs from their quarters; "he'd certainly flog ensigns if he could; and the *Gazette* of last night wont have improved his variable temper. But here he comes, mounted, with holsters and blue saddle-cloth, but looking for all the world like an old woman trotting to market with her butter and eggs. Such a seat—such a queer length, or rather want of length, in the stirrup-leathers! Good morning, Buckle—so we are to have a flogging—ugh? that isn't lively."

Quentin being a young hand, felt somewhat awed, as he knew not what was about to ensue. The sun had not yet risen, and the September morning was chilly and misty; the men of the regiment were falling in by companies under arms in light marching order—the tall grenadiers on the right with their black bearskin caps; the smart light company on the left with green plumes in their shakos, and Saxon horns on all their appointments; the sergeants were calling the various rolls; the officers were gathered in a somewhat silent group, and the face of every man wore a sullen, or rather dejected expression, for a punishment parade is the kind of parade least liked by soldiers of all ranks. It acts as a damper on the spirits of all; on this morning the atmosphere was dense; the sombre sun seemed to linger behind the uplands of Suffolk, and the shadows to lie deeper in the silent barrack square.

Impressed by the taciturnity and gloomy expression of the men, whose faces wore the pallor incident to all who come from bed in haste at an unusual hour, Quentin remained silent and full of expectation and anxiety as he fell into the rear rank of Captain Askerne's company, to which he was to be permanently attached. He was sensible, however, that the soldiers viewed

him with interest, as a volunteer is always popular. It was to rescue Thomas Grahame, when lying severely wounded, and then serving as a simple volunteer in the red coat of the Caledonian Hunt, that our troops in Holland made one of their most desperate rallies, and gained to the service the future Lord Lynedoch, the hero of Barossa.

The inspection of the companies and the drum for coverers rapidly followed the calling of the muster-rolls; a bugle sounded; the officers fell in; the bayonets were fixed, and the regiment, without music, was marched silently by sections to a secluded part of the barracks, where, surrounded by high stores and magazines, no stranger's eye could oversee the proceedings, and then it was formed in a hollow square, in the centre of which Quentin perceived three sergeants' pikes (weapons not disused till 1830) strapped together by the heads, an equilateral triangle being formed by the shafts, which were stuck in the earth. Near these were the drummers and drum-major, who carried in his hand a canvas bag, which, as Quentin was informed in a whisper by the next file on his right, contained "the cats."

"The officer with the cocked hat, and without a sash, close by, is the doctor," he added.

"The doctor—for what is he required?"

"You'll too soon see that, sir," was the ominous response.

"Steady, rear rank—silence," growled old Sergeant Calder.

At that moment one of the drummers drew forth a cat, and Quentin could perceive that it consisted of nine tails of whip-cord, each having nine knots thereon, and these were firmly lashed to a handle about the length of a drum-stick. A slight shudder with an emotion of sickness came over him; and he looked anxiously at the face of Major Middleton, but it seemed immovable as he said to the sergeant-major with studied sternness of tone,

"March in the prisoner."

A section in the face of the square wheeled backward and permitted the unfortunate, with his escort, consisting of a corporal and two men of the barrack-guard, to march in and halt before the major, on which the culprit took off his forage-cap and stood bareheaded, the centre of all observation.

He cast a haggard glance at the triangles; another half furtively and restlessly at the stolid faces round him, and then he seemed to become immovable. There was little need for Mr. Buckle, the adjutant, to read over the proceedings of the Court, for the hopeless sergeant knew at once his double degradation and his doom!

He was to be reduced to the rank and pay of a private, and

to receive *three hundred and fifty lashes*, the utmost number a regimental court could then award; with the option, if he would avoid this extreme punishment, of volunteering to serve for life (*i.e.*, till disabled by wounds or age) in the York Chasseurs, or any other condemned corps, in Africa or the West Indies.

His name was Allan Grange, the colour-sergeant of the Grenadiers, who always considered themselves the *corps d'élite* of a regiment. Altogether he was a model of a man, erect and strong in figure, his hair was a little grizzled about the temples, and his face was somewhat careworn, as if he had known or suffered much anxiety and trouble in his time. His eye was clear and keen, and save a little nervous twitching about the muscles of the mouth, he seemed unmoved and unflinching—unflinching as when on the glorious field of Egmont-op-Zee he commanded the Grenadiers of the 25th, after all their officers had fallen, and with his pike broken in his hand by a musket shot, led them to that bloody hand-to-hand conflict on the road that leads to Haarlem.

Perhaps the poor fellow was thinking of that signal and bloody day—perhaps of his boyhood and his home; it might be of the future, that was all a *blank;* for he seemed as in a dream while the adjutant read over the formula of the trial, the list of charges and the sentence, till he was roused by the drum-major proceeding to rip off with a penknife the three hard-won chevrons from his right arm. It was done gently, but "the iron seemed to enter his soul" at the moment, and a heavy sigh escaped him as his chin sank on his breast.

"Allan Grange," said Major Middleton, raising his voice clearly and distinctly, that the whole of the hollow square and even its supernumerary ranks might hear, "you are the last man in the whole Borderers whom I could have expected to see standing before us as you do to-day. In cutting off your stripes I feel extreme reluctance and sorrow, and I think you have known me long enough to be aware of that."

"I am, major—I am aware of it," said the reduced man in a hollow voice.

"Allan Grange, you have come of a respectable old Scottish stock in Lothian; you were born in my native place, and are one of the many fine lads who came with me to the line from the Buccleugh Fencibles. I know well how, in your native village, the Stenhouse, your name and progress have been watched by early friends and old schoolfellows; by none more than your father, who now lies in Liberton kirkyard, by the good old mother who nursed you; by the old dominie who taught you; by the grey-haired minister who will ere long see your name

affixed, as that of a degraded man, on the kirk-door. I know how, at the village inn on the braehead, in the smithy at the loan-end, at the mill beside the burn, it would be known that Allan Grange had been made a corporal—that he had gained his third stripe—that he had been made a colour-sergeant; and I can imagine how the listeners would drink to your health and to mine, in the hope that we should one day see you an officer; and now—*now*—by one act of folly you are again at the foot of the ladder!"

A heavy sigh escaped the sergeant; the drum-major's knife gave a final rip, and he stood once more a private on parade!

"The worst part of your sentence yet remains—unless—unless you volunteer into the York Chasseurs."

"Major Middleton," said Grange, firmly, and standing erect, like a fine man as he was, "I'll *not* leave the regiment!"

The man was fearfully pale, and it was evident to all that Middleton, though a strict and sometimes severe officer, was greatly moved.

"You will rather take three hundred and fifty lashes than volunteer?" he asked.

"I'd volunteer for a forlorn hope; I've done so before now, sir, as you know well, but I'll not quit the old 25th for a condemned corps. I'll take my punishment—I've earned it like a fool, and with God's help, I hope to bear it like a man."

"Then strip, sir," said Middleton, playing nervously with the blue ribbons of his gorget.

All emotion seemed to pass away as the culprit proceeded deliberately to unclasp his leather stock and unbutton his coat; but before it was off the major exclaimed in a loud voice, as he drew a letter from his pocket—

"*Stop!*"

Grange paused, and looked up with a haggard and bloodshot eye.

"I remit the rest of the sentence, for the sake of one who intercedes for you."

"Sir?"

"I have had a petition from your wife, and willingly grant it. Take away the triangles. Conduct yourself as you did till this misfortune came upon you, and ere long, Grange, you may regain the stripes you have to-day been deprived of. Rejoin your company."

"I thank you, sir, for the sake of my poor wife and her bairnie. I have proved that I would rather take my punishment than leave the regiment, and you; and—sir—sir——"

Here Grange fairly broke down and sobbed aloud: and no man

among the nine hundred there thought the less of him, because his stout heart, which even the terror of the lash could not appal, now became full of penitence and gratitude. At that moment many an eye glistened in the ranks, and many a heart was swelling.

"There, there—don't make a fuss," said Middleton, testily: "I hate scenes! Prepare to form quarter-distance column, right in front—stand fast, the Light Company."

And so ended an episode, that, like the warm rising sun now shining cheerfully into the barrack-square, shed a brightness over every face, and lent a lightness—a sense of pleasure and relief to every heart, as the regiment marched back to quarters, and to what was of some importance after being two hours under arms in the morning air—breakfast.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE OLD REGIMENT OF EDINBURGH.

"Such is our love of liberty, our country and our laws,
That like our ancestors of old, we'll stand in freedom's cause;
We'll bravely fight like heroes for our honour and applause,
And defy the French, with all their art, to alter our laws."
The Garb of Old Gaul.

From Major Middleton, who took somewhat of a fatherly interest in him, Quentin learned much of the past history and achievements of the regiment he had joined.

It was one with which the stories of his old military friends at Rohallion had made him familiar from boyhood; thus he was in possession of so many old regimental names, so many stock stories and anecdotes, which Middleton deemed unknown beyond the circle of their mess-table and barrack-rooms, that he considered the lad an enigma, and was puzzled how, or where, he had gained all this information about the corps; for Quentin, though looking forward to the arrival of Cosmo with a disgust that almost amounted to terror, kept his own counsel with wonderful prudence, and never permitted the name of Rohallion to escape him.

As there is no official record of the Borderers' achievements prior to 1808, the account given by the major is perhaps the only one extant.

Under David Leslie, Earl of Leven, the 25th Foot were formed on the 10th of March, 1689, from a body of six thousand Covenanters, who, on the news of William of Orange landing at

Torbay, marched from the West Country and laid siege to the castle of Edinburgh. On their banners were an open Bible, with the motto, "For Reformation according to the Word of God."

Marching north against the loyal Highlanders, they left their compatriots, all of whom served without pay or remuneration till the conclusion of the siege, when the fortress was surrendered by the Duke of Gordon after a noble defence, and after being warned by a spectre—pale as he "who drew Priam's curtain at the dead of night"—in fact, by the wrath of the terrible Claverhouse in his buff coat, cuirass, and cavalier wig, all stained with gouts of blood, that he had been shot by a silver bullet on the field of Killycrankie. In one of the rooms of the old fortress this vision is alleged to have appeared to Colin, Earl of Balcarris, then the duke's prisoner, and the truth of the episode is admitted by a delirious biographer of the viscount, who affirms that he is frequently in communion with the ghost in question, and with others.

The Earl of Leven, though colonel of infantry under Frederick Wilhelm, Elector of Brandenburg, and of a regiment which came over with the Prince of Orange, who made him Governor of Edinburgh Castle and Master of the Scottish ordnance, was a Whig noble, chiefly famous for the rapidity of his flight from Killycrankie, and the vigour with which he horsewhipped the Lady Morton Hall. It is said that he rode six miles from the Pass without drawing his bridle, though his regiment, the future 25th, and Hastings, the future 13th, were the only troops that made any stand against the victorious Highlanders.

Leven's regiment having been raised in the capital while Sir John Hall, Knight, was Lord Provost, was designated of Edinburgh, and bore the insignia yet borne on its colours, the triple castle of the city with its crest and motto, *Nisi Dominus Frustra*.

As Leven's regiment—the same in which "my uncle Toby" fought at Landen, and with which he went to "mount guard in the trenches before the gate of St. Nicholas in his roquelaure"—it served in all King William's useless wars for the well-being of his darling Dutch, and all the great barrier towns of Europe have heard the drums of the 25th. It was the *first* British regiment which used the socket in lieu of the screw bayonet which its lieutenant-colonel, Maxwell, adopted in imitation of the bayonets of the French Fusiliers. Prior to this, our bayonets were screwed into the muzzles of the muskets, and to fire with them fixed, was, of course, an impossibility. After fighting at Sheriffmuir, as Viscount Shannon's Foot, it served with distinction in the

wars of the Spanish and Austrian succession, and shared in the disasters of Fontenoy, ere its soldiers had again to imbrue their hands in the blood of their own countrymen at Falkirk, at Culloden, and in defending the Comyn's Tower in the old Castle of Blair against Lord George Murray, till we find them again among the troops defeated at Val through the cowardice and incapacity of the Duke of Cumberland.

During the seven years' war it suffered severely at the siege of a small German castle, by the heroism of a sergeant of the enemy. Under Lord Rohallion a party of the Edinburgh Regiment had made themselves masters of an outwork, in which they established themselves at the point of the bayonet. *Under* this work was a secret mine, which (as the "École Historique et Morale du Soldat" relates) was entrusted to a sergeant and a few soldiers of the Royal Piedmontese Guards. The mine was ready, the *saucisson* led through the gallery, the train was laid, and a single spark would blow all below and above to atoms!

With admirable coolness the sergeant desired his comrades to retire, and request the king to take charge of his wife and children. He then, inspired by a spirit of self-devotion, set fire to the train and perished, as the mine exploded. The outwork rose into the air and fell thundering into the fosse, Lord Rohallion, a corporal, and two men alone escaping, covered with bruises and cuts. The name of the sergeant was said to be Amadeus di Savillano, son of the Castellan of the fortress of that name in Piedmont.

The Edinburgh regiment served at the battle of Minden. The Earl of Home was then its colonel, and it was in the second line, and on the left of Kingsley's famous brigade. Landing in England, on the homeward march, near the Borders, the old colours borne in the seven years' war were buried by its soldiers, with all honour, and three volleys were fired over them.

In those days, when any regiment approached London, the colours were furled and cased, and no drum was beaten or fife blown during the march through its limits. The 3rd, or Old East Kentish Buffs, were alone excepted, and had the exclusive privilege of marching through the City of London with all the honours of war, in memory of having, at some period, been recruited from the City Trained Bands.

Likewise no regiment could beat a drum within the walls, or through the portes of the Scottish capital, with the exception of the 25th, or old Edinburgh Regiment. But not long after the battle of Minden, it chanced that a certain thick-pated lord-provost objected to their drums beating up for recruits, on the plea that none should beat there but those of the City Guard.

On this, the colonel, Lord George Henry Lennox (M.P. for the county of Sussex, who died in 1805), was so incensed, that on his special application the title of the corps was changed, and its facings were altered from the royal yellow of Scotland to the royal blue of Britain, and after a time it was styled the "King's Own Borderers."

Egmont-op-Zee, Martinique, and Egypt added fresh honours to those of other times; but still on drum and standard are borne unchanged the castle, triple-towered, with the anchor and motto, *Nisi Dominus Frustra*, usually the first little bit of latinity learned by the Edinburgh schoolboy.

Such is a rapid outline of the past history of this famous old corps, in the ranks of which Quentin Kennedy hoped to achieve for himself a position and a name—perhaps, rank and glory too! What boy does not look forward to some such vague but brilliant future,—

"In life's morning march when the bosom is young."

The evening subsequent to the punishment parade was the *last* on which the battalion mess would assemble, and Quentin was Monkton's guest. He was again seated near the worthy major, and from him he learned much of what we have just narrated, many a quaint regimental story being woven up with what was actual military history.

"You should tell him of that startling adventure, or rather, I should say, of those series of adventures, which happened to you when commanding an out-picquet in America," said Colville, with a significant but hasty glance at Monkton, for the frequent repetition of this story formed a kind of covert joke against the worthy major.

"What—which out-picquet—at the siege of Fort St. John?"

"Exactly, Major," said Monkton.

"St. John, on the Richelieu River?" asked Quentin.

"Yes," said Middleton, with an air of gratification; "you are a very intelligent young man, and have no doubt read of the defence of that place."

Quentin hastened to say that he *had* heard of it; in fact, the defence with all its details—the bravery of Majors Preston and André of the Cameronians, and so forth—formed one of the stock stories of his old friends, the quartermaster and Jack Andrews; and so frequently had he heard it, that he was somewhat uncertain at times that he had not served there too.

"But the episode of yours, with that devilish Indian fellow, may scare Kennedy when on sentry," said the adjutant, "a duty he must do as a volunteer."

"Scare—not at all!" said Middleton, testily; "it is the very

thing to sharpen his wits and to keep him wide awake. There are others here who never heard the story, and it is worth listening to; but before I begin we must send away the marines and replenish the decanters."

"Right!" cried Askerne, who was president; "this is the last night of one of the jolliest messes in His Majesty's service. To-morrow the plate, which has glittered before us so long—the crystal from which we have imbibed the full-bodied port, the creamy claret, and the choice Madeira, the sparkling champagne, the old hock, in fact, 'the entire plant,' to use a commercial phrase, will be packed up and stored away among dust and cobwebs, while the Borderers march in quest of 'fresh fields and pastures new.' A long farewell to our glorious mess!" exclaimed the handsome grenadier, as he poured a glass of port down his capacious throat. "Mr. Vice-President, order the last cooper of port before the major begins his story."

"Ah, the mess!" sighed Buckle, the adjutant; "when we come to be frying our ration beef in a camp-kettle lid, under a shower of rain, perhaps, there will be an exchange with a devil of a difference!"

With the aforesaid "cooper" there came in hot whisky-toddy for the major and a few select seniors, for it was *then* the custom at the messes of Scots and Irish national corps to introduce the Farintosh and pothcen; though I fear our dandies of the Victorian age (especially such as are horrified at the sight of a black bottle) might consider such a proceeding a deplorable solecism in good taste.

"And now, major, for your story," said Askerne, while Colville, perhaps the only affected man in the regiment, gave his shoulders a shrug, perceptible only by the glittering of his epaulettes, and Monkton responded by a sly wink behind his glass of wine, while he pretended to be looking for the beeswing.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ADVANCED PICQUET.

"All quiet along the Potomac, they say,
Except now and then a stray picquet
Is shot as he walks on his beat to and fro,
By a rifleman hid in the thicket.
'Tis nothing. A private or two now and then,
Will not count in the tale of the battle;
Not an officer lost—only one of the men,
Breathing out all alone the death-rattle."

"In the spring of the year '75, a party of ours, under Lord Rohallion, then a captain, was sent to the Fort of St. John, on

the Richelieu River, to strengthen the garrison, which was composed of some companies of the 7th Fusiliers and the 26th, or Cameronians, under Major Preston, of Valleyfield, in Fifeshire, as gallant a fellow as ever bore the King's commission.

"We were in daily expectation of the advance of the rebel General Montgomery, with a great force, so the duties of guards and sentinels were performed with great vigilance, as the whole country for miles around, if not actually in possession of the armed colonists, was full of people who were favourable to their cause, and were consequently inimical to the king and to us.

"Montgomery was expected to approach through Vermont county (now one of the states) by the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, a long and narrow sheet of deep water, which forms the boundary between it and the State of New York; thus, on an eminence which commanded a considerable view of the country southward, and at the distance of two miles from Fort St. John, Major Preston, of the 26th, had an outpost or picquet, consisting of one officer and twenty men, stationed in a log-hut, from whence they were relieved every week. The officer in command of this advanced party had to throw forward a line of sentinels, extending across the road by which the Americans were expected to approach. At the hut was also a small piece of cannon, taken from a gunboat recently destroyed on the Lake, a 6-pounder, which was to be fired as a signal for the troops in Fort St. John to get under arms, and the picquet was well supplied with rockets to give the alarm by night.

"Our sentinels there had frequently been found dead and scalped, without a shot being fired. Sometimes they disappeared altogether, without leaving a trace, save a few spots of blood on the prairie grass. Their desertion was never suspected by those in authority; but that savages and assassins lurked in woods along the eastern and western shores of Lake Champlain we had not a doubt; thus the solitary outpost before the Fort of St. John was a duty disliked by all, and always undertaken with sensations of doubt and anxiety.

"It was on a beautiful afternoon in the month of September, that with a sergeant and twenty men of the Borderers, I took possession of this log hut, relieving a Lieutenant Despard, of the Fusiliers, from whom I received over my orders, and posted my line of six sentinels at intervals across the highway and a kind of open prairie which it traversed. These orders were written and delivered with the parole and countersign, by Major André, of the Cameronians (afterwards named 'the unfortunate'), and they were simply, that during the night the sentinels were to face all persons approaching their posts, to stand firm in a

state of preparation at half-cock with ported arms, and to fire instantly on all who could not give the countersign.

"Despard informed me that excessive vigilance was necessary, as he had lost five sentinels in one week, information which made my fellows look somewhat blankly in each other's faces; 'and these assassinations have occurred,' he added, 'though we have an Indian scout, Le Vipre Noir, an invaluable fellow, however unpleasant his name may sound, attached to the picquet-house. I would advise you to keep off that bit of prairie in front, Middleton. Zounds! one is always over the ankles in mud there, and mid-leg deep occasionally; so it's more like snipe-shooting in an Irish bog, than knocking over Yankees and Iroquois.'

"I now found that there was another scout, a Cornishman, named old Abe Treherne, attached to the post, as well as the native mentioned by Despard.

"Abe Treherne was a white-haired squatter and pioneer, who, for more than forty years, had been in the district, living by the use of his rifle and hatchet. He wore an Indian hunting-shirt and deer-skin mocassins, and had so completely forgotten the civilization of his native England, that he had almost become an Indian by habit, if not by speech. He was brave, however, and a most faithful fellow to us. Active and hardy, brown and weatherbeaten by constant exposure; privation could not impair, nor toil weary his strength, which was wonderful, for, by the wild life of nature he had led, every muscle had been developed, till it became like a band of iron.

"The savage scout, Le Vipre Noir, as he was named, was one of the Lenni-Lenappe—or unmixed race as they boast themselves—who once occupied all the vast tract of country which lies between Penobscot and the shores of the Potomac; but we styled the most of them Delawares, and by that name they became known.

"Well, this devil of a Delaware—I think I can see the fellow now!—was a model of muscular strength and manly beauty, so far as form and sinew go. He was like a colossal statue of polished copper. His usual expression was fierce and sullen; his eyes were keen, black, and glittering, and his red and yellow streaks of war-paint lent a fiendish aspect to his dusky visage, the features of which were otherwise clean cut and regular. He was somewhat of a dandy in his own way, as his fur mocassins and hunting-shirt were gaily ornamented with scarlet cloth, wampum, and beads, by the Delaware girls.

"His head had been denuded of hair entirely, save the scalp-lock, in which two feathers were stuck. At his girdle hung his

pipe and hunting-pouch, a large musk-rat skin, in the tail of which his keen-edged scalping-knife was sheathed; he had also a pouch for ammunition, a long rifle, and a tomahawk, which were never from his side by night or day.

"This Delaware was from one of the native villages about the upper end of the Penobscot river, where the chiefs had signed a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with our government, and had sworn to have no communication with the Americans others, the king's enemies, without the knowledge of the offic commanding the British forces in North America.

"One of our men, named Jack Andrews, had quarrelled with the Delaware, about a wild goose they had shot. Blows were exchanged; the savage drew his scalping-knife; but the Borderer clubbed his musket, and laid the red-skin sprawling among the reeds. Peace was enforced between them; but the savage was more than ever sullen and reserved, doubtless brooding on the vengeance he meant to take.

"Such was Le Vipre Noir, who will bear rather a conspicuous part in my little story.

"It was a lovely evening, I have said, when we took possession of the sequestered picquet-house. The rays of the setting sun, as he sank beyond those grand and lofty mountain ranges, which rise between the source of the Hudson and Lake Champlain, shed a red glow across the water, and bathed in warm light the foliage of the mighty primeval forest, which for ages had clothed the shores of that magnificent lake. In the immediate foreground the bayonets of my sentinels seemed tipped with fire, as they trod slowly to and fro upon their posts in that voiceless solitude. Before the log-hut the arms were piled, and my soldiers, with the Cornishman, were cooking their supper, while the swarthy Indian scout was squatted on his hams at a little distance, smoking listlessly or half asleep, as the duty of searching in the woods usually devolved upon him after nightfall.

"I, too, lit my pipe, and the pouch from which I took my tobacco called back to mind some half-forgotten thoughts and fancies.

"They were lovely hands that embroidered that pouch for me, and it was associated with many a promenade in Paul Street, when we were quartered in Montreal, with balls at *her* father's house, in the Rue de Notre Dame, flirtation and ices in the Place d'Armes, where the French troops used to parade of old—for, in short, that tobacco-pouch had been made for me by Ella Carleton, the belle of that old colonial city.

"She had a dash of the old French blood in her, and hence her dark hair and eyes, which contrasted so wonderfully with her

pure English skin, and hence her continental form of eyelid and drooping lash. So I sighed as I thought of a year ago—cursed the emergencies of the service that banished me to Fort St. John, and passed my fair Ella's present to the sergeant of the picquet, that he might supply himself, for active service is a true leveller, and without impairing discipline leads to a spirit of *camaraderie* not to be found in such tented fields as Hyde Park or the Phœnix at Dublin.

"After the sun set and twilight stole on, I walked restlessly to and fro before the log-hut, within which my men were now gathered with their arms, as the dew was falling. I had seen all carefully loaded and had examined the flints and priming. I was resolved that due vigilance on my part should not be wanting if the post were attacked or my sentinels surprised; and to prevent them from wandering unconsciously from their beat in the dark, I had six white stakes placed in the ground, and gave orders that they were to remain close by them during the night, until relieved, and every hour I went in person with the reliefs, a most harassing duty.

"Leaving my sergeant at the picquet-house, a few minutes before midnight, I went with six men to relieve my sentinels, who were all posted on the skirts of an open space, a large tract of waste ground which for some miles was covered with long prairie grass, and which stretched away towards the forest that was traversed by the main road leading to Fort Edward on the Hudson, about sixty miles distant.

"Save the gurgle of a runnel that stole under the prairie grass there was no sound in the air—not even the whistle of the cat-bird; there was no moon, but the stars were clear and bright, and guided by their light we went straight from post to post, relieving the sentinels; but as we approached the place where the sixth should have been, on the extreme left of the highway, we advanced *unchallenged* to the stake that marked his beat: the place was solitary and the man—was gone.

"His musket, undischarged, was lying there, and a pool of blood beside it at once refuted any suspicion of desertion. But how came it that he had perished without resistance—without giving an alarm, and where was his body? All round the place we searched for it, but did so in vain.

"Posting another man, I gave him reiterated orders and injunctions to be on the alert, and wistfully the poor fellow looked after us as we returned to the picquet-house with the tidings of another mystery, which added to the consternation that prevailed concerning this devilish outpost. Neither le Vipre Noir nor Treherne had yet returned; they were as usual scouting in front

of our advanced sentinels, and when they came back, not together, but separately, they each reported the country all quiet for miles towards the mountains. Who then was this determined assassin, unless it were Satan himself?

"Next night the sentinel on the extreme right was missing, without leaving even a trace of blood, and without the grass being bruised or trodden near his beat; and on the night following, the sentinel on the roadway was found lying dead on his face; his musket was undischarged, his head cloven behind, and his scalp gone.

"The consternation of my picquet had now reached its height. Still our scouts asserted the country to be quiet around us, though, with a strange gleam in his eyes, the Indian said, that when he shouted in the woods he heard an echo.

"'From whence?' I asked, suspiciously.

"'From the great barrows by the lake—where the bones of my forefathers lie. The white man treads there now; but they were great warriors, and many were the scalps that dried before their tents.'

"I was but a young officer then, being fresh from our Scottish Fencibles, otherwise I would have doubled my sentinels; but the idea never occurred to me, and my sergeant failed to suggest it. The affair was becoming intolerable. This mysterious assassination of brave men roused my blood to fever heat, and I resolved that on the next night I should take the duty of sentinel with a firelock, and remain on my post as such, not for one hour merely, but for the entire night, in the hope of solving this terrible enigma.

"On the evening I came to this conclusion the post was visited by Charley Halket from the fort, the captain of our first company, who came cantering up on a fine bay horse. I was glad to see him, for Halket was one of the most lively and devil-may-care fellows in the corps, and he sang the best song and was the best stroke at billiards in our whole brigade. Charley would drink his two bottles at mess overnight and wing a fellow in the morning, without keeping his arm in a cold bath, and with an accuracy that showed he had a constitution of iron; he hunted fearlessly, shot fairly, rode like a mad-cap; gambled, but simply for excitement, and spent his money like a good-hearted fellow. He was always laughing and jovial, and I was about to relate the disasters that had befallen my party, when the pale and anxious expression of his usually merry face arrested me, and I feared that the fort had been taken by surprise in rear of our post.

"'What the devil is the matter, Halket?' said I. 'I have always predicted to Preston that we should never have our legs

under his mahogany at Valleyfield again—never taste his Fife-shire mutton, or test his fine old Burgundy. What is up? Has the fort fallen, Charley, that you come here with your bay thoroughbred covered with foam, even to its bang-up tail?'

"'No, my dear Middleton; but I wish to pass your post.'

"'To the front?' I asked, with astonishment.

"'Yes.'

"'It is impossible!'

"'Even if out of uniform?'

"'In or out of uniform, none can pass or repass save our scouts, whose lives are of little value. Preston's orders are strict and decisive.'

"'But if in disguise?' he urged, earnestly, and lowering his tone, as he stooped from his saddle.

"'Worse and worse!'

"'How? explain, pray,' he demanded, as his earnestness became tinged with irritation.

"'You might be deemed a deserter by General Burgoyne if found more than two miles from camp or quarters.'

"'A deserter!—I?—pooh, man, absurd!'

"'A general officer has joined the rebels already. Then you might be hanged as a spy by Montgomery, whose troops are certainly closing up, if we may judge from the murderous outrages committed by his Indian allies upon the picquest stationed here.'

"'It is for that very reason, Middleton, that I am most anxious to ride southward for about twelve miles into the country, along the shore of the lake, towards Misiskoui.'

"'You could not return; my sentinels have positive orders to fire instantly on all——'

"'Who have not the parole and countersign,' said he, smiling; 'they are *Quebec* and WOLFE. You see that I have both!'

"'From whom?'

"'My friend André, of the Cameronians—the fort-major.'

"'He is very rash! I wish he had this infernal picquet to command; the duty might teach him a caution.'

"But, my dear Middleton——'

"Say no more, Charley—come, don't be rash; duty is duty and I must perform mine. Moreover, I value your life and my own honour too much to risk either to further some mad-cap ramble of yours.'

"'Zounds, sir!' he began, furiously.

"'Now don't call me out, Charley; I am on duty and can't go, and when I am relieved and you are cool, you wont ask me. But tell me, Charley, what affair is this that seems so urgent?

The country in front is full of perils; already eight or nine sentinels have been assassinated, and yonder grave covers one o. three fine fellows I have lost.'

"'Listen to me, Jack,' said he, dismounting, and throwing the reins of his horse over his arm, and leading me a little way apart from the soldiers who were smoking and lounging before the log-hut; 'you remember Ella Carleton?'

"'I should rather think I *do*,' said I, reddening, and giving him a very knowing wink, to which he made not the slightest response; 'Ella, whom we used to meet so much a year ago at Montreal.'

"'The same,' said he.

"'I remember her perfectly—a charming girl, with features that were pale but beautifully regular, and with eyes and hair so dark.'

"'Exactly,' said Halket, whose eyes sparkled with pleasure. Her father, you are aware, is a rich land-owner, in the American interest.'

"'Many a bottle of champagne I have drunk in his house in the Rue de Notre Dame!'

"'Yet he is an old curmudgeon who hates us red-coats, and for that reason, as well as for a few others that were more cogent, Ella and I were privately married about a year ago.'

"'Married?—whew! Here's news for the mess to discuss over their wine and walnuts!' I exclaimed, while laughing to conceal an irrepressible emotion of pique.

"'I depend on your honour,' said he, earnestly.

"'To the death, Charley; but you have quite taken my breath away. Married—you never looked a bit like it!'

"'We were married a year ago at the cathedral in the Place d'Armes unknown to all—even to yourself, Rohallion, and others my most intimate friends,' said Halket, speaking rapidly and with growing emotion; 'in a month she will be a mother—think of that, Jack! She is residing at one of her father's country clearings near the Missiskoui River, in an old hunting-lodge, built by Simon de Champlain, who first discovered the lake. She has written to me by a circuitous route, saying that Montgomery's advanced posts are within a few miles; that her father and all his men are with the rebels; that the Iroquois are ravaging the country, burning, killing, and scalping all before them; and thus, for the love I bear her, and for the sake of our child that is yet unborn, I must strive to save her, and have her conveyed to Fort St. John. This is all my story, Middleton. She is about twelve miles distant from this outpost; I think I know the way, and am certain I should be back before the

morning-gun is fired. If not, I must risk all—commission, rank, reputation, everything—but Ella must be saved! You understand me now, don't you, my dear friend?' said he, earnestly, as he grasped my hand, and I could see that the poor fellow's eyes were filled with tears.

"'Perfectly, Charley; I would risk my life to save or serve her or you; but I think we may find those who will do both more effectually than either you or I.'

"'Who do you mean?'

"'The Delaware scout, and old Abe Treherne, the hunter, will get over the ground in half the time, and knowing, as they do, every track and trail in the forest, with ten degrees more safety than you could ever hope for.'

"I at once proposed the affair to them, and Treherne entered into it with great readiness. His reward was to be a pair of handsome pistols and ten guineas. He knew the old hunting-lodge on Carleton's clearing quite well, and with the assistance of the horse, undertook to bring the lady to the picquet-house in safety, and long before sunrise. The Delaware, however, shook his head.

"'Le Vipre Noir had some darned doubts, I guess,' said the hunter; 'the woods about the Missiskoui are full of the mocassin prints of the Yankees and the Iroquois; the tracks, I reckon, are dangerous enough; and there will be an almighty trouble in bringing a fine lady a-horse-back through the bush; for all that, Delaware, you'll venture to bring the White Chief his squaw safe from the hunting-place beyond the river?'

"'From the Missiskoui, where once I had a wigwam, and where *my* squaw and her little papooses perished at the hands of the white men?' said the savage, in a husky and guttural voice, while his stealthy eyes filled with a malevolent gleam, as he sat sullenly smoking under a tree.

"'You're a darned fool, Vipre,' said Treherne, angrily. 'Look ye har—what's the use o' thinking o' that now? What's past is past, ain't it?'

"'She appealed to them, and they laughed at her. She appealed to Manitto, but his face was hidden behind a cloud, and he saw neither her nor what the pale-faces did to her. She is with Manitto now—but I yet am here.'

"'We may have a scrimmage, Delaware—can you bite yet?' asked Treherne, testily.

"The savage pointed to his scalping-knife and grinned.

"'Will you venture with me for twelve bottles of the raal Jamaiky fire-water?'

"'Oui, ja, yes!' said the savage, eagerly, in his mixed jargon;

'I neither fear the feathered arrows of the rebel Iroquois, or the lead bullets of the Yankees. Go! Le Vipre Noir is a warrior!'

"'Delaware,' said I, patting his muscular shoulder, 'what are the greatest of human virtues?'

"'Courage and contempt of death,' he replied loftily, while shaking the two heron's plumes in his scalp lock.

"'Good,' said Halkett, who had listened to all this preamble with irrepressible anxiety and impatience; here are ten guineas as an earnest of future reward, Delaware. You will risk this for me?'

"'For *you*?' said the Indian, scornfully, putting the coins, however, in the musk-rat pouch, which dangled at his wampum girdle.

"'For her, then?' said Halket, persuasively.

"'For neither,' replied the Delaware, while a lurid gleam shone in his sombre eyes.

"'How, fellow?' asked Charley, with alarm.

"'I do so for the reward—for the fire-water and gold that will buy me powder and blankets; but neither for the squaw nor the papoose of the pale-face.'

"'Risk it for what you will, but only serve me; and you, Treherne——'

"'Make your terms with this darned crittur of a Redskin, and you can settle with me after, sir,' said Treherne, who had been regarding his compatriot with a somewhat doubtful expression. 'Come, Vipre Noir, we must keep the hair on our heads, if we can certainly; so put fresh priming into the pan of your rifle, my dark serpent, for the dew is falling heavily; if the rebel Redskins come on us, it must be our scalp agin theirs! I'm your brother—let us be off to the bush ere the sun sets.'

"Charley Halkett hastily wrote a note to his wife, telling her to place implicit confidence in the two scouts as true and tried men, who would convey her safely to the British outpost in front of Fort St. John, where he, all eagerness and impatience, awaited her; and on being furnished with this, Treherne slung his long rifle across his body, stuck a short black pipe in his moustachioed mouth, mounted Halkett's horse, and, with the swift-footed and agile Indian running by his side, crossed the open bit of prairie before the log-hut, and rapidly disappeared in the dense and virgin forest that lay beyond.

"That forest soon grew dark; twilight stole along the shores of the silent lake; the last red rays of lingering light faded upward from the lone mountain tops; one by one the bright stars came twinkling out, and the old and clamorous anxiety occurred to us all; and each poor fellow, as he was left on his post, felt

himself a doomed man, who might die without seeing his destroyer or who might disappear as others had so mysteriously done, without leaving a trace behind.

"Slowly and wearily our autumn night wore on, and with our pistols cocked, Halkett and I visited the sentinels almost half-hourly. The sky was moonless, and the silence around our lonely post was oppressive; to the listening ear there came no sounds save those of insect life among the long and reedy prairie grass.

"All at once, afar in distance, from the deep recesses of the vast pine forest, there rose the shrill war-whoop of the red man!

"Like the yell of an unchained fiend, it rung upon the still night air; but died away, and all became silent—more silent apparently than before, and I felt the hand of Halkett clutch my arm like a vice, while hot bead-drops rolled over his temples.

"I had terrible forebodings, but remained silent, and with reiterated advice to my sentinels to be 'on the alert,' returned to the picquet-house. Poor Charley Halkett's alarm excited all my compassion; the boldest, frankest, and jolliest fellow in the corps had become a nervous, crushed, and miserable wretch!

"I thought that lingering night would never pass away. It passed, however, as others do; the morning came in, bright and sunny, and without one of our sentinels being missed or molested; and it seemed, certainly, a very singular feature in those mysterious deaths, that the only night on which no fatality occurred, should be that on which we actually had an *alerte*, and when Treherne and the Delaware were away in the direction of Missiskoui, and *not* scouting in front of the post!

"Morning had come, but there was yet no appearance of our messengers or Ella Carleton, and old sympathies made me doubly anxious on her account.

"Halkett, who was pale with sleeplessness and intense anxiety, walked with me a little way beyond our advanced sentinels, who were now shouting to each other their happy congratulations that nothing had occurred during the night—in short, that they were *all* there.

"Lake Champlain, in its calm loveliness, shone brightly under the morning sun, its surface unruffled by the wind, and not a sail or boat was visible in all the blue extent of its far-stretching vista. The gorgeous azalias were still in their bloom, so were the snowy blossoms of the sumach, and the glorious yellow light fell in flakes between the towering pines of the ancient forest, while the dewy prairie grass glittered as it rippled beneath the pleasant breeze.

"The distant landscape and the dim blue hills that look down on the winding Hudson seemed calm and tranquil, the silence

around us was intense, the hum of a little waterfall alone breaking the stillness of the autumn morning.

"Poor Charley was like a madman, and it was in vain that I suggested to him that Treherne and the Delaware might have been compelled to make a long detour; that Ella might be ill and unable to travel on horseback, that her father might have returned, that Montgomery's advanced guard might be now far beyond the Missiskoui, that our scouts might have lost their way in going or in returning, not that I believed either possible for a moment, but I was glad to say anything that would serve to account for their delay, or soothe his gnawing anxiety; so in exceeding misery he returned to Fort St. John. The moment that morning parade was over he hastened to me again, and slowly the terrible day passed over, without tidings of Ella Carleton or her guides, and as night drew near I had almost to use force to prevent Halkett from setting out on foot for the old hunting-lodge on the Missiskoui, a place he could never have reached alone.

"Suddenly we were roused, about sunset, by a shout from the picquet, and as we looked up, the Delaware stood before us—alone!

"His aspect was fierce but weary; his hunting shirt was torn and bore traces of blood. His story was brief. They had been attacked by Indians in a deep gulley some miles distant, in the grey dawn of the morning; Treherne had been killed and the lady carried off. The Indian showed his wounds, and then claimed his reward.

"Poor Halkett, on hearing of this catastrophe, fell as if struck by a ball, and was laid on the hard bed of planks whereon the soldiers slept. He was in a delirium, yet passive and weak as a child.

"So the hostile Indians were in our neighbourhood! I though with horror of what the poor girl—on the eve of becoming a mother—might suffer at their merciless hands; and all her delicate beauty, her merry laugh, the singular combination of elegance and *espiéglerie* in her manner, came vividly back to memory, as I had seen her last, happy, radiant, and smiling, amid the glare and glitter of a garrison ball in the city of Montreal.

"I questioned the Delaware closely; but his story was simple and unvarying, so he received food, rum, and the reward which Halkett had promised.

"An irrepressible anxiety stole over me as night deepened, so taking my servant's musket and bayonet, I primed, loaded, and fixed a new flint with care; and proceeding to the distance of fifty yards in front of my line of sentinels, on the open space where the prairie grass grew thick and rank, I resolved to pass some hours there as an advanced sentinel.

"The sky was dark and cloudy, the stars were obscured by vapour, the silence was intense, and it smote upon my heart with a sense that was in some degree appalling, though I knew that my sentinels and the rest of the picquet were all within hail. The tall prairie grass waved solemnly and noiselessly to and fro; the sombre forest beyond, with the myriad cones of its black pines, stretched far away to the distant mountains, but not a sound came from thence, nor from the lone shores of the vast lake of Champlain, whose vista receded away for miles upon my right. Even if the night-herons were wading among its waters I could not hear them, and the whistle of the cat-bird was silent.

"Through the dark, I could see where the wild sumach, with its white blossoms and scarlet berries, waved over the graves of those who had perished on this fatal out-post. Their aspect was solemnizing in such a dark and silent hour, and the familiar faces of the dead men seemed to hover before me. But there was something mysterious and unaccountable in the total disappearance of those whose blood we had only traced upon the grass of prairie.

"Around where I stood this grass was more than a yard in height and thick as ripened corn. It was waving steadily to and fro as the breath of the night wind agitated it.

"I had been in that solitary place about two hours, and midnight was at hand, when an emotion like a thrill—a tremor, not of fear, but of *warning*—a 'grue,' as we Scots call it, came over me. I felt the approach of some unseen thing, and cast a hurried glance around me. Something unusual about the appearance of the prairie-grass caught my eye.

"Where, when hitherto I had looked in a direct line to the front, the surface, while swaying to and fro, seemed a flat and unbroken mass, there was now visible a dark line, a hollow furrow, as if some animal was crawling slowly and stealthily through it.

"With every nerve braced, with all the powers of vision concentrated, I watched this new appearance, and the hollow track seemed to draw nearer and nearer *to me*, slowly, silently, and almost imperceptibly, as if a snake or some such reptile were crawling towards my post; and, ere long, it was not more than fifteen yards distant.

"I placed a handkerchief over the lock of my musket to muffle the click of the lock in cocking, then I took a steady aim and fired!

"On this, 'piercing the night's dull ear,' there rang a wild, shrill and savage cry—a cry like that we had heard on the preceding

night—and a dark figure, bounding from among the grass, came rushing towards me, but I stood, with bayonet charged, ready to receive him on its point.

"He was an Indian, brandishing a tomahawk; but, within a few feet of where I stood, he fell prone on his face, wallowing in blood. The report of my musket, and his cry, brought all the picquet to the front. We dragged him into the log-hut, and discovered that I had shot our missing scout, the Delaware, Le Vipre Noir, the ball having entered his left shoulder, and traversed nearly the entire length of his body. He was mortally wounded, but the powers of life were strong within him. I was greatly concerned by this misfortune, which might procure us the enmity of his entire tribe; but why was he stealing upon our post in the manner he had done?

"Before this could be resolved, and while we were staunching the welling blood, and doing all in our humble power to soothe suffering and prolong existence, a pale and bloody figure, who had given our sentries the pass-word, staggered into the hut, and sunk, half fainting, against the guard-bed. He was old Abe Treherne, the scout, cut, gashed, and apparently dying.

"He was almost as speechless as the Delaware; but, on seeing each other, though weak and deplorable their condition, the eyes of these men glared with rage and hate, and they made such incredible efforts to reach each other, knife in hand, that the soldiers of my picquet had to hold them asunder by force.

"'Search the hunting-pouch of the darned thief—the accursed red-skin!' said Treherne, in a hollow voice. 'May I never hew hickory again if I don't have his scalp and his heart tew!'

"I was about to make the search, when Charley Halkett anticipated me, and shudderingly drew forth its cold and clammy contents.

"There were four human scalps; three were recognised as belonging our to own men, the murdered sentinels, and the fourth had attached to it the long, black silky hair of a woman—the soft and ripply tresses of Ella Carleton!

"'The red-skin fell on us suddenly in the bush, with knife and tomahawk,' said Treherne, speaking with difficulty, and at intervals; 'he took me unawares from behind, and well nigh clove my head—darned if I don't think the tommy's stickin' there yet! I fought hard for my precious life—harder for the poor lady, I guess; but I swowned, after a time, and then he dragged her into the bush.'

"'Ella—Ella!' exclaimed Halkett, wringing his hands.

"'The last I saw, 'tween the leaves and the blood that poured into my eyes, was the glitter of his scalping-knife; and the last

heard was her death-cry. Shoot the varmint, captain! I searched the bush for her till I was weary. Shoot the critter dead, soldiers! Ah! he was well named Le Vipre Noir, by that son of a Delaware dog, his father.'

"The savage scarcely heard the end of this, for Halkett, maddened by the contents of the hunting-pouch, and brief story of Treherne, placed a foot upon the prostrate body of the Delaware, then, slowly and deliberately, while his teeth were set, his eyes flashing fire, his brows knit by rage and griet, and, while an unuttered malediction hovered on his lips, he passed his sword-blade twice through the heart of the scout. The latter, for a moment, writhed upward on the steel, like a dying serpent, and then expired.

"Poor Abe Treherne died soon after, for his wounds were mortal.

"So our false Delaware proved, after all, to have been in the American interest, and inspired by some real or imaginary wrongs, to have been the assassin of our sentinels.*

"Fort St. John soon after fell into the hands of the Yankees under General Montgomery; we were all made prisoners of war, and my poor friend, Charley Halkett, died, and (far from his kindred, who lie in the Abbey Kirk of Culross) we buried him amid the snow as we were being marched, under escort, up the lakes, towards Ticonderago."

Such was the major's story of *the advanced picquet.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

COSMO JOINS.

"Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
And Andrew, dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle may they grieve ye.
For care and trouble set your thought,
Even when your end's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
When every nerve is strained."—*Burns.*

After a careful search through some of the old dog-eared Army Lists, which, with Burns's poems, Brown's "Self-interpreting Bible," and Abercrombie's "Martial Achievements of the Scots Nation," formed the chief literary stores in his snuggery, the old

* Several sentinels of an outpost were thus actually assassinated during the American war. A Scottish periodical of the time gives a Highland regiment—the 74th, I think—the credit of furnishing the victims.

quartermaster discovered that in the 94th, the famous old Scots brigade, there was a Captain Richard Warriston. He was the only one of that name in the service, and doubtless the same officer whom Quentin mentioned in his letter as having so kindly befriended him; and by Lord Rohallion's direction, Girvan at once addressed a letter to the officer commanding the regiment for some information regarding the runaway.

In due time an answer came from Colonel James Campbell, to state "that no volunteer named Quentin Kennedy had attached himself to the 94th Regiment;" thus the household of the old castle were sorely perplexed what to do, and had to trust to time or to Quentin himself for clearing up the mystery that overhung his actions.

In little more than ten days after Cosmo's name had appeared in the War Office *Gazette*, Quentin received the unwelcome information that the new lieutenant-colonel, his enemy, had arrived at head-quarters, and that a parade in full marching order was to take place on the morrow, when he would formally take over the command of the corps from poor Major Middleton.

Though daily expected, these tidings fell like a knell upon Quentin's heart, and the old sickly emotion that came over him, when Warriston brought the fatal *Gazette* to the mess-room, returned again in all its force.

"I think this Guardsman will prove a thorough Tartar," said Captain Askerne, in whose rooms Quentin first heard Cosmo's arrival canvassed; "and I fear that he wont make himself popular among the Borderers."

"From what do you infer that?" said some one.

"He refused to let the drums beat the 'Point of War' this morning."

"The devil he did!" said Colville.

"That looks ill, damme!" added Monkton.

"I do not understand," said Quentin, as if looking for information.

"It is," said Askerne, "a custom as old as the days of Queen Anne—older, perhaps, for aught that I know—for the drums and fifes of a corps to assemble before the quarters of every officer who is newly appointed to it, and there to honour the king's commission by beating the 'Point of War.' Though dying out now, and frequently 'more honoured in the breach than the observance,' it is a good old custom, peculiar to many of our Scottish regiments. The officer then gives to the drummers a few crowns or guineas, as the case may be, to drink his health; but the Master of Rohallion bluntly and haughtily told the drum-major that he 'would have no such d—d nonsense, and to dismiss!"

"The deuce! this augurs ill," said Colville, with his affected lisp, as he arranged his hair in Askerne's little camp mirror.

"Perhaps his exchequer is in a bad way."

"Not improbable, Monkton," said Askerne; "he was one of the most lavish fellows in the household brigade, and he played and betted deeply; but there goes the drum for parade; in a few minutes we shall see what like our new man is."

We shall not afflict the reader with details of this most formal parade, during which the regiment marched past Cosmo in slow and quick time in open column of companies; then followed an inspection of the men, their clothing, arms, accoutrements, and everything, from the regimental colours to the pioneers' hand-saws; but thanks to old Middleton's unwearying zeal and pride in the Borderers, the somewhat fractious lieutenant-colonel discovered nothing to find fault with.

Mounted on a fine dark charger, with gold-laced saddlecloth and holsters, Cosmo, in his new regimentals, looked every inch a handsome and stately soldier; and his appearance, together with his clear, full, mellow voice, when commanding, impressed the corps favourably. Quentin, from the rear rank of Askerne's company, surveyed him earnestly, anxiously, and with secret misgivings; for every feature of his cold, keen, and aristocratic face brought back vividly the mortifying and unpleasant passages in which they had both borne a part at Rohallion, and sadly and bitterly he felt that the *worst* was yet to come.

The parade over, the regiment was dismissed, but the orderly bugle summoned the officers to the front, where they gathered around Cosmo, who had dismounted and haughtily tossed his reins to an orderly (Allan Grange, the crest-fallen and reduced sergeant), his gentleman's gentleman—that town-bred appendage who had excited alternately the wrath and contempt of sturdy old Jack Andrews, had resigned, having no fancy for the chances of war as a camp-follower; so the Master had to content himself with such unfashionable "helps" as soldiers and batmen.

Quentin, lingering irresolutely, and half hoping to escape observation, was about to retire to his quarters, when Askerne called to him, with a friendly smile—

"Kennedy, come to the front; Middleton is about to introduce the officers, and you must not be omitted."

Poor Quentin felt that his doom had come, and he could feel, too, that as his heart sank, the blood left his cheeks. But honest anger and just indignation came to the rescue, and gave him courage.

"Why should I dread this man—why shrink from one I have never wronged?" he asked of himself. "Of what am I afraid? The sooner this introduction is over, and that I know on what

terms we are to be, the better. Perhaps he may be desirous of forgetting the past, of committing to oblivion all that has occurred, and may be the first to hold out a friendly hand. Heaven grant it may be so!"

But this suggestion of his own generous heart was little likely to be realized.

With studied politeness and grace, if not with pure cordiality, Cosmo received each officer as he was presented according to his rank, until the junior ensign, Boyle, was introduced.

"Ah!" said Cosmo, detecting one present *without* epaulettes, "you have a volunteer with you, I see."

"One," said Middleton, "whom I wish especially to introduce to your notice and future care, colonel, as a most promising young soldier, who in a few weeks has passed through all his drills, and is now fit for any duty. Mr. Quentin Kennedy—Colonel Crawford."

The nervous start given by Cosmo, the changing colour of his cheek, the shrinking and dilation of his cat-like eyes, as he raised and almost nervously let fall his eye-glass, were apparent to several; and Quentin saw the whole. Cosmo bowed with marked coldness, and turned so sharply on his heel, that his spurs rasped on the gravel of the barrack-yard.

"Major Middleton," said he, haughtily, before retiring, "tell that young man, Mr.—what's his name——?"

"Mr. Kennedy, sir."

"That when speaking to an officer, he should bring his musket to the *recover*."

And so ended this—to Quentin—most crushing interview.

"What the devil is up now?" said Monkton to Colville; "it is evident that our new bashaw doesn't like gentlemen volunteers."

"Then he is devilishly unjust—that's all," said Askerne, the Grenadier, who had begun his military life as a volunteer.

Quentin could have furnished the clue to all this; but to speak of the friendless childhood which cast him among the household at Rohallion, and, more than all, to speak of Flora Warrender, and to make her name the jest of the heedless or unfeeling, were thoughts that could not be endured. He was silent, and his tongue seemed as if cleaving to the roof of his mouth, while wearily and sadly he turned away to seek the solitude of his bare and scantily-furnished little room.

Middleton, who had followed unobserved, entered after him, and just when Quentin, to relieve his overcharged heart, was on the point of giving way to a paroxysm of rage, even to tears, the worthy old field officer caught his hand kindly, and said with earnestness—

"Don't be cast down, my boy, by what has occurred to-day. He was cold and haughty to every one of us, but it is evidently his way, and may wear off after a time. I hope so, for our Borderers wont stand it. Take courage, lad—take courage, and don't fret about it; Jack Middleton will always be your friend, though a hostile commanding officer is a dangerous rock ahead."

"Oh, major, you are indeed kind and good," said Quentin, as he seated himself at the hard wood table, and covered his burning face with his trembling hands; "but you know not all I have suffered—all I think, and feel, and fear!"

"Chut, Kennedy, look up! 'The English pluck that storms a breach or heads a charge is the very same quality that sustains a man on the long dark road of adverse fortune,' says an author—I forget who—not he of the 'Eighteen Manœuvres,' however; so, Quentin, don't let Scottish pluck be behind it. To follow the drum is your true road in life, boy, and who but God can tell when that road may end?"

"Major Middleton," said Quentin, bitterly, "the colonel's chilling manner, and *more* than you can ever know, have crushed the heart within me. I never knew my father—of my mother I have barely a memory," he continued in a broken voice—"a memory, a dream! Fate has made me early a victim—a plaything—a toy! Advise me—I feel my condition so desolate, so friendless again. What future can there be for me, if I continue to serve under him; and how can I hope for happiness, for justice, or advancement under such as he?"

"Obey and suffer in silence; bear and forbear, and you will be sure to triumph in the end. 'He that tholes overcomes,' says our Scottish proverb, and the poor soldier has much to *thole* indeed; but do your duty diligently, and you may defy any man—even the king himself."

Quentin strove to take courage from the good major's words, and ultimately did so; but Middleton knew not the past of those he spoke of, and was ignorant of the secret rivalry and settled hatred that existed between them, especially in the heart of Cosmo; while Quentin, in his ignorance of military matters, knew not that the Master, if he chose to exert his powers arbitrarily, might dismiss him from the corps at once, unquestioned by any authority for doing so; and that by the stigma thus attached to his name, the chance of any other commanding officer accepting him as a volunteer would be utterly precluded; and that Cosmo did *not* do so was, perhaps, only by a lingering emotion of justice or of shame for what his family, and chiefly Flora Warrender and that huge bugbear "the world," would say if the story got abroad.

"Better trust to the *chances* of war," thought Cosmo, grimly, as he lay sullenly at length, smoking, on a luxurious fauteuil in his ample quarters, which were furnished with all the comforts and elegance with which a Jew broker could surround him; "a brat, a boy, a chick—a d—ned foundling! With all my conscious superiority of rank, birth, and, what are better, strength of mind and character, why do I dread this Quentin Kennedy? Why and how does he seem to be so inextricably woven up with me, my fate and fortune—it may be, with the house of Roballion itself? Last of all, why the devil do I find him here?" (This question he almost shouted aloud as he kicked away the cushion of the fauteuil.) "Why do I dread him? *Dread*—I—shame! what delusion is this—what depression is it that his presence——the very idea that his existence—and contact bring upon me? In all this there is some strange fate—I know not what; but I shall trust to the chances of war for a riddance, and to the perilous work I shall cut out for *him* in particular."

And so he trusted; but with what success we shall see ere long.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DEPARTURE.

"Our native land—our native vale—
A long and last adieu;
Farewell to bonnie Teviotdale,
And Cheviot mountains blue!
The battle-mound, the border-tower,
That Scotia's annals tell,
The martyr's grave—the lover's bower—
To each, to all—farewell."—*Pringle.*

Cosmo studiously and ungenerously omitted the slightest mention of Quentin's name or existence in the letters which he wrote home to Carrick, well knowing that if he did so the kind old general, his father, would at once address the authorities at the Horse Guards on the subject of the young volunteer's advancement: and he knew that if appointed to any other corps than the Borderers, Quentin would be beyond his influence, and free from the wiles and perils in which he had mentally proposed to involve his future career.

At last came the day so long looked forward to by all the regiment—the day of its departure for foreign service, as it proved, in the Spanish Peninsula, the land to which, after severa

useless and bloody expeditions to Holland, Flanders, Sweden, and Italy, the thoughts and hopes and all the sympathies of Britain turned with the desire of driving out the victorious French, and restoring the Bourbon dynasty—almost an old story now, so remote have the struggles before Sebastopol and the wars of India made the great battles of those days seem to be.

The regiment had been under orders, and in a state of readiness for weeks; but until, for it and for others, the *route* came in the sabretasche of an orderly dragoon who rode spurring in "hot haste" to Colchester Barracks, its members knew not for what country they were destined.

The drums beat the *générale*, the signal for marching, early in the morning of a soft September day, and the four pipers of the regiment played loud and high a piobroch, that rang wildly, in all its various parts, through the calm air, waking every echo of the old barrack square; for the piobroch, we may inform the uninitiated, is a regular piece of music, containing several portions; beginning with an alarm, after which follow the muster, the march, the fury of the charge, the shrill triumph of victory and the low sad wail for the slain.

With the battalion of the Borderers, there were to march on this morning another of the Gordon Highlanders—the 92nd—one of the most noble of our national corps, together with a strong detachment of the 94th, under Captain Warriston, so the enthusiasm of all was at its height when, in heavy marching order, with great coats rolled on the knapsacks, blankets folded behind them, havresacks and wooden canteens slung, the companies fell in, and there seemed to be a rivalry between the kilted pipers of the 92nd and the Borderers as to who should excel most, or (as Cosmo, who was not inspired by overmuch nationality, said to Middleton) who should "make the most infernal noise."

Silent and grim, and keeping somewhat haughtily aloof from all his officers, Cosmo sat on his black horse, gnawing the chin-strap of his shako, as if controlling some secret irritation, while watching the formation of the corps, looking very much the while as if longing to find fault with some one.

"And so we are destined to reinforce the army under Sir John Moore?" said Quentin, for lack of something more important to remark.

"Yes," said Askerne, as he adjusted the cheek-scales of his tall grenadier cap; "Sir John is a glorious fellow, and quite the man of to-day."

"I would rather be the man of *to-morrow*," said Monkton,

with an air that implied a joke, though there was something prophetic in the wish.

"I knew Moore when he was serving as a subaltern with the 82nd in America—he is a brave, good fellow, and a countryman of our own, too," said Middleton, whose orderly brought forward his horse at that moment; "and now," he added, putting his foot in the stirrup, "a long good-bye to the land of roast-beef, and to poor old Scotland, too! I wonder who among us here will see her heather hills and grassy glens again—God bless them all!" And reverentially the fine old man raised his hand to his cap as he spoke.

A crowd formed by the soldiers' wives and children of the regiment, now gathered round him, for the old major knew all their names and little necessities, and was adored by them all. Now he was distributing among them money, advice, and letters of recommendation to parish ministers and others, and to none was he more kind than to the weeping wife of Allan Grange, who, by his reduction to the ranks, lost nearly every chance of accompanying the troops abroad.

To the screaming of the bagpipes had now succeeded the wailing of women, for many soldiers' wives and children were to be left behind, and to be transferred to their several parishes in Scotland; many to remote glens that are desolate wildernesses now; and it was touching to see these poor creatures, looking so pale and miserable in the cold grey light of the early morning, each with her wondering little brood clinging to her skirts, as she hovered about the company to which her husband belonged, his quivering lip and glistening eye alone revealing the heart that ached beneath the coarse red coat, amid the monotony of calling rolls and inspecting arms.

On one of the waggons which was piled high with baggage, huge chests of spare arms, iron-bound trunks, camp-beds and folded tents, Quentin tossed the little portmanteau which contained his entire worldly possessions; then the baggage-guard, looking so serviceable and warlike with their havresacks and canteens slung crosswise, came with bayonets fixed, and the great wains rumbled away through the echoing, and as yet empty streets of Colchester.

None of the officers were married men, fortunately for themselves perhaps, at such a juncture. The colours were brought forth with their black oilskin cases on; the advanced guard marched off, and just as the sun began to gild the church vanes and chimney-tops, and while reiterated cheers rang from the thousands of soldiers who crowded the barrack windows, and whose turn would come anon, the troops moved off, the brass

bands of other regiments—the usual courtesy—playing them out, the whole being under the command of the senior officer present, Lieutenant-Colonel Napier of Blackstone, who afterwards fell at the head of the 92nd Highlanders on the field of Corunna.

In the excitement of the scene, Quentin felt all its influences, and marched happily on. He forgot his affronts, his piques and jealousies, and as the young blood coursed lightly through his veins, he felt that he could forgive even Cosmo, were it only for Lady Winifred's sake, when he saw him riding with so stately and soldier-like an air between Major Middleton and Buckle the adjutant, at the end of the column, where the splendid grenadiers with their black bearskin caps and braided wings, made a martial show such as no company of the line could do in the shorn uniform of the present day.

All the happy impulses of youth made Quentin's spirit buoyant; thus his light heart beat responsive to the crash of the drums and cymbals, and to every note of the brass band. Thus, when on looking to the rear, he saw so many hundred bayonets and clear barrels (they were not browned in those days) flashing in the sun, with the long array of plumed Highlanders that wound through the streets after his own regiment, he forgot, we say, his grievances, and the cold and haughty Master—we believe he forgot even Flora Warrender—he forgot all but that he was a soldier—one of the old 25th, and bound for the seat of war! Ah, there is something glorious in these emotions—this flushing up of the spirit in a young and generous breast; but alas! the time comes when we look back to the long-past days with envy, regret, and, it may be—wonder!

The sorrowful parting, the hurried embraces, the last kisses, the sad and lingering glances of farewell being exchanged along the line of march every moment, by husbands and wives, by parents and children, as group after group gradually dropped to the rear of the column they could but follow with their eyes and hearts, ceased after a time to impress him by their very number and frequency; thus he soon laughed with the gay, and enjoyed all the silly banter of the heedless, as the officers began to group by twos and threes, after Colchester was left behind, and the troops were permitted to "march at ease" along the dusty highway between the meadows and ploughed fields.

"I have never seen so jolly a morning as this," said Ensign Boyle, as he trudged along with the regimental colour crossed on his left shoulder; "never since first I saw my own name in print!"

"How in print?" asked Quentin, with simplicity; "you do not mean on the title-page of a book?"

"Not at all—nothing so stupid—I mean in the Army List——"

"Where you have never been tired of contemplating it since—eh, Pimple?" asked Monkton; "but I hope you have left your flirting jacket and best epaulettes with the heavy baggage—you only need your fighting traps now."

"I say, Pimple," said Colyear, the senior ensign, who, of course, had the King's colour, "how much of the ready had that flax-spinner's daughter, about whom Monkton quizzes you so much?"

"Rumour said twenty thousand pounds."

"The devil! You might have done worse—aw—eh!"

"We're all doing worse, damme, marching for embarkation on this fine sunny morning," said Monkton. "There goes the band again to the old air; but, save you, Pimple, few among us leave 'girls behind us' with twenty thousand pounds."

"Adieu to Colchester, its morning drills and monotonous guards, and that devilish incessant patter of little drum-boys practising their da-da, ma-ma, on the drum from sunrise till sunset," said Colville, looking back to where the strong old Saxon castle and the brick steeple of St. Peter were being shrouded in yellow morning haze exhaled by the sun from the river Colne.

"*Bon voyage!*" cried a gay staff-officer, lifting his plumed cocked hat, as he cantered gaily past; "good-bye, gentlemen."

"Adieu, Conyers," replied Monkton; "can I do anything for you?"

"Where?"

"Among the ladies in Lisbon?"

The officer made no reply, but rode hurriedly on.

"That is the fellow who had to quit Wellesley's staff for eloping with some hidalgo's wife, the night after Vimiera," said Askerne. "Monkton, you hit him hard there."

"Don't you think old Jack Middleton looks dull this morning?" asked some one.

"The colonel is in a devil of a temper, I think," replied Askerne.

"Perhaps he has left his love behind him," suggested Boyle, raising his stupid white eyebrows sentimentally; "don't you think so, Kennedy?"

"Pimple, allow me to rebuke you," said Monkton, with an air of mock severity. "An ensign may wear a faded rose next his beating heart; but in a field-officer, such an insane proceeding is not to be thought of."

While this empty talk was in progress, about eight miles from Colchester, a troop of the Scots Greys approached, en route for

that place; and, as they drew near, the drums and fifes of the Borderers struck up a lively national quick step; the Greys brandished their swords, and gave a hearty cheer on coming abreast of the colours of each regiment, and loud were the hurrahs which responded.

This little episode, and the thoughtless banter which preceded it, had raised Quentin's spirits to a high state of effervescence. Fresh hope had come with all her ruddiest tints to brighten the future and blot out the past, and with all the glorious confidence of youth, he was again building castles in the air on this morning march, when the sun that shone so joyously on the green English landscape, added to the brilliance of his thoughts and enhanced his joy and happiness.

From his day-dreams, however, he was roughly awakened by the harsh voice of the Master of Rohallion, who half reined in his horse, and turning round with his right hand planted on the crupper, said with great sternness:

"Captain Askerne, I must remind you that, though officers may converse together when the men are marching at ease, such a privilege can by no means be accorded to a mere volunteer. Mr. Kennedy, rejoin your section, and keep your place, sir!"

Askerne's dark and handsome face coloured up to the rim of his bearskin cap, and his eyes sparkled with rage at the colonel's petulant wantonness; while poor Quentin, who, lost in his bright day-dreamings, had certainly, but unconsciously, diverged a few paces from the line of march to converse with his friends, fell sadly back into the ranks, and felt that the dark cloud was enveloping him again.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON THE SEA.

"A varied scene the changeful vision showed,
For where the ocean mingled with the cloud,
A gallant navy stemmed the billows broad.
Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear,
From mast and stern St. George's symbol flow'd,
Mottling the sea their landward barges row'd,
And flashed the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear,
And the wild beach returned the seaman's jovial cheer."
Vision of Don Roderick.

THE kingdom of Spain was at this time the great centre of European political interest. France, Prussia, and Russia had scarcely sheathed their swords at Tilsit, when the terrible conspiracy of Fer

dinand, the Prince of the Asturias, against his father, Charles IV. —a plot imputed to Michael Godoy, who, from a simple cavalier of the Royal Guard, had, by the queen's too partial favour, obtained the blasphemous title of the Prince of Peace—afforded the Emperor Napoleon, whose creature he was, a pretext for interfering in the affairs of the Spanish Bourbons. He decoyed the royal family to Bayonne, compelled their renunciation of the crown and kingdom of Spain, into which he poured at once his vast armies, and, after the fashion of the cat in the fable, who absorbed the whole matter in dispute by the monkeys, he solved the problem by seizing the Spanish empire, and gifting it to his brother Joseph, formerly King of Naples.

Portugal, at this juncture, deserted by her government and by her pitiful king, who fled to Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, fell easily into the power of a French army, under Marshal Junot, who was thereupon created Duke of Abrantes, a town on the Portuguese frontier.

All Europe cried aloud at these lawless proceedings, and the Spaniards, so long our enemies, with our old allies the Portuguese, were alike filled with fury and resentment. The peasantry flew to arms, and the provinces became filled with bands of guerillas, brave but reckless; so the whole peninsula was full of tumult, treason, bloodshed, and crime.

"England," says General Napier, "both at home and abroad was, in 1808, scorned as a military power, when she possessed (without a frontier to swallow up large armies in expensive fortresses) at least *two hundred thousand* of the best equipped and best disciplined soldiers in the universe, together with an immense recruiting establishment through the medium of the militia."

War, *not* "Peace at any price," was the generous John Bull's motto, and, to aid these patriots, a British army proceeded to the peninsula in June, 1808, under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley. Some sharp fighting ensued along the coast, the prologue to the long and bloody, but glorious drama, that was only to terminate on the plains of Waterloo.

On the 21st of August we fought and won the battle of Vimiera, and nine days after followed the convention of Cintra, by which the French troops were compelled to evacuate the ancient Lusitania, and were conveyed home in British ships; but still the marshals of the empire, with vast armies, the heroes of Jena, Austerlitz, and a hundred other battles so glorious to France, were covering all the provinces of Spain, from the steeps of the Pyrenees to the arid plains of Estremadura.

"Soldiers, I have need of you," says the Emperor, in one

his bulletins. "The hideous presence of the leopard contaminates the peninsula of Spain and Portugal. In terror he must fly before you! Let us bear our triumphal eagles to the Pillars of Hercules, for there also we have injuries to avenge! Soldiers, you have surpassed the renown of modern armies, but have you yet equalled the glory of those Romans, who, in one and the same campaign, were victorious upon the Rhine and the Euphrates, in Illyria and upon the Tagus? A long peace and lasting prosperity shall be the reward of your labours."

The standard of freedom was first raised among the Asturians, the hardy descendants of the ancient Goths, and in Galicia; then Don José Palafox, by his valiant defence of the crumbling walls of Zaragossa, showed the Spaniards what brave men might do when fighting for their hearths and homes.

"In a few days," said Napoleon, boastfully, in the October of 1808, "I go to put myself at the head of my armies, and with the aid of God, to crown the King of Spain in Madrid, and plant my eagles on the towers of Lisbon."

The Junta of the Asturias craved the assistance of Britain, even while the shattered wrecks of Trafalgar lay rotting on the sandy coast of Andalusia. Three years had committed those days of strife to oblivion, or nearly so, and arms, ammunition, clothing, and money were freely given to the patriots, while all the Spanish prisoners were sent home. Then, Sir John Moore, who commanded the British forces in Portugal, a small but determined "handful," was ordered to advance into Spain against the vast forces of the Duke of Dalmatia; which brings us now to the exact period of our humble story, from which we have no intention of diverging again into the history of Europe.

The body of troops among which our hero formed a unit, sailed in transports from Spithead, and in the Channel, and when Portland lights were twinkling out upon the weather-beam, poor Quentin endured for the first time the horrors of sea-sickness, and lay for hours half-stifled in a close dark berth, unheeded and forgotten, overpowered by the odour of tar, paint, and bilge, and by a thirst which he had not the means of quenching, for he was helpless, unable to move, and longed only for death.

It was no spacious, airy, and gigantic *Himalaya*, no magnificent screw-propeller like the *Urgent*, the *Perseverance*, or any other of our noble steam transports, that on this occasion received the head-quarters of the "King's Own Borderers," but a clumsy old and leaky tub, bluff-bowed and pinck-built, with her topmasts stayed forward, and her bowsprit tilted up at an angle of 45 degrees, and having a jack-staff rigged thereon. She was a black-painted bark of some four hundred tons, with the figures

"200 T."—(signifying Transport No. 200)—of giant size appearing on her headrails. Between floors or decks hastily constructed for the purpose, the poor soldiers were stowed in darkness, discomfort, and filth. The officers were little better off in the cabin, and hourly their servants scrambled, quarrelled, and swore in the cooks' galley, about their several masters' rank and seniority in the order of boiling kettles and arranging frying-pans, while the hissing spray swept over them every time the old tub staggered under her fore course, and shipped a sea instead of riding buoyantly over it.

In the mighty stride taken by civilization of late years, when steam and electricity alike conduce to the annihilation of time and space, the soldiers of the Victorian age know little of what their fathers in the service underwent, when old George III. was King. In stench, uncleanness, and lack of comfort and accommodation, our shipping were then unchanged from those which landed Orange William's Dutchmen at Torbay, or which conveyed our luckless troops in after years to the storming of the Havannah or the bombardment of Bocca Chica.

After Quentin had recovered his strength (got his "sea-legs" as the sailors have it) he presented his pale, wan face on deck one morning, when the whole fleet, with the convoy, a stately 74-gun ship, were scattered, with drenched canvas, like sea-birds with dripping wings, as they scudded before a heavy gale, through the dark grey waters of the Bay of Biscay, the waves of which were rolling in foam, under a cold and cheerless October sky.

On that comfortless voyage to the seat of war, many were the secret heart-burnings he felt; many were the cutting slights put upon him by his cold and hostile commanding officer, who went the tyrannical length of even raising doubts as to whether he should mess in the cabin or among the soldiers; but, to Cosmo's ill-concealed rage and confusion, the motion was carried unanimously and emphatically in the poor lad's favour; that the cabin was his place, as a candidate for his Majesty's commission.

Cosmo gave a smile somewhat singular in expression, and unfathomable in meaning, when Major Middleton communicated to him the decision of the officers; but though victorious in this instance, young as he was, the new affront sank deep in Quentin's heart, and he felt that there was "a shadow on his path" there could be no avoiding now.

So rapidly had events succeeded each other since that evening on which the Master had so savagely struck him down in the avenue, that Quentin frequently wondered whether his past or his present life were a dream. His last meeting with Flora Warrender among the old and shady sycamores—Flora so

loving, so tender, and true!—his last farewell of old John Girvan (but one of whose guineas remained unchanged); that horrid episode of the dead gipsy, when he sought shelter in the ruined vault of Kilhenzie; the drive in the carrier's waggon; his volunteering at Ayr; the march to Edinburgh, with the voyage to England in the armed smack, and his subsequent military life, all appeared but a long dream, in which events succeeded each other with pantomimic rapidity; and it was difficult to believe that only months and *not* years must have elapsed since the kind and fatherly quartermaster closed the gate of Rohallion Castle behind him. And now he was sailing far away upon the open sea, bound for Spain—a soldier going to meet the victorious veterans of Napoleon, in England alike the bugbear of the politician and the truant school-boy; and he was in the 25th too—that corps of which, from childhood, he had heard so much, and under the orders, it might be said truly at the mercy, of his personal enemy and bad angel, the cold, proud Master of Rohallion!

He found it difficult indeed to realize the whole and disentangle fact from fancy—reality from imagination; but that the faces of Monkton, Boyle, and the good Captain Warriston, when he saw him occasionally, were as links in the chain of events, and gave them coherency.

At times, especially after dreams of home (for such he could not but consider Rohallion), there came keen longings in his heart to see Flora once again and hear her voice, which often came plainly, sweetly, and distinctly to his ear in sleep. Of her, alas! he had not one single memento; not a ring, a miniature, a ribbon, a glove—not even a lock of her soft hair—the hair that had swept his face on that delightful day when he carried her through the Kelpie's pool in the Girvan, and which he had kissed and caressed, in many a delicious hour spent with her in the yew labyrinth of the old garden, by the antique arch that spanned the Lollards' Linn, under the venerable sycamores that cast their shadows on the haunted gate, or where the honey bee hummed on the heather braes that sloped so sweetly in the evening sunshine towards the blue Firth of Clyde.

From soft day-dreams of those past hours of happiness he was roused on the evening of the 3rd October by the boom of a heavy gun from the convoy, and several signals soon fluttered amid the smoke that curled upward through her lofty rigging. They were to the effect that *land was in sight*—the fleet of transports to close in upon the convoy—the swift sailers to take the dull in tow; and now from the grey Atlantic rose a greyer streak, which gradually became broken and violet-coloured in the

sheen of the sun that was setting in the western waves, as the hills of Portuguese Estremadura came gradually into form and tint, on the lee-bow of the transport.

Next morning, when day broke, he found the whole fleet at anchor in Maciera Bay, and all the hurry and bustle on board of immediate preparations to land the troops on the open and sandy beach, where, when the tide meets the river, a dangerous surf rolls at times, and from thence they were, without delay, to march to the front.

It was a glorious day, though in the last month of autumn. The ruddy sun of Lusitania was shining gaily on the hills and valley of Maciera, and on the plain beyond, where already the grass was growing green above the graves of our soldiers, who fell three months before at the battle of Vimiera. But little recked the new-comers of that, as the boats of the fleet covered all the bay, whose surface was churned into foam by hundreds of oars, while clouds of shakos and Highland bonnets were waved in the air, and swords and bayonets were brandished in the sunshine, as with loud hurrahs, that were repeated from the ships, and re-echoed by the rocks and indentations of the shore, the soldiers of the Borderers and the 92nd anticipated a share in the laurels that had been won at Rolica and Vimiera—hopes many were destined never to realize; for like the thousands who, elsewhere, were marching under Moore and others, towards Castile and Leon, full of youth and health, joy and spirit, many were doomed but to suffer and die, unhonoured and unurned.

Portugal, as we have stated, having been rescued from the grasp of the French by the treaty of Cintra, and Sir John Moore having been ordered to advance into Spain, notification came that a fresh force from Britain, under the orders of Sir David Baird, would land at Corunna, to co-operate with him. Thus the troops on board the little fleet in Maciera Bay were ordered at once to cross the Tagus, traverse Portugal, and join him on the frontiers—a march of more than one hundred and twenty miles, in a land where the art of road-making had died out with the Romans.

At this time the British forces in the Peninsula numbered forty-eight thousand three hundred and forty-one, bayonets and sabres.

On the 15th of the next month the French in Spain, commanded by the Emperor in person, made a grand total of three hundred and thirty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-three men, with upwards of sixty thousand horses; yet, with hearts that knew no fear, our soldiers marched to begin that struggle so perilous and unequal, but so glorious in the end!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PORTALEGRE.

"You ask what's campaigning? As out the truth must,
'Tis a round of complaining, vexation, disgust,
Night marches and day, in pursuit of our foes,
Up hill or down dale, without prog or dry clothes;
And to add to our pleasure in every shape,
The French give us doses of round shot and grape."
Military Panorama, vol. ii.

On the evening of the 11th of October, the armed guerillas who hovered on the wooded mountains which look down on the rough old winding Roman highway that leads from the dilapidated citadel of Crato to Portalegre, saw the glitter of arms in the yellow sunshine, the flashing of polished barrels and bright bayonets, and the waving of uncased colours, amid the clouds of rolling dust that betoken the march of troops; and ere long, the same picturesque gentry, in their mantles, sombreros, and sheepskin zamarras, might have heard the martial rattle of the British drum, and the shrill notes of the fife, together with the wilder strain of the Scottish bagpipe, echoing between the green and fertile ranges of the sierra that there forms the northern boundary of Alentejo, and the sides of which are clothed in many places by groves of olive, laurel and orange trees; but from the latter the golden fruit had long since been gathered, ere it was quite ripe, to save it alike from the marauding soldiery of friend and foe.

Covered with the dust of a march of twenty miles from the rustic village of Gaviao, they were our old friends of the 25th, the Highlanders, and Warriston's detachment, that were now approaching the head-quarters of the division to which they were to be attached.

On this route from the Bay of Maciera, Quentin had undergone all the misery of a soldier's life during the wet season in Portugal, where the towns were then in ruins and desolate, the country utterly destroyed, and where every one who was not in arms seemed to have fled towards the coast, for, like the breath of a destroying angel, the armies of France had passed over the entire length of the land from Algarve to Galicia, laying all desolate in that wicked spirit of waste which has been so peculiar to the French soldier in all ages.

Each day, in lieu of the old Scottish *réveille* welcoming the morning, Quentin had heard the sharp note of the warning bugle, or of the drummer beating hastily the *générale*, through the

ruined streets of Santarem, of Abrantes or elsewhere; through the equally silent lines of tents when they encamped on the mountains, or the miserable bivouac when they halted in some wild place where whilom maize or Indian corn grew, summoning the drowsy and weary soldiers to their ranks for the monotonous march of another day.

From the bare boards, the hard tiled floor, or perhaps the cold ground, whereon our volunteer had slept with his knapsack for a pillow, he had been roused by the voices of the sergeant-major, or Buckle the adjutant, shouting in the grey morning, "Fall in, 25th—stand to your arms—turn out the whole!" while the rain that swept in sheet-like torrents along the desolate streets, and the gale that tore in angry gusts among the ruined gables and shattered windows, formed no pleasant prelude to a day's march that was to be begun without other breakfast, perhaps, than a ration biscuit soaked in the half-stale fluid that filled his wooden canteen.

In camp, the tents were made to hold twelve soldiers each; but some of these were always on duty. All lay with their feet to the pole and their heads to the wall or curtain. Each man's pack was his pillow, and each slept, if he could, with a blanket half under and half over him. The rain always sputtered and filtered through in their faces, till the drenched canvas tightened, and the water was carried off by a little circular trench.

Quentin shared Askerne's tent with his two subalterns.

So the night would pass, till the cry of "Rouse!" rang along the lines, and the bugles sounded the assembly, when the blankets were rolled up and strapped to the knapsacks; the wet tents were struck and folded; the pegs and mallets replaced in their bags, and the troops prepared to march in the grey morning haze, weary, wet, stiff and sore, by reposing on the damp sod.

Quentin had always fancied a bivouac a species of military pic-nic, *minus* the ladies, pink cream, and champagne; but on the first night he lay in one, when the baggage guard was lagging in the rear and no tents were pitched, as he was drenched in a soaking blanket under the cold October wind that swept down the rocky sierra, he began to have serious doubts whether man was really a warm-blooded animal.

"Ugh!" grumbled Monkton on this night, "who, with brains in his head-piece, would become a soldier?"

"You remind me," said Askerne, as he shook the water for the twentieth time from his bearskin cap, "of a story I have heard of Maitland, one of our early colonels who served on the staff of the Duke of Marlborough. It was at Blenheim, I think, when he was riding along the line accompanied by the colonel

and another aide-de-camp, whose head was suddenly shattered by a cannon shot from the Bavarian artillery. Perceiving that Maitland looked long and fixedly at the fallen man, Marlborough said angrily—

"'Colonel Maitland, what the devil are you wondering at?'

"'Simply, that how a man possessed of so much brains as our poor friend, ever became a soldier,' replied Maitland, and the phlegmatic victor of Blenheim and Ramilies smiled as he rode on."

Then the dinner during a halt on the march was not tempting, and the *cuisine* was so decidedly bad that even Monktou could not joke about it. The slices of beef fried in a camp-kettle lid, or broiled on an old ramrod—beef that had never been *cold* (the miserable ration bullocks after being goaded in rear of the troops for miles by muleteers and mounted guerillas, being shot, flayed and cut up the moment the drum beat to prepare for dinner) was always tough as india-rubber; while the soup which the soldiers tried to make with a few handfuls of rice and the bones of the said bullocks, lacked only the snails mentioned by Peregrine Pickle, to make it resemble the famous black broth of the Spartans.

A little more of this common-place detail, and then we have done.

For all Quentin suffered, the novelty of treading a new soil and all the varied scenery of Portugal could scarcely make amends; yet there were times when he could not but view with interest and pleasure the old arches and aqueducts, the stony skeletons of departed Rome, the ruined amphitheatres and temples, especially that of Diana which Quintus Sertorius built at Evora, while remains of baths and cisterns, columns, capitals and cornices of marble and jasper lying prostrate among the reeds and weeds in wild places, made him think of Dominie Skaill and the rapture with which he would have lingered over them. Then there were the beautiful vineyards, the verdant valleys where the lemon and orange trees grew; the steep frowning sierras, wild and barren, but majestic; the fertile plain overlooked by the thirteen spires of Santarem; and the old Roman bridges, spanning rivers that rushed in foam down the granite steeps to mingle with the Tagus.

Little convents perched in solitudes where the French had failed to penetrate, and where now the bells rang in welcome to the British; tiny wayside chapels and holy wells, presided over by local saints; wooden crosses and cairns that marked where some paisano or guerilla had been shot by the French—green mounds that marked where the French, butchered in their turn,

had been buried without coffin or shroud, all seemed to tell of the new and strange land he traversed.

Though stout and hardy, poor Quentin's powers of endurance were sorely taxed. In his knapsack were all the necessaries of a soldier—to wit, one pair of shoes and long gaiters of black cloth, shirts, socks, and mitts; a forage cap, brushes, black-ball, pipe-clay, hair-ribbon, and leather. He had to carry a blanket and great coat, a canteen of wood for water, and a canvas havresack for provisions was slung over the right shoulder; a pouch with sixty rounds of ball cartridge was over the left; add to these his musket, bayonet, belts, and grenadier cap, and the reader may believe that the poor volunteer felt life a burden before he saw the hill and spires of Portalegre.

Stiff, sore, and weary, on halting he was unable to remove his trappings, or even to take off his cap without the assistance of his servant; and he usually found himself all over livid marks, as if he had been beaten about the back and shoulders with a stick. Not the least of his discomforts was to march under the hot morning sun after a night of rain, with two wet pipeclay cross-belts smoking upon his chest.

"Ah, if Flora Warrender or Lady Rohallion could see me now!" he would think, when, at the close of each day's march, he lay breathless and powerless on the floor of a billet, or the sod of a camp, or whatever it might chance to be!

Use, however, becomes second nature, and after a time Quentin learned to carry all his harness with ease, or ceased to feel it a burden.

"Châteaux en Espagne!" He was a skilful builder of such edifices, and had often erected one of great comfort and magnificence for himself; but he found a difficulty in dreaming of them while lying under a drenched blanket, or in a tent on the sides of which the rain was rushing like Rounceval peas, while he had only a knapsack for a pillow, and Brown Bess for a bedfellow.

In the Highland regiments the gentlemen volunteers carried simply a claymore and dirk; in other regiments generally a musket only; but Cosmo was resolved to *grind* Quentin to the utmost; thus he compelled the poor lad to carry all the trappings of the stoutest grenadier.

Rowland Askerne, who loved the lad for his unrepining temper, manly spirit, and gentleness, and who, like the entire regiment, saw how studiously the haughty colonel ignored his existence, was unremitting in kindness to him; and Monkton never ceased to encourage him in his own fashion.

"Well, well," he would say, "it's queer work just now, of course; but some of these fine days you will receive a parchment

from the king, greeting you as his 'trusty and well-beloved,' appointing you ensign to that company, whereof, I hope, Richard Monkton, Esquire, is captain; so take courage Kennedy, my boy!"

He strove to do so, but felt thankful with all his heart for the prospect of a few days' halt, as the regiment approached the western gate of Portalegre, where a captain's guard of Cazadores was under arms as the Borderers marched in with bayonets fixed and colours flying, their band playing General Leslie's march, "All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border," since 1689 their invariable quick step. And now its lively measure woke all the echoes of this singularly picturesque old Portuguese town, which crowns the summit of a hill, where its narrow, dark, and tortuous streets, with quaint mansions overhanging the roadway, are surrounded by an old wall, among the ruins of which may be traced the foundations of twelve great towers, and a castle where, as the monks tell us, dwelt Lysias the son of Bacchus!

The town was crowded by the regiments composing the division of Sir John Hope; thus, the deserted convents, the two hospitals, and even the episcopal palace, had all become temporary barracks; and now in the stately chambers where the Bishops of Lisbon and the Counts of Gaviao, of old the lords of Portalegre, with their white-robed prebends, or their steel-clad titulados, held their chapters and courts, and where a hundred years before the period of our story, Philip, Duke of Avignon, received the submission of the ancient city, the rollicking Irishman sung "Garryowen," as he pipeclayed his belts or polished his musket; the grave and stern Scottish sergeant daily and nightly called the roll, and John Bull in his shirt sleeves or shell jacket might be seen cooking his rations under a splendid marble mantelpiece, which bore the bishop's mitre and the count's coronet, with the knightly *paete gules* of Christ, and the green *fleur de lis* of St. Avis, while the fuel was supplied by the cedar wood of fine old cabinets or gilded furniture that had survived the sojourn of the Marshal Duke d'Abrantes and his suite in the same place.

The grenadiers of the Borderers were all billeted in a narrow and antique street, which was overshadowed by the vast façade of the cathedral; and there, from the open lattices of their room (in a house the proprietors of which were either dead or had fled), Askerne and Quentin sat smoking cigars and enjoying some of the purple wine of Oporto, from the cool, vaulted *bodega* of a neighbouring wine-house, and with their feet planted on a charcoal *brasero*, they felt, on the evening after their arrival, for the first time, that they were somewhat at home and could take their ease, with belts off and coats unbuttoned. And so they sat and watched, almost in silence, the swift-coming shadows of the October even-

ing as they deepened in the quaint vista of the old Portuguese street, where the costumes were so striking and singular; the citizen who seemed to have no lawful occupation but smoking, in his ragged mantle and broad sombrero; a secular priest with his ample paunch and shovel-shaped chapeau; a white-robed Carmelite or grey Franciscan, flitting, ghost-like, amid the masses of red coats who lounged about the doors and arcades, most of them smoking, and all chatting and laughing, till the stars came out, when the bugles would sound tattoo, and when all loiterers would have to turn in, save the quarter guards and inlying picquet.

These were ordered to be of considerable strength, as a numerous band of homeless and lawless Spanish and Portuguese guerillas, under a runnaway student of Salamanca, named Baltasar de Saldos, hovered among the hills. This band was of somewhat dubious loyalty, as the members of it, more than once, had scuffles with the British foraging parties, and even fired on them—the alliance between this country and Spain being so recent, that after the long and vexatious wars of the preceding century, the people could not understand it.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

COSMO'S CRAFT.

"Small occasions in the path of life,
Lie thickly sown, while great are rarely scattered.
* * * * * *
Shame seize me, if I would not rather be
The man thou art, than court-created chief
Known only by the dates of his promotion!"

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE two first days after Quentin's arrival in Portalegre were varied by the flogging of soldiers for marauding, when they were four months in arrears of pay. One of these men was flogged by tap of drum; a measure by which half a minute was allowed to elapse between each stroke, greatly enhancing the agony; and this process went on during more than four hundred lashes, till the bare muscles were seen to quiver under the cats, and then he was removed.

On the second day, the troops that had recently arrived from England, together with a battalion of Cazadores from Lisbon, were paraded outside the walls of the little mountain city for the inspection of the lieutenant-general commanding.

Their new uniform and accoutrements contrasted strongly with the ragged, patched, and war-worn trappings of the corps which

had served during the preceding campaign, and had so rapidly cleared Portugal of the French.

The Cazadores were active, bustling, and soldier-like little Portuguese light infantry, all clad in dark green uniforms of London make, with smart shakos, having green plumes. Their ranks were ever redolent of garlic and tobacco, to all who had the misfortune to march to leeward of them, while their snubby round noses, thick lips, and dark complexions reminded all who saw them of their Moorish descent.

Prior to the infusion of British officers among them, the Portuguese soldiery were every way contemptible. Murphy tells us that in the beginning of the war in 1762, "their army as in a most wretched state, scarcely amounting to ten thousand men, most of whom were peasants, without uniform or arms, asking charity, while the officers served at the tables of their colo els;" and matters were not much improved when Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived to uphold the interests of the House of Braganza, after which he had few better or braver troops than the Lusita ian Legion.

The general of division, Sir John Hope of Rankeillour, took particular notice of the Borderers, having been colonel of the regiment about fifteen years before. He had been wounded on the Helder, like Cosmo Crawford, and had served in the first campaign of Egypt with great distinction.

He complimented Cosmo in strong terms upon the appearance and discipline of the battalion, both of which high qualities the Master had not the candour or the generosity to say were due to the enthusiasm, exertions, and genuine *ésprit de corps* of Major Middleton; and as Sir John rode along the line, wearing a glazed cocked-hat, an old telescope slung across his well-worn red coat, the lace and aiguillette of which were frayed by service and blackened by gunpowder, he looked a thorough soldier. He was tall, well formed, and in the prime of life, being in his forty-second year; and Quentin regarded him with deep interest, for he was informed by Askerne, in a whisper, that "Sir John had joined the army as a volunteer in his fifteenth year, prior to his first commission as a cornet, in the 10th Light Dragoons."

"As we are about to enter Spain by the way of Badajoz," said the general to Cosmo, after the troops had been dismissed to their quarters, "I am particularly anxious to open a communication with El Estudiente."

"Is this a town which lies near it?" asked Cosmo.

"Oh, no. El Estudiente is a man," replied Sir John, laughing, while the staff joined, as in duty bound, and Cosmo reddened with anger.

"Who, or what is he?" he asked, coldly.

"A guerilla chief—Baltasar de Saldos, a personage of savage character, and very doubtful reputation."

"You recommend him badly, general."

"But truly, though."

"In what way can I assist you in the matter?" asked Cosmo, with increasing coldness of manner, as he began to fear that the unpleasant duty of opening the "communication" in question, was, perhaps, to devolve on him.

"I wish a messenger to convey a despatch from me to him—one of yours—not an officer, whose life would be too valuable; but if you have any private, a troublesome fellow, worthless, frequently in the defaulters' book—you understand me, colonel?"

"I think that I do, Sir John," replied Cosmo, whose green eyes shrunk as he inserted his glass in one, and gazed at the general, keenly; "but is the risk of delivering a message so great in Portugal, after you have cleared it of the French?"

"Stragglers, orderlies, and solitary individuals are at all times liable to be cut off, we scarcely know by whom, the country is so lawless; but this fellow, Baltasar, is somewhere among the mountains near Herreruela, beyond the Spanish frontier; and to say nothing of the wolves that infest the wild places hereabouts, there are three chances to one against any messenger returning alive, even after he has delivered our letter to Baltasar."

"A lively duty!"

"Portugal and Spain are not without traitors in the French interest ready to assassinate a red-coat; others are ready to do it merely to procure his clothing and arms, and some of the low wayside tabernas are kept by people who would cut any man's throat for the chance of finding half a vintin in his pocket. Then there are the hazards of being hanged as a spy by the French, of losing one's way among the wild, depopulated sierras, and dying there of starvation, or being devoured by the black wolves, or by those wild dogs, of which the Duke of Abrantes strove in vain to clear the country."

"A pleasant country for a sketching tour!" said Cosmo.

"Yet Sir John Moore has distinctly ordered me to communicate with these guerillas, to strengthen us and cover the flank of our advance towards the Guadiana, as it is not impossible that the enemy may push forward from Valladolid, and cut off our communication with the main body of the army, and as scouts and sharp-shooters, the guerillas are invaluable."

"If your messenger did *not* return, what proof would you have that he had ever delivered your letter?" asked Cosmo, with one of his strange smiles.

"The presence of Baltasar's armed guerillas on our flank as we advance through Spanish Estremadura, would be all the reply I wish. Colonel Napier, of the Highlanders, has said that he would rather go in person than sacrifice one of his men· but——"

"I am not so chivalrous," said Cosmo, laughing, as he shrugged his shoulders and toyed with his gathered reins alternately on each side of his charger's silky mane; "I have a fellow whom I can very well spare, one who is a nuisance to the regiment in general, and to me in particular—one of whom I should like to be handsomely rid; he is clever, sharp, and resolute, too," he added, as he and the general rode slowly side by side into Portalegre.

"He is the very kind of man I require; but," said the worthy general, hesitating and colouring, "it is not a duty on which I should wish to risk a valuable life—you understand me, Colonel Crawford?"

"Oh, perfectly; when will your letter be ready?"

"Before sunset; but what is the name of the bearer, for however numerous his chances of failure may be, I must duly accredit him in my mission to the guerilla chief—those Spaniards are so suspicious."

Cosmo took one of his own calling cards, and pencilling on it the name of Quentin Kennedy, handed it to the unsuspecting general.

"His rank?" asked the latter.

"Volunteer," was the curt reply.

"A volunteer, Colonel Crawford!" exclaimed the general; "I spoke of some private soldier, whose conduct made him worthless. The bearing of a volunteer must be careful—his honour spotless."

"Such are not his," said Cosmo, angrily, for this cross-questioning fretted his fierce and crafty temper; "and I have said that I wish to be handsomely rid of him."

"Very good—you are the best judge of how to handle your command; but if in your place, I should send him back to his friends in Britain."

"The letter," began Cosmo impatiently.

"My orderly will bring it to your quarters within an hour. Adieu, colonel."

"To-night, then, perhaps to-night!" muttered Cosmo, half aloud, through his clenched teeth, and with a sombre smile, as he saluted the general and rode off in search of Buckle, his adjutant. "A volunteer must always be the first man for duty; I swore to work this fellow to an oil, and egad! the game for

him is only beginning. Good! to think of the simple general baiting the very trap into which he is to fall. Once handsomely rid of him, I shall deceive the old folks at home anew, and pretend that the letters in which I mentioned that he was serving under me have *miscarried*."

He cast one of his sinister smiles after Sir John Hope, and spurred his horse impatiently up one of the streets of Portalegre, towards the Bishop's palace, where his quarters were, and where the colours of the Borderers were lodged under a sergeant's guard.

Sir John Hope was that distinguished Scottish officer, who, after Waterloo, was created Lord Niddry for his many brilliant services, and who, two years subsequently, succeeded to the old Earldom of Hopetoun. Concerning him a very singular story is still current in the French army.

It is to the effect, that the eldest son of Marshal Ney challenged the Duke of Wellington to a mortal duel, for his alleged share in his father's death—the place of combat to be any spot in Europe he chose to select. On receiving this cartel, the Duke is said to have replied:

"My life belongs to my country and must not be lightly risked in trifles!"

On this, one of his aides-de-camp, the Scottish Earl of Hopetoun, whom he had always mentioned with honour in his despatches, accepted the challenge in his place, and leaving Scotland, without bidding adieu to his Countess, Louisa Wedderburn, or their eleven children, repaired straight to Paris, and met young Ney on the Bois de Boulogne, where they fired at once. The story adds, that Hopetoun fell pierced by a ball in the head, in the very place where he had been wounded during the famous sortie from Bayonne in February, 1814, and that as he fell, young Ney flung his pistol in the air, exclaiming—

"Sacré Dieu! the Prince of Moskwa is revenged!"*

* Unfortunately for this story (which contains some strange grains of truth, and which was told me by the Lieutenant of Marshal St. Arnaud's Spahi troop in the Crimea) the gallant Earl of Hopetoun died in his bed, from natural causes, at Paris, on the 27th August, 1823.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

QUENTIN DEPARTS.

"Would ye my death? Can that avail you?
Or life? *what* life will ye to give?
For this existence, grief-embittered,
Doth hourly die, yet dying live.
My sorrows, if ye fain would slay me,
Your blows so fierce, so fast to deal
It needs not: one the least, the lightest,
Would task endurance strong as steel."
Portuguese of Rodriguez Lobo.

On the same evening when Quentin received the despatch from the adjutant, with instructions to start forthwith by the nearest road that led towards the frontier, Monkton was preparing to give a little supper in his billet, and was superintending the cooking thereof in person.

The house he occupied had belonged to some titulado of Portuguese Estremadura. The ceilings were lofty, and the cornices of the heavy and florid Palladian style were elaborately gilded, and everywhere the green *fleur-de-lis* of St. Avis (an order founded by Alphonso, for defence against the Moors, from whom he took Santarem and Lisbon) was reproduced among the decorations.

The floors were of polished oak; the furnitnre, in many instances richly gilded, was all of crimson velvet stuffed with down, and the cabinets of ebony were covered with carvings, some representing the past discoveries, victories, and glories, real or imaginary, of the kings of Portugal. Many fine paintings bore marks of additions received from the French in the shape of bayonet stabs and bullet holes, with finishing touches in burnt cork, by which Venuses and Madonnas were liberally supplied with moustachios and so forth; while the frescoes bore such lovely delineations of fair-skinned, golden-haired, and ripe-lipped goddesses and nymphs, that, as Monkton said, "they made one long for pagan times again." Over a Venus being attired in scanty garments by some completely nude graces, was the motto, "*Si non caste tantum modo caute.*"

"Which means?" asked Askerne, who had been trying to make it out.

"In good Portuguese, 'If you can't be chaste, at least be cautious,' an old-fashioned aphorism," said Monkton.

"Poor Portugal!" said Askerne, thoughtfully; "she is left now with but mere traditions of her past; a country without

kings, warriors, poets or painters. The land of Camoens, of Rodriguez Lobo, of Antonio Ferreria, Bernardez, the captive of Alcazalquiver, of Andrade de Cominha, cannot *now* produce one patriotic song."

In one corner of the apartment a dark stain on the floor showed where blood had been lately shed, and there were the marks of a woman's hand upon the wall and oak-boards, as if she had been dragged from place to place, thus telling of some terrible outrage—an episode of its recent occupants, the French.

"Now, what the devil is the meaning of this?" asked Monkton, looking up from his culinary operations as Buckle entered "Kennedy can't be the first man for duty."

"No, he is not," replied Buckle, curtly, for having on his sword and gorget, he felt and looked official.

"Then why the——"

"Why select him, you would ask, with the addition of some unpleasant adjective?"

"Yes."

"Because a volunteer is always the first man for any duty that is dangerous."

"And is this duty so?" asked Quentin, with very excusable interest.

"Undoubtedly—there is no use concealing the fact, as foreknowledge will make you wary; and if successful, it will be reported favourably to head-quarters, 'that negotiations with the formidable guerilla chief—what's his infernal name—have been honourably concluded, through the courage and diplomatic skill of that very distinguished volunteer, Mr. Quentin Kennedy, now serving with the 25th Foot, whom I recommend most warmly to your Royal Highness's most earnest and favourable consideration'—that is the sort of thing," added the adjutant, putting aside his sword and belt, as the odour of the cooking reached his olfactory nerves.

"You think, Mr. Buckle, that the colonel will recommend me thus?" asked Quentin, his young heart throbbing with delight.

"And Sir John Hope, too—of course; they can do nothing else," was the confident reply, for the adjutant believed in what he said.

Hope, pride, and enthusiasm swelled up in the poor lad's breast as the adjutant spoke.

"Ah," thought he, "I should have offered my hand to Cosmo, and shall do so when I *return*."

"Congratulate me," major, he exclaimed, hastening to Middleton, who entered at that moment; "I have been chosen for an important duty already."

"So I have heard—so I have heard," he replied, quickly shaking his head and his pigtail with it.

"And what do you think of it? Here is the despatch, addressed, 'Al Senor Don Baltasar de Saldos, Herreruela, *vid* Valencia de Alcantara.'"

"You are particularly to avoid that town," said Buckle, emphatically.

"Why?"

"Because a French garrison occupy it—some of General de Ribeaupierre's brigade."

"It is a little way across the frontier," said Quentin; "so, my dear sir, what do you think of the duty?"

"Think—that the whole affair is a cruelty and a shame!" exclaimed the old major, bluntly. "I've been looking at the map, and see that the place is some miles beyond the frontier—in the enemy's country, in fact."

"Come, major, don't discourage him," said Buckle; "he must go now, and there is an end of it."

"I wish there was. Does he go in uniform?"

"Yes; it is safer."

"How?"

"In mufti he might be taken for a spy."

"Uniform did not protect my poor friend André of the 26th, when taken on a similar mission."

"Come, come, I'll bet you a pony apiece that Kennedy comes off with flying colours," said Monkton. "Some more butter, Askerne—where's the pepper-box?—Quentin is a devilish sharp fellow, and always keeps his weather-eye open, as the sailors say."

"What is the distance between this and Herreruela?" asked Askerne, who had hitherto remained silent.

"About thirty British miles, as a crow flies."

"And he is to proceed on foot?"

"But he can do so at leisure—there is no word of breaking up our cantonments here yet."

"But in this country miles seem to vary very much, Mr. Buckle," said Quentin; "when am I supposed to be back?"

"Back?" replied Buckle, rather puzzled.

"Excuse my asking," said the lad, modestly; "but I am so ignorant of the country, and so forth."

"True, Kennedy. Well, supposing that you see this Baltasar de Saldos—fine melodramatic name, isn't it?—he is doubtless a fellow in a steeple-crowned hat and seven-league boots, all stuck over pistols and daggers—supposing you see him at once, there is nothing to prevent you being back in six days, at latest."

"So we are about to make a night of it, the first jolly one we

have had since landing at the mouth of the Maciera, and, damme, here is poor Quentin going to leave us!" said Monkton, who in his shirt sleeves was devilling a huge dish of kidneys over a brasero, for the orthodox fuel of which (charcoal) he had substituted the shutter of a window, torn down and broken to pieces. "One glass more of Oporto for the gravy, another dash of pepper, and the banquet is complete. You must have supper with us to-night, ere you go, Quentin."

"The same readily-found fuel was roasting on the marble slab of the richly-carved fireplace, a goodly row of sputtering castanos, which were superintended by Rowland Askerne.

"Where is Pimple to-night?" he asked, looking up.

"With Colville, on the quarter guard," said Monkton; "and, rosaries and wrinkles! where do you think they are stationed?"

"By your exclamation, opposite a convent, probably."

"Exactly—el Convento de Santa Engracia; but it hasn't a window to the street, so they might as well have the wall of China to contemplate."

A borrachio skin of Herrera del Duque (the famous wine of the Badajoz district), of which Monkton had somehow become possessed, lay on the beautiful marqueterie table, like a bloated bagpipe, while tin canteens, silver-rimmed drinking-horns, tea-cups, everything but crystal vessels, were ranged round to imbibe the contents from.

The plates and other appurtenances of the table were of the same varied description, and were furnished by the guests themselves, as the French had carried off or destroyed nearly everything in the house. A canteen of brandy and a loaf of fine white bread completed the repast, to which all brought good humour and appetites that were quite startling, better than any they could ever procure for the dainties of the mess-table at Colchester.

Servants were entirely dispensed with; thus the conversation was free and unrestrained, like the jests and laughter.

"I can scarcely assure myself that you are actually going to-night," said the major to Quentin; "the whole arrangement is a black, burning shame; an older man, one of more experience, one who has been longer in the country and had served the campaign in Portugal, should have been sent on this duty."

"But the greater is my chance of honour!" said Quentin, cheerfully.

"And peril too. Your health—and success, boy! This wine is excellent, Monkton—but the service is going to the devil! we have never been the men we were since the abolition of hair-powder and pigtails, brigadier wigs and Nivernois hats! Think of a garrison court-martial according four hundred and odd lashes

to a poor devil yesterday, for borrowing a loaf of bread like this, when we are all so far in arrears of pay; and yet, I remember when we ate Jack Andrew's baby in America, men were tucked up to the next tree for just as little."

"Jack Andrews' baby," said Quentin, looking up from his devilled kidneys at the familiar name.

"It is an old regimental story," said the major, laughing, as he filled his horn with wine from the gushing borrachio; "it happened when we were in garrison at Fort St. John on the Richelieu River (a place I have often told you about); provisions were scarce, for the Yankees had intercepted all our supplies, so that at times we were literally starving, while to conciliate the colonists, strict orders were issued against plundering. It was as much as your life was worth if the provost-marshal caught you steal anything, even a kiss from a girl in Vermont or New York, so such a thing as levanting with a sucking-pig or a turkey-poult, was not to be thought of even in our wildest dreams; moreover they would not have *sold* a chicken for thrice its weight in gold, to a red-coat!

"Some weeks passed over thus; we were getting very lanky and lean, and though our lovely countenances were ruddied by the American frost, we were always hungry, always thirsty, and longed in our day-dreams for a cooper of the old mess port, or a devilled drumstick; but these were only to be had at the head-quarters of the Borderers and Cameronians, then far away in the Jerseys, in pursuit of the rebels, under Lord Stirling; and we often shivered with hunger as well as with cold under the ice-covered roofs of our wooden barrack at night.

"Lord Rohallion of ours, had a servant named Jack Andrews, a knowing old file, from his own place in Carrick, who contrived to make off with a sheep. How or where Jack did it, the Lord only knows, and we never inquired; but the owner, a pennsylvanian quaker, made an outcry about it, and the provost's guard were speedily on poor Jack's track with the gallows rope. A stab with a bayonet in the throat soon silenced the sheep, and Jack brought it under his greatcoat to our quarters, and while the provost, with Simon Pure, was overhauling the soldiers' barrack, we tucked up the spoil in a cradle, with a blanket over it and a muslin cap round its head. We set a piper's wife to rock it, while Jack pretended to make caudle at the fire, and in this occupation they were found, when the provost came in, intent on death, and Broadbrim on retribution.

"Hush-a-by, baby, on the tree-top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock,"

sung the piper's wife, patting the sheep tenderly.

"Hush,' said Jack to the intruders; 'don't stir for the life that is in you!'

"'Why—what is the matter with the baby?'

"'It's either measles or smallpox; we don't know which,' said Jack.

"'Yea verily—aye—ho, hum,' snivelled the Quaker.

"'All right,' said the provost, as he withdrew with his guard to search elsewhere. The sheep was soon cut up, divided, and a sumptuous supper Major André, Rohallion and a select few of us had that night, and ere morning all traces of it had disappeared, save the skin, which, to the rage of the provost, was found concealed, no one knew by whom, between the sheets of his bed. Long after the fort was taken by the Yankees, and none had a fear of coming to the drum-head, the whole story came out, and many a laugh we had at the provost-marshal and Jack Andrews' baby."

The names mentioned thus incidentally by the good major recalled so much of home and of old associations to Quentin, that his warm heart swelled with kind and affectionate memories; and now, when on the eve of departing from friends that he loved so well, and who had a regard so great for him—departing on a lonely and decidedly perilous duty—he was on the point of telling them the story of his earlier life, so that, if aught occurred to him, his military companions might write to Rohallion; but thoughts of the haughty Master chilled him, and he repressed the suddenly-conceived idea.

And now the time came when he was compelled to depart.

He had three days' cooked provisions in his havresack, and he had still money enough remaining for his wants in a land where he had to journey almost by stealth, and where the French had left so little either to buy or to sell.

He took with him his great-coat and forage-cap; in lieu of his heavy musket, Askerne gave him a sword, and Middleton a pair of pistols; and the former accompanied him nearly two miles on the road from Portalegre.

"You dare danger fearlessly, Quentin," said he.

"I dare it as those who are friendless and alone do! The knowledge that I have few, perhaps none, who would really regret me, renders life of little value."

"Come, Kennedy, egad! this bitterness is ungrateful," said Askerne, in a tone of reproach.

"True, my friend, forgive me! I believe that you at least, with Middleton and Warriston—he's on duty, remember me to him—Monkton, and a few *others* that are far, far away, have, indeed, a sincere regard for me."

"Well, then, how many more, or what more would you have? The world is not so bad after all," said Askerne, laughing, as he shook his hand warmly and bade him adieu, after giving him much good advice concerning prudence and care of consorting with strangers on the way; for Askerne and his brother officers saw, or suspected that the colonel's selection of the lad was the result of bad feeling; while Quentin deemed it but a part of his hard and venturesome lot as a gentleman volunteer.

Often he turned to wave a farewell to Askerne, whose erect and soldier-like figure was lessening in the distance, as he walked back to Portalegre. At last, a turn of the road, where it wound suddenly between some olive groves, hid him entirely; and, for the first time, an emotion of utter loneliness came over Quentin's heart as he hastened towards the darkening hills.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ANXIOUS FRIENDS.

"Oh, Leolyn, be obstinately just;
Indulge no passion and deceive no trust.
Let never man be bold enough to say,
Thus, and no farther shall my passion stray;
The first crime past compels us into more,
And guilt grows *fate*, which was but *choice* before."

AARON HILL.

THE third day and the fourth passed away at Portalegre; on the fifth and sixth, Major Middleton and others, who felt a friendly interest in Quentin Kennedy, began to surmise, when they met on the morning or evening parade, or in each other's billets, or so forth, that it was time now he had reported his return, and the good or bad success of his journey, to the colonel and general commanding the division.

Other days passed; it was whispered about from staff-office officials that ere long the division would leave Portalegre, as the whole army was about to advance against the enemy; and then Captain Askerne, Monkton, Buckle, the adjutant, and others, became double anxious about the lad, and were interested as much as men could be under their circumstances, when human life is deemed of so little value as it is when on active service and before an enemy.

As for Warriston of the 94th, not being under the immediate command of Colonel Crawford, he openly and bitterly inveighed against "the iniquity of having sacrificed a mere youth in such a

manner," and threatened "to bring the matter prominently before Sir John Moore," who commanded the forces in Portugal.

"He has, perhaps, gone over to the enemy—a despatch is sometimes well paid for," said Cosmo, in his sneering manner, when some of the remarks reached him on parade, one morning.

"Impossible, my dear sir—impossible!" said Middleton, testily, while spurring and reining in his horse; I know the lad as if he were my own son, and feel assured that he is the soul of honour; that he was all ardour for the service, and that he would die rather than disgrace himself."

"Indeed—ah-aw—you think so?" drawled Cosmo, with his glass in his sinister eye, as he surveyed the major with a glance of somewhat mingled cast.

"I do, colonel," was the emphatic rejoinder.

"He has disappeared at all events—a dubious phrase. If the fellow has not levanted to the Duke of Dalmatia with General Hope's despatch, may his heart not have failed him? May he not have shown the white feather? Better men than he, among the Belem Rangers, have done so ere now."

The imaginary corps referred to contained one of the most offensive imputations to the ears of Peninsula men; thus Captain Askerne exclaimed—

"Cowardice, Colonel Crawford—would you infer cowardice?"

"I infer nothing, gentlemen, but that better men than he have shown the white feather."

"Not in *the Line*, that I am aware of," was the somewhat pointed remark of Middleton; and Cosmo, who had lately come from the Guards, crimsoned with suppressed passion.

"A volunteer is a soldier of fortune, and none such can ever be a coward," said Askerne, stoutly.

"Of course not—the idea is absurd," added Middleton, looking round the group of officers, who glanced their approval.

"You are warm, Major Middleton," said Cosmo, sternly, while his eyes gleamed with their most dangerous expression; "somewhat unnecessarily warm on this trivial subject, I think."

"I am at least honest, colonel, as he must be who defends the absent or the dead."

"We have had enough of this—to your companies—fall in, gentlemen!" said the colonel, sternly and impatiently, as he spurred his horse, unsheathed his sword, and the formula of the parade began, after which he revenged himself by drilling the corps, under a drizzling rain for nearly two hours, forcing Askerne's grenadiers to skirmish in a swamp, and making old Major Middleton put the battalion twice through the eighteen manœuvres.

About this time a patrol of Portuguese cavalry found near the high

road that led through a desert towards the Spanish frontier, the remains of a man, almost reduced to a skeleton, picked, gnawed, and torn asunder, to all appearance recently, by those devouring wolves and wild dogs which infest the mountains of the district.

Terrible surmises of Quentin's fate were now whispered among the Borderers; the officer in command of the patrol was closely questioned by Middleton, Warriston, and others; but he constantly stated that the victim had probably been stripped by robbers before being devoured, as nothing had been found near the remains that might lead to their identification, or in any way connect them with the missing Quentin Kennedy. Thus, in default of other proof, as time wore on, the members of the regiment made up their minds to consider the poor bones as his, and concluded that he had perished miserably in the wilderness.

To do Cosmo Crawford justice, there were times when he was not without secret emotions of shame, and even of compunction, for the part he acted to Quentin. His own conscience, the small still voice that would speak, could not acquit him; but those gleams of the better spirit came only briefly and at intervals, and such unwelcome thoughts were always eventually stifled by the constitutional malignity of his nature, and he would mutter to himself—

"Pshaw! he is well away; what the devil was he to me, or I to him?"

It was while the troops were lingering at Portalegre and elsewhere along the Spanish frontier, that Lord Castlereagh's despatch, containing the first organized plan of the future campaign, arrived in Lisbon.

In the northern provinces of Spain, thirty-five thousand horse and foot were to be employed; ten thousand of these were to be embarked from British ports, and the rest to be drafted from our army of occupation in Portugal; and these were supposed to be equal to cope with the vast hosts pouring through the many passes of the Pyrenees from France and Germany, and those which already blackened all the plains of Castile and Arragon.

We have elsewhere mentioned the vast strength of the French army, whose head-quarters were at Vittoria.

The brave but ill-fated Sir John Moore was ordered to take the field without delay with the troops that were under his own command. Some fortress or city (unnamed) in Galicia, or on the borders of the kingdom of Leon, was to be the place for concentrating the whole allied armies of Britain, Spain, and Portugal; and his specific plan of operations was *afterwards* to be concerted with the stupid, jealous, and uncompromising local juntas, and the obstinate and impracticable Spanish generals.

These orders were perilous, loose, and vague; they prom

nothing, but only that war at any hazard was to be waged in Old Castile and on the banks of the Ebro.

And now for a time let us change the scene to a not less tuneful or classic locality—the rocky hills and heather braes of Carrick's western shore.

CHAPTER XL.

THE PARAGRAPH.

"My kindred are dead, my love is fled;
Courage, my heart, thou canst love no more
Pale is my cheek, my body is weak;
Courage, my heart, 'twill soon be o'er.
Dim are my eyes with tears of sorrow,
They ache for a night without a morrow."—M. N. S.

It was towards the end of the month—the last days of October, now.

The acorns were falling from the moss-grown oaks, the hollies and hedge-rows were gay with scarlet berries and haws, the grey sea-gulls were often seen mingling with the black gleds and hoodie-crows far afield inshore. The redwing, the fieldfare, and the woodcock had come again to their old haunts on the braes of Rohallion, in the oakwood shaw, in the hawthorn birks that overhang the Girvan, and the deep carse land where the rushes grew and the water flowed of old.

The autumn winds, as they swept through the hollow glen, shook down the last brown leaves of the old sycamores, and the spoils of the past summer lay in rustling heaps about the haunted gate and the guns of La Bonne Citoyenne on the battery before the castle-keep. From the tall square chimneys of the old feudal stronghold on the storm-beaten bluff, the gudeman of Elsie Irvine and other fishermen from the coves, saw the smoke of the rousing fires ascending into the grey autumn sky, and the evening lights glittering early in the great towers, a land-mark now to them as it had been to their forefathers long ages ago, when the Scot and the Saxon found work nearer home for their swords than fighting for conquered Spain or ravaged Portugal.

"People now-a-days, with the help of the penny-post and the telegraph, and the endless means of communication and of coming and going, are certainly able to *care for* a greater number of persons than they could have done a hundred years ago," says a recent writer in the "Cornhill;" but he might have said thirty years ago, so far as the people of Scotland are concerned.

Thus, secluded by her own retiring habits and personal circumstances, as well as by those incident to the time, content to reside in her narrow circle, and chiefly among her husband's household and dependents, Lady Rohallion's heart yearned with all a mother's love for her lost *protégé*, the more, perhaps, that the cold and repulsive manner of her only son Cosmo had cast her warm and affectionate heart somewhat back, as it were, upon herself; though the memory of much if not all his shortcomings in the way of filial reverence and regard were now by her forgotten, or merged in the idea of his absence at the seat of war.

Quentin's memory she cherished chiefly in silence; for, still fostering her hopes or views with regard to Cosmo and the wilful little heiress of Ardgour, she spoke of the lost one but reservedly and at long intervals, to the latter; though, sooth to say, young Fernie of Fernwoodlee, a neighbouring proprietor, had become so frequent a visitor at the castle, that, so far as good looks, assiduity, and unwearing industry as an admirer might go, he bade fair—gossips said—to supplant both Quentin and the Master of Rohallion, for a lover lost, and another commencing a campaign, were just as satisfactory as no lover at all.

It was about this time that the post-bag brought by John Legate, the running-footman, from Maybole, was opened before Lord Rohallion by his faithful old henchman Jack Andrews, and emptied on the breakfast-table.

One small missive, bearing Fernwoodlee's crest—a fern leaf all proper—he handed to Flora, who coloured slightly and said it referred to a proposed ride as far as the ruins of Kilhenzie, to see the Eglinton hounds throw off, as the keeper had promised to find a leash of foxes in the cover there.

"These fox-hunting fools are beginning their work betimes—why, this is only October," said his lordship drily; "they would be better employed riding in the light dragoons against the enemies of Europe."

Pushing the rest of the letters across the table to Lady Rohallion, as if for perusal at her leisure, he opened the latest newspaper, and betook himself, with true military instinct, to the gazette and matters pertaining to the war against France and the Corsician, by land and sea.

Erelong, it was with an exclamation of astonishment that shook the powder from his venerable pigtail, that made Lady Rohallion permit the urn to overrun her teacup, Flora to start nervously, Mr. Spillsby to drop the egg-stand with its contents, and Jack Andrews to spring mechanically to "attention" on his lame leg, that his lordship, raising his voice to an unusually high pitch, read the following paragraph:—

"On the 6th October, the final despatch of the premier reached the general commanding at Lisbon, and by this time the whole army will have been in motion across the Spanish frontier, to chastise the barbarian hordes of the Corsican tyrant, under whose sway the people of France and Spain alike are groaning. We rejoice to say that before marching from Portalegre, Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope of Rankeillour most successfully opened a communication with the famous guerilla, El Estudiente, a matter fully and finally arranged by the skill and courage of Mr. Quentin Kennedy, a young volunteer, then serving with H.M. 25th Regiment, or 'King's Own Borderers.'"

"Quentin!" exclaimed Flora, rushing behind Lord Rohallion's chair, her cheeks flushing red, as she peeped over his shoulder.

"Quentin Kennedy!" said Lady Rohallion, in a breathless voice, as she grew pale and trembled.

"The boy is found—found at last! There, read the paragraph for yourselves," said his lordship, flourishing the paper over his head.

Poor Lady Rohallion made many ineffectual efforts to do as he bid her; but her eyes were full of tears, and her spectacles were quite obscured.

"Spillsby—Andrews, send for John Girvan; zounds! the 25th, too—the blessed old number!—here's news for him! The lost is found again! You'll write to him, Winny—and Flora, too—gad, we'll all write!" continued the old lord, in a very incoherent way. "The cunning rogue, to keep us in suspense so long, and to be wearing the buttons of the old Borderers all the time. It must be he; there can't be two Quentin Kennedies; oh, no—of course it must be he!"

"There is something strange in this," said Lady Rohallion, finding relief in tears; "how many letters, Flora, have we had from Cosmo since he left us?"

"Five."

"Five letters!"

"One from Colchester; others from Santarem and Abrantes; and two from Portalegre."

"Exactly," said Lord Rohallion, on whose benign brow a cloud gathered; "five letters, and in none of them has one word escaped him concerning the poor lad who joined the corps before him—the dear old 25th, of my earliest memories. It is not generous, Winny; I don't envy Quentin his commanding officer; it shows a bad animus, and I am sorry our boy should behave so."

Lady Winifred was silent, for she felt the truth of what her husband said; and Flora, full of her own joyous thoughts, was silent too.

"Read over the paragraph again, Flora, darling; egad, I must cut it out, and send it over to Earl Hugh, at Eglinton; and while Flora read, Rohallion walked to and fro, rubbing his hands with intense satisfaction and delight.

"But, good heavens, my lord!" she suddenly exclaimed, while the colour left her face, "what is this that follows?" there is here another paragraph, about—about——"

"About what?"

"Poor Quentin," she added, faintly.

"Read it!" said Rohallion, impetuously.

"'We regret to have to add, it is feared that after accomplishing this valuable public service with the guerilla, our enterprising young soldier has fallen a sacrifice to his zeal, or the lawless state of the country, as—as he has not been heard of since.' . . . ."

Flora's sweet voice died away almost in a tremulous whisper as she read this blighting paragraph, which Lord Rohallion, after hastily snatching the paper from her, read again and again, with his brows deeply knit.

It did not fall upon him with the crushing effect it had upon the two ladies, who sat silently weeping, for the words of the paragraph were, to them, terribly suggestive and vague; and now the old quartermaster, who had been noisily summoned by his veteran comrade the valet, arrived to join the conclave; and truly, had a thirteen-inch bombshell, shot from a mortar of similar diameter, exploded among the breakfast equipage, worthy John Girvan could not have seemed more astonished and bewildered than he did by the whole affair.

Lord Rohallion and he, as old soldiers, endeavoured to explain the matter away, and to speak from past experience of many instances of men reported as "missing" who always turned up again; newspaper paragraphs in general they treated with great contempt, and expressed their certain conviction that "by this time," no doubt, he had rejoined the corps.

Indeed, so certain were they of this that Lord Rohallion desired the quartermaster to write at once; Flora, with charming frankness, offered to enclose a tiny note, and the old general wrote at once by the next mail to the Horse Guards, urging "the immediate promotion of his young friend to the first ensigncy at the disposal of his Royal Highness the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief—in the 25th Foot, if practicable."

This done, the male part of the household, though full of the affair, and their innumerable yarns of the corps, which it had called to memory, felt more composed on the subject. The quartermaster furbished up his old red coat, and remained to dinner; Flora's engagement to ride with young Fernwoodlee and

the meet at Kilhenzie, were committed to oblivion, and were utterly forgotten, as she sat alone, full of thought, on the old mossgrown garden-seat, with the autumn leaves whirling round her.

Through the branches of the stripped trees on which the rooks were crawing, the sunlight fell aslant upon the copper *gnomon* of the ancient sun and moon dial, which occupied the *centre of the quaint* Scoto-French garden, and round the pedestal of which Quentin, to please her, during the last spring, had trained a creeping plant.

The plant was still there, but its tendrils and trailers were dead, withered, and yellow, and sadly Flora felt in her heart that she was lonely, and that Rohallion was now a *broken home*—broken, indeed, as if Death himself had been there!

Lady Winifred was also alone.

The noonday sun was streaming as of old into the yellow damask drawing-room, and the sea-coal fire crackled on the hearth between the delft-lined jambs cheerily and brightly. Before it, on the thick cosy rug, a sleek tom-cat sat winking and purring, and the favourite terrier of Quentin, coiled up round as a ball, was there too, but fast asleep beside the many-spotted Dalmatian dog, which always followed the old-fashioned family carriage.

The antique ormolu clock, that ticked so loudly on the mantelpiece on the night when Quentin was rescued from the wreck, and his father's corpse was cast on the surf-beaten sand, and when he, a wailing child, was brought by Elsie Irvine to Rohallion, was ticking there still, quietly, regularly, and monotonously, and Lady Winifred looked at its quaint dial wistfully, as she might have done in the face of an old and familiar friend.

Now Quentin and her beloved and only son were both far, far away; both were to encounter the perils of war, and she might never see them more! How much and how many things had happened, she thought, and still the old clock ticked there monotonously, even as it had done when, on an evening now many, many years ago, she came a blooming bride to the old castle by the sea; and so it might continue to tick, long after she, and her comely and affectionate old lord, lay side by side among the Crawfords of past centuries in the Rohallion aisle of the venerable kirk whose tower she could see terminating the woody vista of yonder lonely glen.

The paragraph of the morning had called up a multitude of sad thoughts that had long been buried, and she felt melancholy, almost miserable, and opening her escritoire, she looked long and

earnestly on the relics of Quentin's father—his commission in the French service, the letter in the poor man's pocket-book, and the ring that was taken from his finger, bearing the name of *Josephine*—the boy's mother, doubtless.

The dominie, to whom the quartermaster lost no time in hastening with the intelligence, like the old lord, was stout in his belief that Quentin would, as he phrased it, "cast up again."

"Disappeared," he repeated two or three times; "the bairn no since heard o'; the thing's no possible! He will, he shall return again, be assured, to receive his reward, for he is worthy of a crown of gold—worthy of it, yea, as ever were Manlius Torquatus or Valerius Corvus, ilk ane o' wham, as we are told in Livy, slew a Gaul in single combat."

This classic reward did not seem very probable, when a few weeks after, a long official letter was brought to Rohallion, and added greatly to the anxiety and perplexity of the inmates thereof.

In this missive the military secretary, by direction of H.R.H. the Duke of York, "presented his compliments to Major General Lord Rohallion, K.C.B., and regretted to acquaint him that it was impossible to entertain his request with regard to Mr. Quentin Kennedy, a volunteer with the 25th Foot, as matters had transpired which might render his clearance before a general court martial necessary."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE WAYSIDE CROSS AND WELL.

"If in this exile dark and drear,
To which my fate has doomed me now
I should unnoticed die—what tear,
What tear of sympathy will flow?
For I have sought an exile's woe,
And fashioned my own misery!
Who then will pity me?"

Cancionero de Amberes, 1557.

As Quentin walked on in solitude after Rowland Askerne left him, he could not help musing, as he frequently did, on the changes a short time had wrought in him and in his ideas. It would seem that from a mere day-dreaming school-boy, whose most onerous purposes were to fill his basket with trout from the Girvan, the Doon, or the Lollards' Linn; to supply the cook with an occasional brace of ptarmigan from the oakwood shaw,

or of blackcock from the Mains of Kilbenzie; from trying a pad for Flora, or culling the flowers which he knew she loved most, he had risen to be a man and a soldier, valued by his comrades, all officers of bravery and position, trusted by his superiors, and charged with a great and confidential duty—a portion of the vast game of war and politics now played by Britain for the deliverance of Spain; and yet, withal, he longed for a companion, and to hear the voice of a friend, for a sense of intense loneliness gradually stole over him as the twilight deepened, and the purple shadows grew more sombre on the hills of Portuguese Estremadura.

To Quentin it seemed that his bodily strength and bulk had increased, for drill and marching had developed every muscle to the fullest extent; thus he was stronger, more active and hardy than before.

He felt too, that the time had come when youth was no longer a libel against him; the time for doing something worthy of being mentioned in a despatch of the commander-in-chief, in the government gazette, in general orders — something gallant, manly, and dashing; and that he would turn the occasion to its best account, and achieve something glorious, "or," as romances and melo-dramas have it, "perish in the attempt."

"If I acquit myself well in this, my first duty, it shall in itself prove a revenge upon Cosmo!" thought he.

And so he trod manfully and hopefully on, dreaming of the future, knowing but little of the path he was at present to pursue, and less of the perils and pit-falls that were around it.

As the evening deepened into night with great rapidity, for there is very little twilight in those regions—the mighty shadows of the sierra fell eastward in a sombre mass across the valley through which lay the road—a mere bridal path—towards the Spanish frontier, while the ranges of peaks that faced the west were still glowing in ruddy saffron or pale purple against the blue dome of the star-studded sky.

About twelve miles from Portalegre, the road pursued by Quentin enters a narrow gorge or immense chasm or cleft which rends the mountains from their summit to their base. Down the steep wall of rock on one side, a spring trickles for some hundred feet, and at the foot, near the road-way, it is received into the quaintly carved basin of an ancient stone fountain, behind which stands a memorial cross.

A niche in the shaft of the latter contains a little wayside altar. An image of the Madonna was rudely and gaudily painted in the recess, and before it a copper lamp was always kept burning. This shrine, once reputed to be of great sanctity, had been mutilated and its lamp destroyed by the French; but it had been

replaced by another, which was always supplied with wick and oil by the passing muleteers, contrabandistas, guerillas, and others.

The rays of this lamp were burning feebly in the vast rocky solitude, forming a strange and picturesque feature in the deep dark dell, the silence of which was broken only by the plash of the slender thread of liquid that filtered or trickled down the granite face of the dissevered mountain.

This cross and well had been built by Alphonso I., in the year that he achieved his greatest victory over the united arms of five Moorish sovereigns. It had been deemed holy even in those days, for there he had halted and prayed when on the march with his mail-clad knights to the capture of Santarem; and an inscription, frequently renewed, invited the passer to say a prayer for the repose of his soul, and the souls of all the good and true Portuguese who drew their swords against the Moslem.

A long ray of light shed by the rising moon, shone down the cleft at the bottom of which the road lay, casting the shadows of the well and votive cross far along the narrow gorge. The thick foliage of some gigantic Portuguese laurels, which grew in the interstices of the rocks, glittered like bronze gemmed with silver sheen, and offered a resting place for the night; so Quentin, as he felt weary, crept under the branches, which formed a pleasant shelter.

The turf below was soft and dry, and to him, who had slept so often on the bare earth during his march to the frontier, it seemed a comfortable couch enough. The shaft of King Alphonso's cross on one side and the wall of rock on the other protected him from prowling wolves in the front and rear; the stems of the giant laurels formed barrier on a third side, and the fourth, which was open, he might defend with his weapons if attacked.

He took a draught from his canteen, which was filled with rum and water, and placing it under his head for a pillow, with his sword and loaded pistols ready by his side, he addressed himself to sleep.

The air was filled with a strange but delicious perfume, which came from those little aromatic shrubs that grow wild everywhere throughout Spain and Portugal. The intense stillness of the place, the only sounds there being the trickle of the far-falling water and the croakings of some bull-frogs among the long grass, made him wakeful for a time.

He felt neither alarm nor anxiety, but utterly lonely, and he said over a prayer that in infancy he had often repeated at Lady Rohallion's knee; then something holy and placid stole over his heart; sleep at last closed his eyes and he slumbered peacefully besides the old stone cross of our Lady of Battles.

So passed the first night of his absence from head-quarters.

When Quentin awoke next morning after a long and sound slumber, the result of youth, high health, and the toil of the past day, though he had acquired all a soldier's facility for sleeping in strange places and strange beds, or without other couch than the bare sod, he was at first somewhat confused and puzzled on perceiving the bower of leaves above him, and a minute elapsed before he could remember where he was, and how he came to be roosting under those huge Portuguese laurels.

Then the despatch rushed upon his memory; he searched his breast pocket, and found the important document was safe; his weapons were all right, and he was about to creep forth, when he suddenly perceived the figure of a man near the well, and, remembering the reiterated advices of Askerne and others, he paused to observe him.

His first idea was that the stranger must be a robber, for, to a Briton, Portuguese and Spaniards too have usually that unpleasant character in their aspect. Their sallow visages, deep dark eyes, densely black beards and moustaches, with their slouching sombrero, and large, many-folded cloak of dark brown stuff, together with a certain fixed scrutiny of expression when observing strangers, give them all the bravo look and bearing of the "sensation" ruffian or mysterious bandit of a minor melodrama; thus, says a recent writer, "in consequence of the difficulty of outliving what has been learnt in the nursery, many of our countrymen have, with the best intentions, set down the bulk of the population of the Peninsula as one gang of robbers."

The Spaniard in question, for such he seemed to be, was a young man of powerful and athletic form; his face was sallow and colourless, and his hair and eyes were black. He was closely shaven, save a heavy moustache, which had a very ferocious twist across each cheek towards the tip of the ear. His features were very handsome, and his whole appearance was eminently striking.

He had a huge cloak—what Spaniard has *not*, generally to cover his rags rather than his finery—but this he had flung aside, and Quentin could perceive that he had a well-worn zamarra of sheepskin over a gaily embroidered shirt, a pair of crimson pantaloons, which seemed to have belonged to a hussar, and they ended in strong leather *abarcas*, which were laced with thongs from the ankle to the knee. He had a dagger and pair of pistols in his flowing yellow sash, and close by him lay one of those long, old-fashioned travelling staffs, shod with iron and loaded with lead, called by the Portuguese a *cajado*.

Thus, upon the whole, considering the difference of their

stature and bodily strength, Quentin prudently thought that the stranger was not a personage to be intruded upon without due consideration.

Reverently removing his black sombrero, which was rather battered and rusty, and had a gilt image of our Lady del Pilar on the gay broad scarlet band thereof, the Spaniard approached the wayside shrine, and kneeling before it, crossed himself three times with great devotion, while muttering a short prayer. Then seating himself on the grassy sward behind the well, he pulled a little book from the pocket of his zamarra, and began to peruse it very leisurely while smoking a cigarito and making his frugal breakfast on a few dry raisins and a crust of hard bread, which he dipped from time to time in the cool water of the gurgling fountain.

"This cannot be a bad kind of fellow," thought Quentin, who felt somewhat ashamed of lurking from one man; so he half-cocked his pistols, placed them in his girdle, and crept forth from behind the stone cross, saying:

"*Buenos dias*, senor."

"Senor, good morrow," replied the Spaniard, with a hand on his dagger, while he surveyed Quentin with a quietly grim, but unmoved countenance, without rising from his recumbent posture; "are there any more of you under these bushes?"

"No—I am alone."

"*Por mi vida*, but you choose a strange hiding place!" said the other, with a glance of distrust.

"A strange sleeping-place, you should say rather, senor—yet not a bad one," said Quentin, laughing, and willing to conciliate the stranger, who closed his book after quietly turning down a leaf to mark his place; "I crept in over night, and have slept there until now."

"Signs of a good digestion or a clear conscience."

"Of both, I hope, thank Heaven."

"I am indifferently provided with either; yet I can breakfast on this poor crust, and be thankful to God and our Blessed Lady for it."

"I can give you something better, Senor Portuguese," said Quentin, unbuttoning his havresack.

"*Muchos gracias*," replied the other; "but remember, senor, that I am a Castilian, and in Spain we have a belief that a bad Spaniard makes a tolerably good Portuguese."

"I beg pardon, senor, but your dress——"

"My dress!" interrupted the other with a sardonic grin; "*oh, por el vida del Satanos*, the less you say about that the better. I was not wont to sport such a costume when rendering Virgil into Castilian, and Las Comedias de Calderon into Latin, in the Arzobispo College at old Salamanca."

"A student?"

"Perhaps—it was as might be," replied the other, with sudden reserve; "and you are——"

"What you see me."

Quentin gave a portion of his ration-beef and biscuit to the Spaniard, who took them with many thanks, and with an air that showed he was a man of breeding far above what his present paisano costume seemed to indicate. His hands were strong, white, and muscular, yet seemed never to have been used to work, and a valuable diamond sparkled in a ring on one of his fingers. In the course of conversation, Quentin could gather that he was remarkably well informed of the strength, number, position, and divisions of the British Army, together with the probable movements towards Castile, thus he felt the necessity of acting with the greatest reserve, and getting rid of him as soon as possible; for the most subtle, wily, and dangerous Spaniards were those in the French interest, which, at first, he feared his new friend to be.

"By my life, Senor Inglese," said the Spaniard, laughing, "with all this victual in your wallet, 'tis a miracle of our Lady's Cross that the wolves did not come snuffing about you in the night."

"You are a traveller?" observed Quentin, after a pause, during which they had been observing each other furtively.

"I hinted that I had been a student among Salamanquinos," replied the Spaniard, coldly.

"And you are now——"

"What the Fiend and the French have made me!" said he, with a lurid gleam in his fine dark eyes.

"And that is——"

"My secret, senor," said the other, bluntly, adding "*muchos gracias*," as Quentin smilingly proffered his canteen, the contents of which he declined to taste. "The well of our Blessed Lady will suffice for me," he said, and proceeded to twist up another cigarito.

"You are very curious about me, senor; but pray what are you?"

"What my uniform declares me," said Quentin, showing the scarlet uniform, which his grey coat had concealed; "a British soldier."

"*Bueno*! Your hand. And whither go you?"

"On duty."

"Where—to whom?"

"That is *my secret*," retorted Quentin, laughing. But a dark expression began to gather in the Spaniard's face, and he looked searchingly at the young volunteer.

"Are you going to the front?" he asked.

"Yes, senor."

"Strange!"

"How so?"

"The British troops have not yet begun to cross the frontier into Spain. They are still in quarters."

"Yes."

"You are not going to the French headquarters?"

"No."

"Still monosyllables!" said the Spaniard, impetuously. "I must be plain, I find. You are a deserter!"

"I have said that I am going on duty," replied Quentin, haughtily. "You need question me no further. I am not bound to satisfy the curiosity of every wayfarer I may meet."

"*Morte de Dios!*" swore the Spaniard, with a scowl in his deep eye, and a hand on his stiletto.

"I, too, have arms to repress insolence," said Quentin, grasping his sword.

On this the Spaniard laughed, and said—

"Come—don't let us quarrel. You are a brave boy, and your little breakfast came to me most opportunely. Let us enjoy the present without thinking of the future. *Demonio!* Neither of us may be what we seem. We more often look like spits than swords in this world!"

"Senor, excuse me; but I don't understand your proverb."

"It means simply, that all men are not what they seem. To you I appear a *gitano*, a *mendigo*—it may be, a *ladrone;* you appear to me a deserter; so our circumstances may change—you prove the spit, and I the sword."

"Spit again!" said Quentin, angrily, as he conceived there was some sarcasm concealed in the word.

"It is a fable. Listen while I read to you what, I suppose, you never heard before."

And, opening his book, which proved to be the little pocket edition of the quaint old literary fables of Don Tomaso de Yriarte, he rapidly read over the story of the "Spit and Espada."

"Once upon a time there was a rapier of Toledo; a better was never seen in the Alcazar, or tempered in the waters of the Tagus. After having been in many battles, and belonging to many brave cavaliers, by one of the vicissitudes of fortune which lay the greatest low, it came at length to lie forgotten in the corner of a scurvy posada.

"There, desirous in vain to breathe a vein and flash once more in battle, it lay long unnoticed and covered with rust, till, by command of her master, a greasy kitchen-wench stuck it through a large capon, and thus forced that which had been a rapier of high renown, arming the hands of the noble and valiant, to degenerate into a mere spit!

"About this time, it likewise chanced that a clownish paisano, by the sport of fortune became a hidalgo at court, and as he must needs have a sword, he repaired to the booth of an espadero, who no sooner saw the kind of customer he had to deal with, than he knew that anything having a hilt and scabbard would do, and so desired him to call next day.

"Against the time of his coming he furbished up an old spit that lay in his kitchen, and sold it to our courtier as Tisona, the very same blade with which the Cid Rodrigo of Bivar made the Arabian Khalifs skip at Cordova, and the Moorish dogs at Jaen. Hence we see that the innkeeper was a very great fool, and the espadero a very great rogue."

"And what am I to understand by all this?" asked Quentin, who with some impatience had permitted the Spaniard to read thus far.

"Simply, senor, that though by the vicissitudes of fortune, I seem a spit at present, I may prove in the end a good Toledo blade; for we should never judge solely by appearances;" and pointing to a hole in his sheepskin zamarra, he laughed and added, "Farewell—I go towards the mountains."

"And I towards Spain: I have but two wishes—to reach Herreruela, and to avoid the French in Valencia."

"Truly, they are well and wisely avoided," said the Spaniard through his clenched teeth, while his face became distorted and convulsed by concentrated hate and passion. "Save myself and another, my whole family have perished under their hands. Not even our aged mother was spared, for she died like my helpless old father by their bayonets, on the night that Junot entered Salamanca; and well would it have been if some of the young had suffered the same fate *first*. I had three sisters, senor—three lovelier girls, or three more loving, good, and gentle, God's blessed sun never shone on. Two suffered such wrongs on that night of horrors at Salamanca, that they could not or would not survive them; the youngest, Isidora, happily escaped by being in the convent of Santa Engracia, at Portalegre."

Impressed by the undoubted earnestness of the Spaniard, Quentin said—

"I am bound to the frontier, bearer of a secret despatch."

"To whom?"

"Honour ties my tongue for the present, senor."

"Enough, then; continue to pursue this road for some miles, you will find a branch to the left where it runs parallel with the river Figuero, and leads to Castello de Vide. Proceed straight on and you will come to Marvao; six miles further on is Valencia de Alcantara, garrisoned by the French; cross the river Sever, and a league or so further brings you to Herreruela. Ere long I,

too, shall be there, so we may meet again; but remember that the whole country swarms with the accursed French, and that your red coat will ensure your captivity or death."

"I shall be wary."

"Be so, or, Santos! I would not give a *claco* for your life! Do you see yonder hill?" asked the Spaniard, pointing to a lofty peak—the highest of the mountain range.

"Yes—a vapour hovers near it."

"I am going there to see what news the eagles have for the loyal Portuguese."

"The eagles!"

"Exactly—but I forget that you are a stranger and don't understand me," replied the other, laughing.

"Adios, senor," said Quentin, preparing to start.

"Adios, senor soldado—adios, vaya!"

The Spaniard pocketed his book of fables, threw his mantle over his left shoulder, grasped his cajado, and waving his hat, proceeded to ascend with great activity a steep zigzag path up the mountain side, while Quentin Kennedy pursued his solitary way, which opened into a level district covered with green orange, lemon, and olive groves; and though the warnings of his late acquaintance did not fail to impress him with anxiety, he felt hopeful that he would achieve in safety and with honour the duty assigned him—escaping the perils that might be set him, and the deadly snare into which Cosmo hoped he might fall.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE MULETEERS.

"Riper occasions well thy valour claim,
Danger comes on; Typhœus-like it comes,
Whose fabled stature every hour increased."
AQUILEIA—*Old Tragedy.*

WHILE Quentin travelled onward, thinking over his recent meeting at the well, and puzzling himself about the enigma that was probably concealed by the words of the stranger concerning the eagles having news for Portugal, he was roused from his reverie by the jangling of bells, and saw a long a string of mules, all sleek well-fed, of dapple-colour, and in size larger than any he had ever seen, appeared in view, descending with sure and steady steps a narrow rocky path between the olive and orange groves that covered the steep mountain side.

He paused for a moment to permit the string or line, which consisted of twelve mules, to pass along the road in front; but the

three muleteers in charge, all hardy and sturdy fellows in gaudily braided and embroidered jackets of purple or olive green cloth, smart sombreros, and gay scarfs, accoutred with ivory-hafted knives and brass-butted pistols, hailed him immediately, asked whither he was going, and courteously, with cries of "Viva los Inglesos! viva el Rey!" offered him a draught of wine from the leathern bota that hung from the neck of Madrina, and in a trice he found himself accompanying them on their way.

Perceiving that he belonged to the British army, they were very inquisitive to know what he was doing their alone, but Quentin had heard that some of those muleteers could make their way from the heart of Castile (then swarming with French troops) to the cantonments of the British army, along the Portuguese frontier, evading all infantry outposts and cavalry patrols by their superior knowledge of the country and its secret paths. He had heard also that they frequently acted as spies and traitors on both sides; thus he deemed extreme reserve necessary, and, with a prudence beyond his years and experience, parried their inquiries, and turned the conversation to general subjects, chiefly the various merits of their mules, which were laden with Indian corn, Oporto wine, pulse, flour, and tobacco; and he failed not, in particular, to extol the beauty of Madrina, a stately old mare, nearly sixteen hands in height, which had round her neck and on her gaudy red and yellow worsted head-gear a row of larger bells than the rest of the train.

The clear sound of those bells being known to them all, they followed her with wonderful instinct, docility, and affection.

So far as he could gather from the conversation, these muleteers were of Old Castile, the principal arriero being Ramon Campillo from Miranda del Ebro; he was a short, thick-set fellow, with a pleasant and sun-burned face, and a beard and head of hair so black and dense that made Quentin think the process of sheep-shearing might, in his instance, have been resorted to with ease and comfort. This shaggy mop he had gathered into a red silk hair-net, over which he wore his hat of coarse brown velvet, adorned by a band and bob of scarlet plush.

These three men carolled and sung as they proceeded along, cracking their whips, indulging in scraps of old warlike ballads, of love-songs and seguidillas, pausing now and then to mutter an *Ave* on passing a cross or a cairn that had some dark story of bloodshed and crime. And many a boast they made of their sunny Castile which France should *never*, NEVER conquer! and many a story they told of the Cid Rodrigo, of our Lady of Zaragosa, the Holy Virgin del Pilar, of miracles and robbers, all pell-mell; but their chief themes were the recent exploits of their

guerilla chiefs, then rising into power; of Don Julian Sanchez with the hare lip, and his glorious Castilian lancers; of El Pastor, the shepherd; El Medico, the doctor; El Manco, the cripple; of Don Juan Martin, the Empecinado, who, when his whole family had been murdered by the French, after the ladies of his house had endured horrors worse than death, in the first outburst of his grief, smeared himself with pitch, and vowed never to sheath his sword while a Frenchman remained alive in Spain; and who, when the French nailed a number of patriots to the oaks of the Guadarama, nailed up thrice that number of French soldiers in their place, to fill the forest with their dying groans. With enthusiasm they extolled all those wild spirits whom the war of invasion and independence had brought forth, calling it a *Guerra de moros contra estos infideles!*

But their local hero of heroes seemed to be Don Baltasar de Saldos, whom they described as partly a Cid and partly a devil in his hatred of France and Frenchmen. The mention of his name proved of deep interest to Quentin, and finding him a ready and wondering listener, many were the stories they told of him and of his band, which was composed of Spanish deserters, runaway students, ruined nobles, unfrocked friars, and all manner of wild fellows who loved him with ardour and obeyed him with devotion.

He was the flower of Castilian guerilla chiefs!

"I have seen and heard enough of French atrocity in our peregrinations throughout the kingdoms of Andalusia, Castile, Leon, and Arragon, to make me imbibe somewhat of the same spirit of vengeance that inspires Baltasar de Saldos—aye, Senor, to the full!" said Ramon, in his energy, spitting away the end of his cigarito, and crushing it under his heel.

"In your line one must see much of life," said Quentin.

"Much—maladita! I should think so. I was present in Madrid on the 23rd of last April, when one hundred and twenty defenceless citizens were slaughtered in cold blood by the troops of Murat—shot down by platoons, and for what? Por el Santos de los Santos! only because the epaulettes of his aide-de-camp, the gay Colonel de la Grange, were splashed with mud by some rash students at the gate of Alcala."

"A slight cause, surely."

"But that night, hombre, we had a terrible retribution," said the second muleteer, through his clenched teeth, as he gave a fierce twist to the scarlet silk handkerchief which encircled his head, and the fringed ends of which came from under his sombrero and floated over his shoulders.

"Retribution, Ignacio Noain, I think we had, amigo mio!" replied Ramon, with a bitter laugh; "for it was on that night

Baltasar threw off his student's gown and betook him to knife and musket, and rushed through the streets, shouting, 'Guerra al cuchillo, Salamanquinos!' and 'Viva el Rey de Espana' before the head-quarters of Marshal Murat; and sure vengeance he took, for ere morning the gutters of the Prado were gorged with the blood of more than seven hundred Frenchmen who fell by the muskets and daggers of the loyal Castilians."

"Then," said the third muleteer, with a smiling face and in an encomiastic tone, "it was Baltasar who slew Don Miguel de Saavedra."

"To the devil with him!"

"The traitorous governor of Valencia," added the other two.

"And it was he," said Ramon, "who with his namesake, the Padre Baltasar Calvo, for twelve days and nights followed the fugitive French and Valencian traitors, the tools and followers of Godoy, through the s reets, knife in hand, slaying them in cellars, vaults, and bodegas, till the last who was false to Spain had breathed out his dog's life, and his heart, reeking on a bayonet, was thrown on the altar of St. Isidor."

The fiery energy of the speakers, the expression of their dark flashing eyes, the picturesque costumes, the modulation of the grand old language in which they spoke, made those fierce and barbarous recitals doubly striking to Quentin Kennedy, who heard them with something bordering on astonishment, for the English press had no "own correspondents" *then*, to let the people at home know what was enacted abroad.

"Then, senor," said Ignacio Noain, "it was Baltasar de Saldos who suggested the singular death to which the Spanish regiment of Navarre put the timid Italian, Filangheri."

"And this mode of death?" asked Quentin, whom, sooth to say, the grim energy and suddenly developed ferocity of the hitherto jolly muleteers somewhat scared.

"I shall tell you," said Ramon, "for I saw it. You must know, senor soldado, that this Italian was Governor of Corunna and a loyal cavalier to the King; but terrified or hopeless by the overwhelming power of Bonaparte, he showed some signs of wavering, and refused to issue a proclamation of war against the French."

"Might it not have been wisdom to temporize for a time?"

"Santos! this is no time for trifling; so Baltasar rushed among the soldiers of our regiment of Navarre, and incited them to seize the governor at Villa Franca-del-Vierzo, a town on the road which leads from Corunna to Madrid, where they dragged him, almost naked, from the Marquis's palace.

"'Muera al Filangheri!' shouted Baltasar to the soldiers;

'unfix your bayonets, plant the ground with them, and toss the traitor in a blanket!'

"With shouts of acclamation at a suggestion so novel, they hastened to do as he suggested. The ground was soon planted thickly with three hundred bayonets, their sockets fixed in the earth, their sharp points upwards. The breathless governor, pale and imploring mercy, was tossed thrice into the air from a blanket, as dogs are tossed on Shrove Tuesday. After the third toss, the blanket was withdrawn, and the hapless Filangheri fell crash on the bayonets. He was impaled in every part of his body at once; after this, leaving him miserably to die, the soldiers dispersed to join Baltasar's band of guerillas in the mountains of Herreruela; but this destruction of a king's officer caused Sir John Moore to deem him false to Ferdinand VII."

"How horrible is all this!" exclaimed Quentin.

"Desperate times and men, require desperate hearts and stern measures, said the muleteer Ramon, as he slung his long musket—which no doubt had a goodly charge of slugs in its barrel—and took a guitar which hung at the collar of one of his mules. "But we must not scare you, senor Inglese, as we shall surely do, if we talk longer thus; so now for something more cheerful;" and he began at once to sing, with a very mellow voice, a little romance, in which his companions joined with much laughter, and which began thus,—

"Tiempo es el Caballero,
The world will all divine;
Now my girdle is too narrow,
They'll see my shame—and thine!

"Tiempo es el Caballero—
When the maids my garments bring,
I see them wink and nod their heads,
I hear them tittering."*

"We have come from Arronches and are going to Castello Branco, in Lower Beira, along the Portuguese frontier," said Ramon, "and yonder is the puebla at which we are to halt," he added, pointing to a few ruined walls that bordered the highway.

"What walled town is that on the hill, with an old castle?" asked Quentin.

"About two leagues beyond?"

"Yes."

"That is Castello de Vide, famous for its cloth factory."

"Castello de Vide—good Heavens, senores arrieros, your pleasant society has lured me out of my proper way."

* Poetry of Spain.

"I am sorry to hear it," said Ramon, drily.

"I should have gone to the right."

"Madre de Dios!"

"To the right?"

"Towards the French lines?"

Such were the exclamations of the muleteers as their frowns deepened.

"I should have gone somewhat in that direction, at all events," said Quentin, reddening with the annoyance and confusion natural to an honourable person when viewed with mistrust.

"Senor Inglese, in what capacity, or for what purpose are you travelling on foot alone, and in this suspicious fashion, towards the outposts of General de Ribeaupierre, the commander in Valencia?" asked the muleteer Ramon, sternly, as he drew himself up, and proceeded very deliberately to examine the flint and priming of his long musket.

"By what right do you ask?" demanded Quentin, whose heart beat tumultuously at the prospect of being butchered far from help or justice.

"Take your hand from your pistol—dare you question us, senor—one to three?"

"Yes, I do—by what right do you molest me?"

"The right of loyal and true Castilians," replied the three muleteers, with one voice, as the other two, who had not yet spoken, unslung their bell-mouthed trabucos or blunderbusses, and all their faces assumed that very formidable scowl, which appears nowhere so grimly as in the dark and sallow visages of those sons of old Iberia.

Now ensued a brief, but somewhat unpleasant and exciting pause; and finding that matters had come to this dangerous pass with him, Quentin, on reflection, drew forth his sealed missive, and showing the address to Ramon, said:

"I am the bearer of this despatch from Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope, to Don Baltasar de Saldos, the guerilla chief, and if you are loyal Spaniards, as you say, you will put up those weapons, and direct me by the nearest and safest route to the hills near Herreruela."

"Oh, par todos Santos, but this alters the case entirely!" said Ramon, as they relinquished their weapons, wreathed their grim fronts with sudden smiles, and cordially shook hands with him.

"Why did you not tell us all this at first?" asked the muleteer Ignacio Noain.

"Well, even Madrina, I suppose, does not like to be sharply

taken by the bridle," said Quentin, smiling, and feeling considerably, relieved in his mind.

"No more does she, the old beauty, she would lash out at her own madre. You have somewhat overshot the way, senor, for a mile or two along the Figuero; however, you shall not leave us yet awhile. Dine with us at the old puebla—the French have not left many stones of it together. Ay de mi! it was a jovial place once; many a bolero and fandango I have danced with the girls here, and where are they all now? We have only bacallao (dried ling) and biscuits, with a mouthful of good wine—real vino de Alicant—to offer you."

"Thanks, senores, but evening is almost at hand."

"It will be nightfall when you reach the base of yonder mountain," said Ramon, pointing to a lofty hill, whose granite brows were all empurpled by the sunshine; "there Gil Llano, a poor vinedresser, lives—a Portuguese, who for my sake, if not for your own, will gladly give you shelter; be sure, however, to show him this."

With these words, Ramon disengaged from one of the four dozen of brass bell buttons, with which his jacket was adorned, one of the many consecrated copper medals that hung thereat, and placed it in Quentin's hand, just as they entered the ill-fated puebla (village), which was totally roofless and ruined. Fragments of charred furniture, broken crocks, cans, and plates strewed the now untrodden street, where the grass was springing. The broad-leaved vines grew wild about the crumbling walls and open windows; and a rude cross here and there marked the hastily made graves of the slaughtered villagers.

There, as elsewhere, the wings of the Imperial Eagle, like those of a destroying angel, had spread desolation and death!

"When," asked the poor Portuguese, in one of their manifestoes after the horrors of Coimbra, "did the laws of man authorize the outrage of women, the slaughter of aged and other defenceless inhabitants of places which made no resistance; the assassination of men who were accounted rich, only because they could not furnish that quantity of treasure of which it was said they were possessed?"

Halting by the old village well, the muleteers attended first to the wants of Madrina and her sleek companions.

"*Arre, arre,* old woman," said Ramon, "thou shalt have a deep cool draught at last; *arre, arre!*"

This is an old Moorish term (literally gee-up), whence the muleteers are familiarly termed *arrieros.* They then shared with Quentin their dried fish and hard biscuits, with a few olives and luscious oranges, that had become golden among the groves that

cast their shadows, on the Ebro; and they frequently patted him on the shoulder, and expressed regret for their suspicions, and the mischief these might have led to.

The group around this lonely well, which bubbled through a grotesque stone face, under an old Roman arch, and the scene around, were wonderfully striking and picturesque.

In the immediate foreground were the swarthy Castilian muleteers in their gaudy dress, and their gaily trapped mules, all resting on the bright green sward; close by was the ruined puebla; northward rose Castello de Vide in the distance on its verdant hill, the round towers of its ancient fortress and ruined walls, that had more than once withstood the tide of Moorish and Castilian chivalry; to the east and south rose the great sierras that form the boundary between Spain and Portugal, all crimsoned with the light of the gorgeous sun that was setting in gold and saffron behind the cork-tree groves that clothe the hills of St. Mames.

The frugal repast was barely over when the tinkle of a clear and silvery bell that rung in some solitary hermitage, concealed affar off among the chestnut woods in some hollow of the mountains, came at intervals on the evening wind.

"Vespers," said Ramon Campillo, taking off his sombrero; "amigos mios, to prayers."

Then, with a simple devotion that impressed him deeply, Quentin Kennedy saw those sturdy and jovial, but rather reckless fellows, who, but a few minutes before, were (we are compelled to admit it) quite disposed to knock him on the head, kneel down and pray very earnestly for a minute or so.

A few minutes more saw them on their way to Castello de Vide, and him progressing towards the mountains. They waved their hats to him repeatedly, and then as the twilight deepened, the breeze of the valley as it swept over the odorous orange groves brought pleasantly to his ear the jingle of the mule-bells, and the tinkle of Ramon's guitar dying away in the distance, with a verse of the song the three arrieros sung—an old Valencian evening hymn.

"Thou who all our sins didst bear,
All our sorrows suffering there,
O Agnus Dei!
Lead us where thy promise led
That poor dying thief who said,
Memento mei!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

GIL LLANO.

"Still, however fate may thwart me,
Unconvinced, unchanged I live;
From those dreams I cannot part me,
That such dear delusions give;
Hoping yet in countless years,
One bright day unstained with tears."

RODRIGUEZ LOBO.

THE outrages of the French invaders in Spain and Portugal were doubtless of the worst description; but those reprisals which the patriots were not slow in making were equal in atrocity. The stories he had heard of these shook Quentin's confidence in his own safety, and in his powers mental and physical; they caused him to regard with something of suspicion, repugnance, and mistrust the dwellers in the land, and to wish himself well out of it, or at least safe once more under the colours of the Old Borderers

He remembered the intense bitterness, the momentary but clamorous anxiety caused by his late episode, and how keenly the foretasted agony of death entered his soul, when the three muleteers threatened him with their weapons, and when there seemed every prospect of his falling by their hand in that mountain solitude, and being left there dead to the wolves; his fate and story alike unknown to all who might feel the slightest interest therein. He remembered all this, we say, that he had no desire to endure such an agony again.

He felt his isolation, his helplessness in many respects, and longed anxiously for the end of his task, and for the society of his comrades and friends, of Askerne, Middleton, and others by whom he was esteemed and trusted.

This very anxiety made him quicken his pace, and thus about an hour after parting from the muleteers at the puebla, he saw a light twinkling on the roadway at the base of the dark green mountain; then, after passing under some half-ruined trellis where the vines were carefully trained and made a leafy tunnel, he reached the dwelling of Gil Llano (pronounced Yano) the vine-dresser, a wayside cottage, with a few smaller adjuncts where the galinas roosted and the porkers snorted.

He knocked at the door, which was slowly opened after some delay, and after he had been reconnoitred by a pair of keen black eyes through an eyelet hole; then the proprietor, a swarthy

stout little Portuguese, black bearded and snub-nosed, appeared with a bare knife clenched between his teeth and a cocked musket in his hands, to demand who was there.

"*Quien es?*" he asked, angrily.

"*Gente de paez,*" replied Quentin, in a conciliating tone.

"*Pho!*" indeed—your dress doesn't say you are a man of peace."

"I am a British soldier travelling on duty," said Quentin.

"How can I assist you, senor?"

"The muleteer, Ramon Campillo, of Miranda del Ebro, who is now on his way to Castello Branco, informed me that you are a loyal Portuguese——"

"None more loyal!" responded the other, slapping the butt of his musket.

"I was to show you this medal, and, if not intruding, remain with you for the night."

"Ramon is my good friend," said the Portuguese, carefully looking at the brass medal, which bore the image of St. Elizabeth, "and this was my gift to him. You are welcome, senor, to such poor accommodation as the French have left me to offer."

The Portuguese conducted Quentin into his cottage, the interior of which, by its squalor and poverty, showed that poor Gil Llano's circumstances had not been improved by the influences of the war.

A candle, in a clay-holder, flickered on the bare table, an iron brasero, full of charcoal and dry leaves, smouldered on the hearth; above the mantelpiece were a little stucco Madonna and some gaudy little Lisbon prints of holy personages, such as St. Anthony of Portugal, with his beloved pig; St. Elizabeth the queen, who died at Estremoz in 1336; St. Ignatius Loyola, and others in scarlet and blue drapery, with golden halos, all pasted on the whitewashed wall.

The cottage appeared to consist of three or four small apartments, all roofed with large red tiles, through the holes in which Quentin could see the stars shining, and suggesting an idea of umbrellas in case of rain. The rafters were thickly hung with bunches of dried raisins, by the sale of which to the passing muleteers and contrabandistas, Gil and his family subsisted. But even this humble place bore traces of the retreating French. One of the little windows had been dashed to pieces by a musket-butt, and most of the woodwork had gone for fuel when Junot's voltigeurs bivouacked among the vine trellis, half of which they tore down and destroyed.

Poor Gil Llano, whose whole attire consisted of a zamarra, a

pair of red cotton breeches, a yellow sash, and the net which confined his hair, made Quentin Kennedy heartily welcome, and spoke with enthusiasm and gratitude of the British, who had swept Portugal of the French; and he exulted about the recent battle of Vimiera, which he had witnessed from the Torres Vedras, where, he frankly admitted, he had hovered among the cork-trees, and, with his musket, had "potted" successfully some of Ribeaupierre's dragoons as they fell back in disorder before the furious advance of General Anstruther's column.

Quentin soon found himself at home, and shared with Llano family the supper of ham and eggs, cooked in a crock betwee the brasero and one of the stones of Antas, which are supposed, when once heated, to continue so for two days. He might have excused the flavour of garlic, but found an Abrantes melon sliced with sugar, and a flask of Oporto wine, very acceptable.

The half-clad mother and her meagre, dark-skinned brood, with their large black eyes, he could perceive regarded him as a heretic and soldier, doubtfully, even fearfully, and askance—an English heretic being always associated, in the minds of Peninsula people, with priestly denunciations and the *autos de fé* of the Holy Office in its palmy days. However, after a time, as he manifested no desire to eat any of the children, but bestowed upon them all he could afford—a handful of half-vintins, part of the poor quartermaster's parting gift—confidence became established, and little bare-legged Pedrillo crept close to his knee; Babieta pecped slily at him from behind her mother's skirts, and, when he hung Ramon's brass medal round the tawny neck of Gil, the nursling, the goodwoman Llano's heart opened to him at once.

Perceiving that Quentin was so young, she asked, while her dark eyes filled with a tender expression, if his mother sorrowed for him, and if she had many other sons, that she could spare him; adding that, after all she had seen of war, she would rather die than permit either of her boys to become soldiers, even to fight for Portugal.

"Ere long Portugal shall have stronger hands than we could furnish to fight for her," said Gil, confidently. "No miracle the blessed saints of heaven have ever worked has been half so wonderful as these marvellous and prophetic eggs that have been found by Don Julian Sanchez, by El Pastor, the Alcalde of Portalegre and others, in the nests among the mountains. True it is, senor," he continued, on perceiving Quentin's glance of inquiry and surprise, "that eggs have been found laid in the mountains by the birds of the air—eggs bearing inscriptions which foretell that as Portugal has been deserted at her utmost need by the

House of Braganza, our brave old king, Don Sebastian, of pious and glorious memory, will come to protect and rule over us again."

"Don Sebastian," said Quentin, who had heard this farrago of words with some wonder; "how long is it ago since he was king?"

Gil reckoned on his brown fingers, and then said—

"About two hundred and thirty years."

"How—what?" exclaimed Quentin, thinking that he had not heard aright.

"Exactly, senor; he was taken—some say killed—in battle by the Moorish dogs at the battle of Alcazal-quiver, on the coast of Fez, in 1578; but his restoration to us is certain now."

"And *eggs*, do you say have prophesied this?"

"By the soul of St. Anthony of Lisbon, yes! The miraculous legends written on their shells told us so. I saw one with my own eyes as it lay on the altar of the Estrella convent where it had been brought by the Marquis d'Almeida, who found it on the mountain of Cintra."

"And you read the legend?"

"No, senor—I cannot read; moreover, it was written in old Latin."

"By whom, Senor Gil?"

"God and St. Anthony only know," replied Gil, crossing himself after dipping his fingers in a little clay font of *agua-bendita* that hung beside the mantelpiece.

Now Quentin remembered the words of the stranger whom he had met by the wayside cross, and whom he had last seen toiling up the mountain with the aid of his staff, as he alleged, in search of eagles' nests. He had some trouble to preserve his gravity, and probably nothing enabled him to do so but his wonder at the perfect simplicity and the good faith of this Portuguese peasant in the return of Lusitania's long-lost hero.

On inquiring further, he learned, for the first time, that there still existed in Portugal the sect called of old "Sebastianists," fondly cherishing a belief that their crusader king (who fell in battle against Muley Moloc) was detained in an enchanted island, where he was supernaturally preserved; and that they also cherished a belief that he would reappear with all his paladins to deliver Lusitania when at her utmost need!

Portugal's utmost need had come and gone; Roleia and Vimiera had been fought and won by Sir Arthur Wellesley; but still the Sebastianists believed in the ultimate return and intervention of their favourite hero, and eggs marked by the more cunning with some chemical agency, bearing legends foretelling the event, were opportunely found and exhibited: a puerile

trick, which Marshal Junot, General de Ribeaupierre, and others soon contrived to turn against the inventors; for *other* eggs bearing mottoes of very different import were frequently found in the same places.

A belief similar to that of the Sebastianists long lingered among the Scots relative to their beloved James IV., who fell at Flodden; among the Germans regarding Frederick Barbarossa, who filled all Asia with the terror of his name, and died on the banks of the Cydnus; among the Britons concerning their fabulous Arthur of the Round Table; and among the ancient Irish concerning some now unknown warrior named Dharra Dhearg. But it was left for the poor Portuguese to be among the last to console themselves under defeat and disaster with such delusive hopes; and thus in the year of Vimiera, "many people," says General Napier, "and those not of the most uneducated classes, were often observed upon the highest points of the hills, casting earnest looks towards the ocean, in the hopes of descrying the enchanted island in which their long-lost hero was detained."

CHAPTER XLIV.

DANGER IN THE PATH.

"Beloved of glory, Spain! hail, holy ground!
All hail! thou chosen scene of deeds renown'd,
By warriors wrought in each progressive age,
Who struggled to repel th' oppressor's rage.
Tell thou the world how on thy favoured coast,
Our Wellesley fought, and Gaul her sceptre lost."

Roncevalles—a Poem.

PROCEEDING eastward next morning, Quentin was guided by Gil Mano for some miles towards the Spanish frontier. To avoid all chance of being seen by cavalry or foraging parties, the officers commanding which were sometimes really ignorant rather than oblivious of the actual line of demarcation between Spain and Portugal, the worthy vinedresser conducted him by unfrequented but steep and devious mountain paths, which left far on their right flank the little town and fortress of Marvao, that lies in the Comarca of Portalegre, and as they were now within six miles of Valencia de Alcantara, which was the head-quarters of Ribeaupierre's cavalry brigade, the utmost circumspection was necessary.

The morning was one of singular loveliness; the white mists were rolling up the green mountain sides from the greener valleys below, and there was a peculiar freshness and fragrance in the atmosphere which made Quentin feel buoyant and happy, for a

time at least; the sun was high in heaven, the dew was glittering on every herb and tree, and the mountain scenery looked bright and glorious.

The blood of our soldiers who fell at Roleia and Vimiera had not been shed in vain for Portugal. Already signs of peace were visible in her valleys and towns, and all was in repose along her frontier. Thus Quentin could hear the lowing of oxen and the bleating of sheep come pleasantly on the morning wind that passed over the green sierra, bearing with it the odour of the orange groves in the valley and of the flowering arbutus that bordered the way.

In a hollow of the hills, Llano showed Quentin a lake, on the borders of which some of the miraculous eggs had been found by Baltasar de Saldos in a cypress grove; and he alleged that its waters had the power of swallowing or sucking into the bowels of the earth whatever was thrown therein, consequently not a leaf, or reed, or lotus was to be seen floating there.

"But its power, senor, is a mere joke when compared with that of the lake of Cedima, which lies about eight leagues from Coimbra, and which instantly swallows up the largest logs and trees, if cast therein."

"Is there a whirlpool in the centre?" asked Quentin.

"Saints and angels only know what is in the centre; but in my father's days—he was a farmer, senor, in the Quinta das Lagrimas—there came a Danish cavalier who refused to credit the story, and offered, mockingly, to cross the lake on horseback, in presence of the Juiz-de-fora, the Reformator of the University, the Alcalde of the city, and all the great lords of Coimbra.

"After hearing the bishop (who is always Conde de Arganuil) say mass in the church of Santa Cruz, and after partaking of the Holy Communion before the altar there, he mounted his horse, and, in presence of a vast multitude, proceeded to the lake of Cedima. Then when he saw its black and ominous water that lay without a ripple in the sunshine, his heart somewhat failed him, and lest the story of the lake might be true, and lest his life might indeed be lost, on perceiving a great stake, or the trunk of an old chestnut tree near the edge, he tied a thick rope to it, securing the other end to his right leg. Another rope of similar strength he tied to the neck of his horse, a fine Spanish gennet, and giving him the spur, he uttered a shout and plunged headlong into the water.

"A little way the horse swam snorting, and then began to sink; ere long his ears alone were visible! Then they too disappeared; the water bubbled above his nostrils as his head went down; then the dark water flowed over the rider's shoulders—

then over his head, and while a cry of dismay rose from the terrified people, the steed and the stranger vanished together and were seen no more."

"So the ropes proved of no service?" said Quentin.

"The one that was about the neck of the horse was snapped right through the centre: but at the end of the other was found the right leg of the unfortunate Dane, torn off by the thigh, doubtless as the downward current whirled him into the vortex; and so from that day a belief in the waters of Cedima has been stronger than ever in Portugal."

"After the marvellous eggs and the enchanted island, I can easily think so," said Quentin.

When worthy Gil Llano (who expressed a hope to see him again if he returned that way) had left him, with the information that from the top of the next hill he would see Spain and the spires of Valencia de Alcantara, Quentin proceeded all the more rapidly that he was now alone, and his steps kept pace with the busy current of his thoughts.

His whole ideas of the duty on which he had been sent were somewhat vague. He had but three instructions given him; first, to avoid Valencia (which the reader must not confound with the capital of the kingdom of the same name); second, to reach Herreruela how he best could; third, to deliver his despatch; and for the execution of this he had been sent from Portalegre unsupplied either with money or credentials of any Alcalde, Juiz-de-fora, or other civil or military authority, in case of any difficulty arising.

There were times—and this was one—when Quentin felt as if he were again at Rohallion—at his home, for such he felt it to be—relating all these adventures to those who were now there; to the kind and soldier-like old Lord; to the courteous and gentle Lady Winifred; to the old quartermaster, with his kind red face and yellow wig, while Mr. Spillsby the butler and Jack Andrews loitered near to listen; to the dominie, with his rusty blacks, his square shoe-buckles, and his musty memories of the classics; and more than all, to Flora Warrender!

And then, with these thoughts, there seemed to come to his ears the pleasant rustle of the aged sycamores as the west wind shook their branches, the cawing of the black rooks on the old grey keep, the rush of the Lollards 'Linn pouring under its arch and over its ledge of rock; and to his fancy's eye the sierras of Portugal gave place to the brown hills of Carrick, the distant Craigs of Kyle, and "the bonnie blooming heather," or the waves of the Clyde as they boiled in foam over the Partan Craig and climbed the dark headland of Rohallion.

So the past returned and the present fled!

Amid those cherished scenes he had long since left his happy boyhood. Now he felt himself, as we have said, every inch a soldier and a man, inspired by a sense of duty, of trust, and not a little by the love of adventure natural to youth. The inborn ambition which the solid weight of his knapsack and accoutrements, and all his sufferings when on the march from Maciera Bay, had somewhat chilled; the high spirit that Cosmo's hatred and cutting coldness had striven to crush, both sprang up anew in his buoyant heart, and he felt it glowing with hope, energy, and enthusiasm; and now, when he had reached the summit of the mountain over which the road passed, and on issuing from a narrow rocky defile, saw a vast extent of open country beyond, a glorious and fertile landscape, all vibrating apparently in the rays of the cloudless sun, he waved his cap and almost cried "hurrah!" for he knew that he looked down on——Spain!

Before him, as on a map, he saw the vast extent of Spanish Estremadura stretching into distance far away, all steeped in a lovely golden glow, the almost universal verdure of the landscape relieved here and there by the water of the Salor and other minor tributaries of the Tagus, winding like blue silk threads through velvet of emerald green, dotted by thickets of chestnut, orange, and cork trees; and there, too, were the strong embattled towers and the spires of Valencia de Alcantara, with the tricolour on its greatest bastion; and in the distance, half hid in saffron haze, through which they loomed in purple tint, the ramparts of Albuquerque, on its steep hill, the heritage of the Condes de Ledesma. Between these cities lay a little puebla, which he knew must be San Vincente, near, but not through which, lay his path to the hills that overlooked the plain.

Thoughts of the poetry, of the beauty, and romance of Spain came thronging on his memory, and we must confess they formed an odd chaos of cloaked cavaliers with guitars and rapiers; dark-eyed donnas in balconies, fluttering fans and veils; lurking rivals, with mask and dagger; mountain robbers in high-crowned hats, with their legs swathed in red bandages, after the orthodox fashion of all melo-dramatic banditti. These, together with the solid splendour and wonderful stories of the Alhambra, the wars of the high-spirited Moors of Granada, ending so sadly in *el suspiro del Moro*, when the warriors of Ferdinand and Isabella rent the banner of the Prophet from the weak hand of Boabdil el Chico, not unnaturally made up his stock ideas of the sunny land he looked upon.

But it was the land of the Cid Campeador—he at whose name the eyes of even the most unlettered Spaniard will lighten—for

he was the veritable and redoubtable Wallace of Castile against the enemies of Christianity and the Christian's God. Such memories as these rushed on Quentin's mind as he looked down on Estremadura; nor could he forget, though last not least, that it was the native land of him "who laughed Spain's chivalry away"—the illustrious Cervantes, the one-handed soldier of Lepanto.

A distant but unmistakable sound of musketry reverberating among the mountain peaks on his left, roused him somewhat unpleasantly from his dream, bringing him all at once from the romance of the past to the reality of present Spanish life.

Several shots he heard distinctly pealing through the air; others followed, and after an interval, two dropping shots, but at a greater distance, as if they proceeded from some flying skirmishers. Then all became still, and he heard only the voices of the birds as they wheeled aloft in the sunshine or twittered among the arbutus leaves.

The road, a narrow and rugged path now as it descended, passed through a dark grove of wild pines; on issuing from which Quentin's nerves received somewhat of a shock on seeing a French light dragoon, in pale green uniform, lying on his back quite dead, with the foam of past agony on his lips, and the blood of a recent wound till oozing from his left temple, through which a musket shot had passed. Crushed, apparently by a horse's hoof, his light brass helmet lay beside him. A few yards off lay another *chasseur à cheval*, and further off still lay a third, who seemed to have been dragged some distance by his horse ere his foot had been disengaged from the stirrup, for a bloody and dusty track was visible from where Quentin stood to where the chasseur lay.

Quentin paused, for his heart beat wildly, and instinctively he looked to the flints and pans of his pistols, his hands trembling as he did so—with an excitement justifiable in one so young—but *not* with fear.

These three unfortunates were the first Frenchmen—the first slain—and, in fact (save the dead gipsy in the vault of Kilhenzie), they were the *first* dead men he had looked upon; thus he glanced timidly, and while his heart swelled with pity, from one to the other.

There they were, three smart and handsome young men, clad in showy light cavalry uniforms, each perhaps a mother's pride and father's hope, left dead and abandoned to the ravens, in that wild place, with their white faces and glazed eyes staring stonily at the glorious noonday sun, while the little birds came hopping and twittering about them.

Quentin's gentle soul was stirred within him; he was new to this butcherly work, and war seemed wicked indeed! Those three rigid figures—those three pale faces with fallen jaws, and those bloody wounds, made a searing and terrible impression upon him; but as he continued hastily to descend the hill, and left them behind, he foresaw not the callous heart and time that use and wont would bring.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CHASSEUR À CHEVAL.

"The soldier little quiet finds,
But is exposed to stormy winds,
And weather."—L'ESTRANGE.

AFTER proceeding a little way, the sound of voices, as if engaged in fierce altercation, made him pause and look round warily, pistol in hand. He drew behind a gigantic Portuguese cypress that overshadowed the way, and on reconnoitring, discovered two men engaged in a fierce and deadly struggle. They were a French cavalry officer and a Spanish guerilla.

The Frenchman was almost in rags, for his silver epaulettes and green uniform, covered with elaborate braiding, had been torn in his conflict with the Spaniard, for, as they grappled, they rolled over each other down a gravelly bank into the dry bed of mountain stream, where they only paused to draw breath before renewing the contest, in which the guerilla was apparently getting the mastery. He had a broadbladed dagger in his sash; but, as the Frenchman held his wrists with a death-clutch, he was unable to use it.

"Ah, sacré Dieu!" cried the officer, on whose breast the knees of the guerilla were pressed without mercy; "I will yield on the promise of quarter—even from you."

"Dog of a Frenchman! May thy foot be heavy on my neck if I spare thee!" was the hoarse and fierce response of the Spaniard, in whom Quentin, with considerable interest, recognised his friend of the wayside cross, whom he last saw going bird-nesting up the mountains in search of the miraculous eggs.

"Espanole," said the Frenchman, in tones of rage and entreaty mingled, "would you kill a defenceless and unarmed man?"

"Why not, if he is French? Who slew my aged father? Who slew my mother—my sisters—all—all? Who deluged our home with blood, and desolated it with fire?"

"Not I—not I—spare me," exclaimed the Frenchman, as he

felt his strength failing him fast; "my mother, Spaniard—hound!—ah, ma mère—ma mère—mon Dieu!" he added, with a hopeless groan; and these two French words stirred some deep, keen chord, some long-forgotten memory in the heart of Quentin, who felt his temples throbbing.

"Maledita! the strife of our forefathers is but renewed," continued the Spaniard, in his noble and forcible Castilian, through his clenched teeth, while his eyes flashed fire, and his moustaches seemed to bristle; "it is a war to the knife against dogs and infidels, for what are Frenchmen but dogs and infidels, even as the Moors were of old?"

Again, without avail, the hapless chasseur pleaded for his life; but the more powerful conqueror heard him to an end, and then laughed exultingly.

"I am guiltless of all, of everything but doing my duty," he urged.

"Duty!" repeated the other; "shall I tell you of our pillaged altars and desecrated churches, of ruined cities and desolated villages; shall I tell you of our slaughtered brethren, our outraged wives, sisters, and ladies of the holy orders, some of whom have been bound to gun-carriages, stripped, and exposed in the common streets and plazas? Par Dios! these things are enough to call down Heaven's thunder on the head of your accursed Corsican!"

"Ah, morbleu!" gasped the Frenchman, "what a devil of a savage it is! Peste! I assure you, monsieur, I have never touched even the tip of a woman's hand since I had the misfortune to cross the Pyrenees. Tudieu! the Emperor finds us other work and other things to think of."

By a violent wrench the Spaniard now got his right hand free, and in an instant, like a gleam of light, his long knife glittered as he upheld it at arm's length above the poor young Frenchman, whose pale face and dark eyes assumed a most despairing aspect.

Quentin could no longer look on unmoved.

"Hold—hold!" he exclaimed, and sprang towards them threateningly.

"Oho, amigo mio," said the Spaniard, looking round with a saturnine smile; "'tis my friend of the laurel bushes—the spit that looked like a sword."

"Hold, I say, Spaniard—would you murder him in cold blood?"

"Demonio, yes; and you, too, if you would protect a soldier of the false Corsican. Begone, and leave us, or it may be the worse for you."

"I shall not."

"Maledita!" said the Spaniard, grinding his teeth, and clutching the throat of the fallen man.

"Release him, I say," demanded Quentin, resolutely.

"Vaya usted con cien mill demonios," (Begone with a hundred thousand devils), said the Spaniard absolutely, gnashing his strong white teeth, which glistened beneath his black moustache.

'Oh, sauvez moi, mon camarade," implored the poor Frenchman.

"Thus, then, die—die en el santo nombre de Dios!"

With this impious shout, the furious guerilla, or whatever he was, raised the dagger which he had lowered for a moment; but ere it could descend, Quentin, with lightning speed, snatched up the heavy cajado which lay at his feet, and, loth to use a more deadly weapon against a Spaniard, struck the guerilla a blow on the head and rolled him over. A heavy malediction escaped him, and then he lay motionless and still, completely stunned.

Breathless with his recent struggle and its terrors, the French officer lost no time in springing to his feet.

"A thousand thanks to you, monsieur! But for you—there—there had been a vacancy in my troop to-night. But here—come this way; we have not a moment to lose, for the hills are full of these guerillas. Peste! they are as thick as bees hereabout; and believe me, the men of Baltasar de Saldos are not to be trifled with."

As the Frenchman spoke, he seized Quentin by the sleeve, and half led, half dragged him through the grove of pines; after which, they ran down hill for more than a mile, till they reached the main-road that led directly to Valencia the lesser, when Quentin paused, and began to reflect that he was going very oddly about the deliverance of Sir John Hope's despatch, a document that probably announced the day on which the entire army would break up from its cantonments and advance into Spain!

CHAPTER XLVI.

EUGÈNE DE RIBEAUPIERRE.

"*Ford.* Well, he's not here I seek for.

Page. No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

Ford. Help me to search my house this one time: if I find not what I seek, show me no colour for my extremity, let me for ever be your table sport; let them say of me, 'As jealous as Ford, that searched hollow walnuts for his wife's leman.'"—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

QUENTIN KENNEDY was only master of a certain amount of the Spanish language, which he had rapidly acquired through the

medium of his friend the dominie's sonorous Scottish latinity; but fortunately the young Frenchman, who seemed to be highly accomplished, spoke English with remarkable fluency.

His uniform, we have said, was in rags; his epaulettes had gone in the recent struggle, the straps of lace for retaining them on the shoulders alone remained. A hole in the breast of his light green jacket showed where the gold Cross of the Legion had been rent away by some guerilla's hand, and the state of his scarlet pantaloons made one see the advantage of wearing a kilt for pugnacious casualties, as they were now reduced to mere shreds.

He was a slender young man, in appearance only a year or two older than Quentin, though really many years his senior in experience of the world and of life generally. His hair, which he wore in profusion, was dark brown and silky, and his hands, on one of which sparkled a splendid ring, were white and almost ladylike. An incipient moustache shaded his short upper lip; his features were very regular, and he was so decidedly good-looking, that Quentin could not help thinking that if he had a sister like him, she must be charming!

They quitted the highway and entered a dense thicket by the wayside, where, breathless, hot, and weary, they cast themselves on the cool deep grass that grew under the leafy shade, and the last of the contents of Quentin's canteen, divided between them, proved very acceptable to both.

"I perceive that you are a French officer," said Quentin; "may I ask whom I have had the honour of succouring?"

"Certainly, mon camarade; I am a sous-lieutenant of my father's regiment, the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval—my name is Eugène de Ribcaupierre."

"Any relation of the general who commands in Valencia?"

"A very near one," said he, laughing; "I am his son, and monsieur's very obedient servant. Come! let us rest ourselves and talk a little. The tap on the head you gave that Spaniard was most critical and serviceable to me."

"True—it only came just in time!"

"I hope it may have despatched him outright."

"I trust not, now that the end was accomplished."

"Now that we have breathing time, you will perhaps excuse my little curiosity, and say how you came to be here, within two or three miles of our sentinels?"

"The country is quite open," said Quentin, evasively, with a smile.

"Your troops, we have heard, are closing up from Lisbon and elsewhere; but have *not* as yet been rash enough to enter Spain, the territories of King Joseph."

"Rash, monsieur?"

"Peste! I suppose your generals have not forgotten the sharp lessons we taught them at Rolcia and Vimiera?"

Quentin laughed to hear the pleasant tone in which the Frenchman spoke of two very important defeats of the Emperor's troops as "lessons" to the British, but he said plainly enough,

"I am here because I was sent on duty."

"To whom, monsieur?"

Quentin hesitated.

"Nay, out with it, man—trust me, on my honour—I may well pledge it to one who has saved me from a barbarous death within the hour, and earned my warmest gratitude."

"Well, then, I go to Don Baltasar de Saldos."

"Diable! the man's a guerilla chief, and we have just had a severe brush with his people. My patrol, consisting of a sergeant, a corporal, and twelve chasseurs, were riding leisurely along the road from San Vincente towards the summit of yonder mountain, when, from a grove of cork and cypress trees, there flashed out some twenty muskets. It was an ambush; the leading section of them fell dead; the rest broke through, sabre à la main, and fled, pursued by the guerillas, who sprang after them with the yells of fiends and the activity of squirrels, leaping from bank to rock, and from rock to tree, firing and reloading so long as we were in range. Struck by a ball in the counter, my horse reared wildly up, and threw me; for some minutes I was insensible, and on recovering, found myself in the paws of yonder Spanish bear, who was thrice my bulk and strength. You know the rest. I thought it was all up with me. As Francis said at Pavia, 'tout est perdu, sauf l'honneur!' Baltasar's head-quarters are in a mountain pueblo near Herreruela, where he successfully defies my father's cavalry. Am I right in supposing that you have been sent to invite his co-operation in some projected movement?"

"My orders were simply to deliver to him a despatch and rejoin my regiment."

"It is a dangerous and desperate errand, my friend," said the young Frenchman, while regarding Quentin with some interest; "I mean desperate to be undertaken by one alone. It looks almost like a sacrifice of you!"

"A sacrifice?" repeated Quentin, as his thoughts naturally wandered to Cosmo.

"Parbleu, yes—to the exigencies of the service."

"Some of my friends were not slow in saying as much," replied Quentin; "but then I—I am only a volunteer, and as such, must take any hazardous duty, I have been told."

"Well, here we must lurk till nightfall—you to avoid our patrols, which are usually withdrawn for a few hours after the evening gun fires, when the inlying picket get under arms; I to avoid those pestilent guerillas. The shade here is cool, and if we had a bottle of wine, a sliced melon, and a little ice, our pleasure would be complete."

"And you think I must conceal myself here?"

"Undoubtedly, mon ami; our people are scouring all the highways, and would be sure to cut you off. Then there is that devilish Spaniard—ah, the brigand!—he will not be in haste to forget the knock you gave him on the head, and should he or his comrades fall in with you, I would not give you a sou for your safety!"

"Strange, is it not, that the first man I have struck on Spanish ground should be a Spaniard?"

"These dons have unpleasant memories for such little attentions, and here the secret shot or stab usually settles everything; but before we separate, I shall have the honour of showing you the direct path to the head-quarters of De Saldos, after which, you must look to your pistols and put your trust in Providence. I shall keep your secret, and if there is any other way in which I can serve you, command me."

"I thank you; but I hope that to-night, or to-morrow morning at latest, will see my face turned towards Portugal, for I long to rejoin my corps."

"The fugitives of my party will spread a calamitous report concerning me in Valencia, and my father, the poor old general, will suppose that I am lying shot on the mountains, instead of holding this pleasant *tête-à-tête* with one of the sacré Anglais over the comfortable contents of his canteen," said Ribeaupierre, laughing. "What a droll world it is!"

"And your mother—I think I heard you mention your mother. She——"

"Happily will know nothing about it, as she is with Joseph's court. She is a gentle and loving creature, with a heart all tenderness. Ah, the seat of war would never do for her, and ma foi! it does not suit me either. It was not willingly I became a soldier, be assured; and yet, now that I am fairly in for it, and have won my epaulettes and cross, I should not like to find myself a mere citizen again. Peste! I shall not in a hurry forget the night on which, by a great malheur, a great mistake, I was forced to become a soldier."

"Mistake—how?" asked Quentin, smiling at the young Frenchman's gestures and energy.

"Mon camarade, a man says more when under the influences

of eau-de-vie, or champagne, than he ever does under those of vin-ordinaire, cold water, or a bowl of gruel; and as your remarkably potent rum-and-water has put me in that condition when a man reveals his loves and hates, and, more foolish still, sometimes his private history, I don't care if I tell you how I became a soldier.

"My father," began the garrulous chasseur, "is an officer of the old days of the monarchy, and held his first commission, like the Emperor himself, from Louis XVI., the Most Christian King, and they were brother subalterns in the regiment of La Fere. To the friendship that grew up between them there, the old gentleman owes his brigade and the Grand Cross of the Legion, quite as much as to his own bravery in Germany, Italy, and Flanders. My mother (or she at least whom I have been taught to call my mother, for she is his second wife) was a widow of rank, who lost her whole possessions in the stormy days of the Revolution. She was without children, and when my father was assisting the Little Corporal to play the devil at Toulon, Arcola, Lodi, Marengo, and elsewhere, she most affectionately took charge of me, and of my education in Paris.

"As we were not rich, it was proposed to make a doctor of me, and I was duly matriculated at the Ecole de Médecine, and commenced my studies there, not with much enthusiasm or industry either; but in the vague hope, nevertheless, that I might some day cut a figure and have my portrait hung among the full lengths of Ambrose Paré, Marechal, La Peyronnie, and others in the school.

"I look back with no small repugnance to the daily tasks I performed there, and to the horrors of the dissecting-room, after boyish curiosity grew satiated. My brain became addled by lectures on the maxillary sinus, on diseases of the stomach, of the pylerus, the hepatic and abdominal viscera; elephantiasis, aortic aneurism, the lacteal and glandular system, and Heaven alone knows all what more, till I imagined that I had alternately in my own person every ailment peculiar to man. We had plenty of subjects, for daily the guillotine was slicing away in the Place de la Grève, and I have seen the loveliest women and the noblest men in France laid on those tables to be stripped and dissected by the knife of the demonstrator.

"I was soon voted the worst if not the most stupid student that ever put his foot within the college walls. The professors were in despair. They could make nothing of me; and to muddle my poor brain more, about this time I must needs fall in love. Ah! I perceive that you now become interested. I was not much over seventeen, and my first love——"

"First?" said Quentin.

"*Oui—ma foi!* I have had a dozen—was Madame Lisette Thiebault, a friend of my mother."

"A widow, of course?"

"Not at all. She was unfortunately the wife of one of our doctors in the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine," replied the *étourdi* young Frenchman.

"Married!" said poor Quentin, somewhat aghast.

Peste! of course she was; but we don't care for such little obstacles in Paris. Well, Lisette, for so I must name her, was nearly ten years my senior, and so had what she called a motherly interest in me. She was a very handsome woman, somewhat inclined to *embonpoint*, with a clear pale complexion and laughing eyes, exactly the colour of her hair, which was a rich deep brown. She was always gay, laughing and smiling, except when her husband, the doctor, was present, and one could no more make fun with him, than with old Bébé."

"Who, or what was he?"

"The mummy of the King of Poland's dwarf—*Ouf!* what a horror it is!—which we have in the School of the Faculty at Paris. Lisette was very fond of me, and, being a little addicted to literature—she was fond of poetry, too—so we read much together.

"Ere long, monsieur, the doctor began to think all this very improper, so he rudely and abruptly put a stop to our studies; he locked Ovid up, and me out. *Tudieu!* here was an outrage! I thought of inviting him to breathe the morning air on the Bois de Boulogne; but a duel between a first-year's student and an old doctor was not to be thought of. Madame had a tender heart, so she pitied me. She considered her husband's conduct cruel, ungrateful, outrageous, barbarous; so, as it was necessary that my classical studies should not be neglected, we arranged a little code of signals. Thus, Lisette, by simply keeping a drawing-room window open or shut, or a muslin curtain festooned or closely drawn, could inform me when Bluebeard was at home or abroad; whether the breach was practicable or not; and thus we circumvented our tyrant for a time, and I returned with ardour to the study of classical poetry; but as for the dissecting-room, diable! it saw no more of me.

"Of the doctor I had always a wholesome dread, as he was a *Septembriseur*."

"What is that?" asked Quentin, perceiving a dark expression shade the face of Ribeaupierre.

"'Tis a name we have in Paris for those who were concerned as aiders or abettors of the horrible September massacres—he

would have thought no more of slily putting a bullet into me, than of killing a wasp; thus, you see, I pursued the acquisition of knowledge under difficulties.

"Now came out the edict issued about eight years ago, for raising two hundred thousand men for the army and marine, and every young man in France had to inscribe his name for the conscription. I omitted—we shall call it delayed—to inscribe mine; but my learned friend, M. le Docteur Thiebault, unknown to me, performed that little service in my behalf. He was extremely loth that the Republic—it was the glorious indivisible Republic of liberty, equality, fraternity, and tyranny then—should be deprived of my valuable aid by land or sea.

"About the time when he usually returned from visiting his patients, I had bidden adieu to madame, for our studies were over, and in the dusk of the evening was on my way home when surprised by a patrol of the police under a commissaire, at the corner of the Rue Ecole de Médecine. To avoid them I shrank into a porch, but they invited me rather authoritatively to come forth, and on my doing so, a sergeant passed his lantern scrutinizingly across my face.

"'A young man,' said the commissaire, who was new in the quartier; 'who are you?'

"'I am not obliged to say,' said I.

"'Ah—we shall see that; what are you?'

"'A student of the Faculty of Médecine. Vive la République! War to the cottage—peace to the castle!' I replied, waving my hat.

"'Is your name inscribed for the levy, blunderer? You quote oddly for a student!'

"'Of course my name is inscribed,' said I, boldly, though I little knew that it was so.

"'Show me your card which certifies this.'

"'Mon Dieu!' I exclaimed, as a brilliant thought occurred to me; 'do not speak so loud, monsieur.'

"'Diable! may we not raise our voices in the streets of Paris?' he asked.

"'Not if you knew the mischief an alarm would do me.'

"'Tête Dieu! 'tis an odd fellow, this!'

"'Monsieur, pity me!' said I, in a voice full of entreaty. 'I throw myself upon your generosity—I perceive that I melt your heart. I have not my card; it is with my wife——'

"'Morbleu! you are very young to have a wife, my friend, with a chin like an apple,' said the grim old sergeant, as he passed his lantern across my face again; 'I hope she is fully grown; but to the point, my fine fellow, or we shall have to

march you to the Conciergerie, and they have an unpleasant mode of pressing questions there.'

"'Where is this wife of yours, my little friend?'

"'In her house, M. le Commissaire, where you see that light above the lamp with the scarlet bottle. Ah, the perfidious! There she awaits a lover for whom I am watching.'

"I acted my part to the life, though jealousy is *not* a peculiarity of French husbands.

"'And this lover?" said the commissaire, becoming suddenly interested, perhaps from some fellow-feeling.

"'He is a young brother student of mine.'

"'His name?' said the commissaire, producing a note-book.

"'Eugène de Ribeaupierre.'

"'We know him,' said the other, 'for the greatest young rascal in all Paris. He destroyed a tree of liberty in the Palais Royal, and painted the nose of Equality red in the Jardin des Plantes.'

"'The same, monsieur,' said I, in a whining voice; 'he will come here disguised in a grey wig and spectacles to delude you, M. le Commissaire, and me, too, unhappy that I am. Ah, mon Dieu, there he is! there he is! Seize him, in the name of morality and justice, of the République Démocratique et Sociale!'

"The patrol instantly laid violent hands on the person of Doctor Thiebault, who, to do him justice, made a violent resistance, and broke the sergeant's lantern, to the tune of twenty francs, before he was borne off to the Conciergerie, where he passed three days and nights in a horrid vault among thieves and malefactors, before he was brought up for examination, when it was discovered that it was not a young student, but an old professor of the healing art, standing high in the estimation of all Paris, who had been maltreated and carried off by the watch.

"So the whole story came out, and on the fourth day I found myself off *en route* to join my father's corps of Chasseurs à Cheval, then serving against the Austrians. My good mother shed abundance of tears at my departure; the Abbé Lebrun gave me abundance of good advice and a handful of louis d'or, which I considered of more value, and in a month after I found myself face to face with the white coats in the forest of Frisenheim, on the left bank of the Rhine.

"As a parting gift my dear friend Lisette had given me a holy medal to save me from bullets and so forth; but, diable! it nearly cost me my life, for one of the first balls fired near Oggersheim beat it into my ribs; the ball came out, and the blessed medal stuck fast, and all the skill of our three doctors was required to extract it, so after three months I found myself again in beloved Paris on sick leave."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE GALIOTE OF ST. CLOUD.

"To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets. There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove."—*Twelfth Night.*

"So," resumed Ribeaupierre, "this was the way in which I became one of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval, in the service of the Republic one and indivisible, as it boasted to be, as well as democratic and social; and how I now find myself a sous-lieutenant, under the Emperor, whom God long preserve!"

"And Lisette?——"

"Bah! in my absence I found that she had taken to study poetry with M. Grobbin, a grenadier of the Consular Guard, the same who was the cause of the First Consul issuing his remarkable order of the day, concerning that Parisian weakness for destroying one's self, in the passion named love. Did you never hear of it?"

"No."

"Ma foi! You English know nothing that is acted out of your foggy little island."

"And this order——"

"Stated that as the Grenadier Grobbin had destroyed himself in despair, for his dismissal by Madame de Thiebault, the First Consul directed that it should be inserted in the order of the day for the Consular Guard, 'that a soldier ought to know how to subdue sorrow and the agitation of the passions; that there is as much courage in enduring with firmness the pains of the heart as remaining steady under the grape-shot of a battery; and to abandon one's self to grief without resistance, to kill one's self in order to escape from it, is to fly from the field of battle before one is conquered!' The order was signed by Bonaparte, as First Consul, and countersigned by Jean Baptiste Bessières."

"Have you ever seen the Emperor?" asked Quentin.

"Once, mon ami—only once."

"In the field?"

"No; but nearer than I ever wish to see him again, under the same circumstances at least. Shall I tell you how it was?"

"If you please."

"Well, monsieur, it happened in this way. I had just been appointed a sous-lieutenant in the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval; we had returned from service in Italy, and were quartered at St.

Cloud, where we were soon tired of the gardens, cafés, water-works, and so forth. A few of us had been on leave in Paris for some days, where our spare cash and prize money were soon spent among the theatres, operas, feasting, and other means of emptying one's purse, so we were returning cheaply to barracks by the galiote, which then used to traverse the great bend of the Seine every morning, leaving the Pont Royal about ten o'clock for St. Cloud; the voyage usually lasted about two hours, and cost us only sixteen sous each.

"On this occasion, as the morning was very wet, the canvas covering was drawn close, and as we had the galiote all to ourselves—save one person, a stranger—we were very merry, very noisy, and very much at home indeed, proceeding to smoke without the ceremony of asking this person's permission, for which, indeed, we cared very little, as he appeared to be a plain little citizen some five feet high, about thirty-six years of age, and possessing a very sombre cast of face, over which he wore a rather shabby hat drawn well down, a grey greatcoat with a queer cape, and long boots; and he appeared to be completely immersed in the columns of his newspaper.

"We were conversing with great freedom concerning the consulate, which was just on the point of expanding into an empire and our senior lieutenant, Jules de Marbœuf (now our lieutenant-colonel) was named by us 'Monseigneur le Maréchal Duc de Marbœuf and master of the horse to Pepin le Bref.' Then we ridiculed unmercifully the proposal of the Tribune Citizen Curée, that the First Consul should be proclaimed *Emperor*, and in this quality continue the government of the French *Republic*.

"'Peste! what a paradox it is!' exclaimed Jules, emitting a mighty puff of smoke, as he lounged at length upon the cushioned seat of the galiote.

"'And the Imperial dignity is to be declared hereditary in his family,' I added, impudently, reclosing one of the openings in the awning, which the quiet stranger had opened, as our smoking evidently annoyed him.

"'In three days *the pear will be ripe*; France will become an appanage of Corsica, and I shall obtain my diploma as peer and marshal of France,' exclaimed Jules with loud voice; 'and you, Eugene——'

"'Oh, I shall be Minister of War to the Little Corporal.'

"'Bravo!' said the others, clapping their hands; 'we shall all pick up something among the ruins of this vulgar and tiresome Republic.'

"'M. le Citoyen,' said Jules, with affected courtesy, 'I perceive the smoke annoys you—you don't like it—eh?'

"'No, monsieur,' replied the other briefly and sternly.

"'Then M. le Citoyen had better land, for before we reach St. Cloud, he will be smoked like a Westphalian ham.'

"'Take care, Jules,' said I, 'the citizen may be a fire-eater—some devil of a fellow who spends half his days in a shooting gallery.'

"'*Parbleu*, he doesn't look much like a fire-eater; but perhaps monsieur is an editor—an author?' suggested Jules, with another long puff.

"'Exactly,' said I; 'he is an author.'

"'Of what?'

"'The famous *Voyage à Saint Cloud par mer, et retour par terre*, taking notes for a new edition.'

"This sally produced a roar of laughter, on which the citizen suddenly folded his paper and prepared to rise, as we were now close to St. Cloud.

"'Don't forget to record, M. l'Editeur, that last week I pulled a charming young girl out of the river close by.'

"'Trust you didn't pull her hair up by the roots, Jules,' said one.

"'Or rumple her dress?' said another.

"'Fie!' I exclaimed; 'but you will give us each a copy, M. l'Editeur?'

"'On receiving your cards, messieurs,' replied the other with a grim smile.

"'Here is mine—and mine—and mine,' said we, thrusting them upon him.

"'And here is *mine*,' said he, presenting to Jules an embossed card, on which was engraved 'Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul.'

"We remained as if paralysed, unable either to speak or move; but the justly incensed First Consul, after quitting the galiote, which was now moored alongside the quay, said to a gentleman whose uniform proclaimed him a general officer, and who seemed to be waiting there,—

"'Bessières, take the swords of these gentlemen, who are to be placed under close arrest, and send the colonel of the 24th Chasseurs to me instantly.'

"His massive features were pale as marble; his keen dark eyes shot forth a lurid glare; his lips were compressed with concealed fury, and we all trembled before the terrible glance of this little man in long boots. Ah, mon Dieu! what a moment it was! How foolish, how triste, how crestfallen we all looked.

"'Your name, monsieur?' said he suddenly to me.

"'Eugène de Ribeaupierre,' said I, with a profound salute.

"'Any relation to the officer who bears that name, and who was captain-lieutenant in the Regiment de la Fere?'

"'I am his only son, monseigneur.'

"'That reply has saved you and your companions from degradation and imprisonment; but still you must be taught, messieurs, that to protect, and not to insult the citizen, is the first duty of a soldier. To your quarters, messieurs, and report yourselves under arrest until further orders!'

"The authoritative wave of his hand was enough, and we slunk away with terrible forebodings of the future. A severe reprimand was administered through Bessières; but whether it was that our political opinions had been uttered too freely, or that the First Consul had no wish to see the 24th figure in the forthcoming pageant of his coronation as Emperor, I know not, but on the day following our precious voyage to St. Cloud, we got our route for Genoa, so that was my first and last meeting with our glorious Emperor, whose name I have made a *cri de guerre* in many a battle and skirmish, and for whom I am ready to die!" he added, with genuine enthusiasm. "Sunset! there goes the gun in Valencia," he exclaimed, as the boom of a cannon pealed through the still air. "The evening is advancing monsieur, and we must part, unless you will accompany me to Valencia."

"Impossible!" said Quentin.

"I will gage my word of honour for your safety there and safe-conduct to the mountains," said he, as they issued cautiously from the thicket upon the highway.

"I thank you, but I am most anxious to complete my task."

"*Très bien*—so be it; then we part at yonder cypress-trees. Hola! what have we here—a dead horse—the charger of one of my men?" exclaimed Ribeaupierre, as they came suddenly upon a cavalry-horse lying dead, with all his housing and trappings on, by the wayside. "It is the horse of Corporal Raoul, one of the three men who fell in the ambuscade—several bullets have struck the poor nag, and it has galloped here only to bleed to death. Raoul was a devil of a fellow for plunder; I know that he always carried something else than pistols in his holsters—let us see."

Unbuttoning the flaps of the holsters, Ribeaupierre drew forth a pistol from each, and these, as they were loaded, he retained; but at the bottom of one holster-pipe he found a canvas bag.

"*Parbleu*, look here! Raoul, poor devil, thought no doubt to spend these among the girls in Paris. Plunder, every sou of it,"

he added, tumbling among the grass a heap of gold moidores, which are Portuguese coins, each worth twenty-seven shillings sterling. "This is Raoul's share of the sacking of Coimbra, which the Portuguese permitted themselves to make such a hideous bawling about. It was the plunder of the living, so you may as well have a share of it *now* that it is the spoil of the dead."

"Who—I?" said Quentin, hesitating.

"Take it—*ma foi!*"

"Can I do so?"

"I should think so; what—would you leave it here to fall into Spanish hands, or be buried with a dead horse?" said Ribeaupierre, as he rapidly divided the money, which amounted to one hundred and sixty pieces in all. "'Tis eighty moidores each; a sum like that is not to be found often by the wayside."

He almost thrust his share into Quentin's pocket, and a few minutes after, they bade each other warmly adieu, with little expectation of ever meeting again.

Ribeaupierre pursued his way towards Valencia de Alcantara, while, following his direction, Quentin proceeded towards the hills near Herreruela, the rocky peaks of which were yet gleaming in crimson light, though the sun had set.

He seemed still to hear the pleasant voice, and to see the dark and expressive face of his recent companion as he trod lightly on, clinking his moidores, happy that he was now master of a sum amounting to more than a hundred pounds sterling, which would enable him to repay his dear old friend the quartermaster, and would amply supply his own wants while on service, for some time at least.

It was a remarkable stroke of good fortune, and he reflected that but for his meeting with Ribeaupierre, he might have passed without examining the dead troop-horse that lay by the wayside; he reflected further, that but for the turn taken happily by the episodes of the day, he might have fallen into the hands of a French patrol, and been now, with his despatch, in safe keeping within the walls of Valencia.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE GUERILLA HEAD-QUARTERS.

"I made a mountain brook my guide,
Through a wild Spanish glen,
And wandered, on its grassy side,
Far from the homes of men.
It lured me with a singing tone,
And many a sunny glance,
To a green spot of beauty lone,
A haunt for old romance."—MRS. HEMANS.

SAVE in the west, where the hues of crimson and gold predominated, the sunset sky was all of a pale violet. Though the mountain peaks were rough and barren, and the plains of Estremadura, long abandoned and for ages uncultivated, were waste and wild in general, the road by which Quentin proceeded towards Herreruela lay through rich scenery and land that was fertile.

The tall Indian corn had been reaped, but its thick brown stubble remained. In some places it had too evidently been destroyed by fire to keep it from the French, or by them to harass and distress the Spaniards. The olive and the vine grew wild by the wayside; the orange tree and the leafy lime, the fig, and the prickly pear were frequently mingled in the same place with the variegated holly, while the myrtle and the lavender flower loaded the air with sweet perfume.

Darkness came rapidly on; the reddened summits of the sierra grew sombre, the western flush of light died away, and ere long Quentin found himself traversing a steep and gloomy road, that led right into the heart of the mountains.

A sound that came on the night wind made him pause and listen.

It was the great bell of Valencia de Alcantara—the same that had rung so joyously when the Christian cavaliers of Salamanca defended the wild gorge through which the Tagus rolls at Al-Kantarah (*the bridge* of the Moors)—and it was now tolling the hour of ten.

Ribeaupierre was now with his friends and comrades, doubtless recounting his adventures and his escape, by the aid of a British soldier. A knowledge of this caused Quentin some anxiety, lest among the listeners, there might be some who had neither the gratitude nor the chivalry of the young chasseur, and who might take means to cut off his return to Portugal,

for he was now fully aware of the risk he ran on the Spanish side, and began to see something of the snare into which he had fallen.

As the last stroke of the bell died away on the wind, a sense of intense loneliness came over Quentin's heart; the sound seemed to come from a vast distance, and the narrow road he was traversing penetrated into the mountains, which seemed to become darker and steeper on each side of it; but there is something intoxicating in the idea of peril to a gallant soul. It kindles a glorious enthusiasm at times, and thus he marched manfully on till a voice in Spanish, loud, sonorous, and ringing, demanded in a military manner—

"*Quien esta ahi?*" (Who comes there?)

"*Gente de paez*," replied Quentin, while the rattle of a musket and the click of the lock as it was cocked came to his ear, and he saw the dark outline of a human figure appear suddenly in the centre of the path.

"*Estere ahi* (Stay there), and say from whence you come," said the challenger again.

Quentin naturally paused before replying, as he knew not by whom he was confronted, and could only make out a tall figure wearing a slouched sombrero, by the pale light of the stars.

"Presto—quick!" continued the stranger, slapping the butt of his musket; "from whence come you?"

"The British cantonments," replied Quentin, conceiving the truth to be the wisest answer to a Spaniard.

"*Bueno!* why didn't you say so at once?" exclaimed the other; "but what seek you here?"

"I am bearer of a despatch for Don Baltasar de Saldos. Am I right in supposing you are one of his people?"

"Si, senor; this is his head-quarters."

By this time Quentin had come close to the questioner, who still kept his bayonet at the charge, and who seemed to be a Spanish peasant, accoutred with crossbelts and cartridge-box. He was posted on the summit of a hastily-constructed earthwork, which was formed across the road in a kind of gorge through which it passed; and there, too, were in position three brass field-pieces, French apparently, loaded no doubt with grape or canister to sweep the steep and narrow approach.

Beside them lounged a guard of some forty men or so, muffled in their cloaks, smoking or sleeping, but all of whom sprang to their feet and to their weapons as Quentin approached. He had now taken off his grey coat to display his scarlet uniform, and, when one of the guard held up a lantern to take a survey of him,

loud vivas and mutterings of satisfaction and welcome greeted him on all sides.

"Senors, where shall I find Don Baltasar?" he inquired.

"At his quarters in the puebla, senor. Lazarillo, conduct the senor to De Soldas," said one who seemed to exercise some authority over the rest; "but I fear you will find him busy at present. At what time are those French prisoners to be despatched?"

"Midnight, Senor Conde," replied he whom he had named Lazarillo.

"It wants but half an hour to that," said the guerilla officer, who was no other than the Conde de Maciera, as he looked at his watch; and it was with emotions of intense pleasure and satisfaction that Quentin found himself proceeding towards the mountain village which formed the head-quarters of the formidable guerilla chief, and thus acting, as he hoped, the last scene in the task assigned him; but he knew little of the people among whom he was thrown, for in character they are unlike all the rest of Europe.

"Nature and the natives," says a traveller, "have long combined to isolate still more their peninsula, which is already moated round by the unsocial sea. The Inquisition all but reduced the Spanish man to the condition of a monk in a wall-enclosed convent, by standing sentinel and keeping watch and ward against the foreigner and his perilous novelties. Spain, thus unvisited and unvisiting, became arranged for *Spaniards only*, and has scarcely required conveniences which are more suited to the curious wants of other Europeans and strangers, who here are neither liked, wished for, or even thought of—natives who never travel except on compulsion, and never for amusement—why, indeed, should they?"

Late though the hour, the guerillas, a loose and, of course, disorderly force at all times, seemed all astir in their quarters. By the clear starlight Quentin could see that the street consisted of humble cottages bordering the way, with red-tiled roofs, over nearly every one of which a huge old knotty vine was straggling. At one end rose a strong old archway, "old," Lazarillo said, "as the days of King Bomba," and there, when the puebla had been a place of greater pretension, a gate had closed the thoroughfare by night.

Now there was no barrier save a bank of earth and rubbish, hastily thrown up, and a couple of field-pieces mounted thereon seemed to hint the rigour with which intruders would be prosecuted; in short, it prevented any sudden surprise in that direction. There were lights—pine torches or candles—burning in all the

houses, and, as he passed the windows, Quentin could perceive the dark-bearded faces, the striking figures, and varied costumes of the guerillas. Various groups of them thronged the little street, and a company of them were parading, under arms, before the largest house in the puebla.

"That is the posada, senor," said Quentin's guide. "There Don Baltasar resides; but we have come too late to speak with him, at least until his work is done."

"His work," repeated Quentin, inquiringly; "what is about to be done?"

"*Por Dios!* you shall soon see," he replied with a grin, as a number of men bearing blazing pine torches issued from the large house, which the guide styled the posada, and, by the united light of these, Quentin was enabled to behold a strange, a wild, and very awful scene.

As a drum only half braced was hoarsely beaten, the guerillas came swarming out of the wayside cottages in hundreds, and a singularly savage but picturesque set of fellows they were. All were strong and hardy Castilians; many were exceedingly handsome both in face and form, and there was scarcely one among them that might not have served as a model for a sculptor or a study for an artist.

Their Spanish peasant costumes, in some instances, were sombre and tattered, in others new and gay; the jackets, olive or claret colour, being gaudily embroidered, and worn over the scarlet or yellow sashes which girt the short, loose trousers. Many were bare-legged and bare-footed, and many wore long leather abarcas. Not a few wore fanciful uniforms of all colours, among which Quentin recognised the brown coats of the Spanish line, and a few scarlet, which had no doubt been stripped from the dead at Rolcia and Vimiera, as they seemed to have belonged to the 29th regiment, and the Argyleshire Highlanders.

Most of them wore the native sombreros; many had their coal-black locks gathered in a net of scarlet twine, or bound by a large yellow handkerchief, the fringed end of which floated on the left shoulder, while others sported regimental shakos and staff cocked-hats. All were armed with long Spanish guns, sabres, pistols, and daggers, and all nearly were cross-belted with cartridge-box and bayonet.

In one or two instances the closely-shaven chin and the tonsure, but ill-concealed by the half-grown hair, indicated the unfrocked friar, who had taken up arms inspired by patriotism or revenge against the destroyers of convents, or it might be to have a turn once more in the world, while the state of Spain loosed all ties, divine as well as human.

Half hidden in the shadow of the starlight night, and half thrown forward into the strong red glare of the upheld pine torches that streamed in the wind, the figures of those in the foreground and those flitting about in the rear—the varied colours of their customs, their black beards and glittering eyes, their flashing weapons, together with the rude mountain village, with its old and time-worn archway, made altogether a strangely wild and picturesque scene.

But its darker and more terrible features are yet to be described.

CHAPTER XLIX.

A REPRISAL.

"Proud of the favours mighty Jove has shown,
On certain dangers we too rashly run;
If 'tis His will our haughty foes to tame,
Oh, may this instant end the Grecian name!
Here far from Argos let their heroes fall,
And one great day destroy and bury all"—*Iliad* xiii.

QUENTIN'S nerves received something like an electric shock when, on proceeding a little further forward, he saw a line consisting of sixteen poor French prisoners, partly bound by ropes, standing in front of the rudely-formed rampart which closed up the archway, and in front of them were four large pits, whose appalling shape and aspect left no doubt that they were to be the premature graves of the unfortunate men who now stood in health and strength beside them.

Those sixteen persons were of various ranks, as four at least seemed by their silver epaulettes to be officers, and medals and crosses glittered on the breasts of several. Their uniform was dark blue, lapelled with red, and all the privates wore large shoulder-knots of scarlet worsted. They were all French infantry men, taken in some recent skirmish. Bareheaded, they stood a sad-looking line, and in their pale but war-bronzed faces, on which the flickering glare of the torches fell with weird and wavering gleams, there seemed to be no ray of hope for mercy or reprieve at the hands of their captors, who were about to sacrifice them in the horrid spirit of reprisal which then existed between the Spanish guerillas and the French invaders.

"Good heavens!" said Quentin, in an agitated whisper; "are these men about to be shot?"

"Si, senor—every one of them!"

"For what reason?"

"Being on the wrong side of the Pyrenees," replied the Spaniard, with a cruel grin.

"Shot—and without mercy?"

"Precisely so, senor."

"By whose order?"

"One who does not like his orders questioned—Don Baltasar de Saldos."

"Is he capable of such an act?"

"Capable! Santiago! The French have made his heart as hard as if it had been dipped in the well of Estremoz (beyond the mountains), which turns everything to flinty rock."

As if to enhance the torture of their anticipated doom, the Spaniards went slowly and deliberately about the selection of a firing party, which consisted of no less than sixty men, who loaded in a very irregular manner, and, as their steel ramrods flashed in the torch-light and went home with a dull *thud* on the ball cartridges, a thrill seemed to pass through the prisoners.

One, a grim-visaged and grey-moustached old captain of grenadiers, folded his arms, shrugged his shoulders, and smiled in scorn and defiance. Doubtless, since the fall of the Bastile and the days of the barricades, he had seen human lives lavished with a recklessness that hardened him; but there was another officer who covered his face with his handkerchief and wept; not in cowardice, for his gallant breast was covered with the medals of many an honourable field; but perhaps his heart at that moment was far away with his wife and little ones in some sunny vale of Languedoc, or by the banks of the silvery Garonne.

Some had their teeth clenched, and their eyes wearing a wild glare of hate, of fear, and defiance mingled; some there were who seemed scarcely conscious of the awful doom prepared for them, and some glanced wistfully and fearfully at the newly-dug pits which were to receive them when all was over.

Some were occupied by external objects, and the eyes of one followed earnestly the course of a falling star of great beauty and brilliance, which vanished behind the hills of Albuquerque.

A guerilla, clad in somewhat tattered black velvet, now took off his sombrero, and in doing so, displayed, by a pretty plain tonsure, that he was an unfrocked or degraded priest; but now inspired by something of his former holy office, he held up a small crucifix, and exclaimed—

"Frenchmen, if any man among you is a true son of the Church, I pray God and the Blessed Madonna to receive him, and have mercy on his soul!"

"That is the Padre Trevino, our second in command," whispered Lazarillo; "and he is the best shot among us."

As Trevino spoke, the sixteen prisoners and all the onlookers, crossed themselves very devoutly. Some of the doomed closed their eyes, and by their muttering, seemed to be praying very earnestly. Intensity of emotion seemed to render them all more or less athirst, as they were seen to moisten their pale lips with their tongues.

The stern grey-haired captain on the right alone seemed unmoved; he had neither a prayer to give to Heaven or to earth, and thus stood gazing stonily and grimly at his destroyers.

"On your knees, senors! on your knees!" said Trevino.

"Never to Spaniards!" replied the old captain.

"Are they really in earnest, M. le Capitaine?" asked the prisoner next him, a mere youth.

"Earnest—ma foi! I should think so, Louis."

"Ah, mon Dieu—to be shot thus—it is terrible!" he exclaimed, in a piercing voice.

"On your knees, Frenchmen," repeated the militant friar, "not to us, but to God!"

"To the blessed God, then," said the old captain; "kneel, comrades; 'tis the last word of command you will ever hear from me."

They all knelt, and now the firing party came forward three paces—

—— "a death-determined band,
Hell in their face and horror in their hand."

And forming line about twenty paces from the prisoners, shouldered arms. Then Quentin felt his excited heart beating painfully in his breast, and he held his breath as if suffocating. From the shoulder the muskets were cast to the "ready," and then followed the terrible clicking of the sixty locks, a sound that made the youngest victim, who had been named Louis, a fair-haired lad (some poor conscript, torn from his mother's arms, perhaps), to shudder very perceptibly and close his eyes; and now came the three fatal and final words of command from the unfrocked friar.

"Camaradas, preparen las armas!"

"Apunten!"

("Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!" cried the old captain, defiantly.)

"FUEGO!"

The straggling volley of musketry broke like a thunder peal upon the silence of the night, and echoed with a hundred reverberations among the mountains, till it was heard, perhaps, by the sentinels in Valencia. Red blood spirted from the wounds

Half killed and gasping painfully, the old French captain struggled into a sitting posture, but fell back again, as another volley poured in at ten paces ended the butchery.

In a few minutes more they were stripped, even to their boots, and flung quite nude and scarcely cold into the pits at the foot of the breastwork, four being cast into each.

In the pocket of the poor officer who had wept there was found a lady's miniature, and three locks of fair hair that had evidently belonged to little children. The loose earth was heaped over the dead, the torches were extinguished, and, like a dissolving view or some horrible phantasmagoria, the whole affair passed away and was over.

In the horror excited by the scene and all its details, Quentin forgot his mission, his despatch, almost his own identity; a sickness and giddiness came over him, till he was roused by the voice of Lazarillo, his guide, who said in the most matter-of-fact way—

"Follow me, senor—perhaps Don Baltasar can receive you now."

The house to which he was conducted was the most important in the place, and had been for ages its chief posada or caravanserie, where the muleteers passing between Oporto, Lisbon, and the southern and eastern provinces of Spain, had been wont to halt and refresh. It is said to have been for a time the residence of the Scoto-Spaniard Don Lago Stuart, who, with the *Sabrina* and *Ceres*, two Spanish frigates, fought Lord Nelson for three hours in the Mediterranean, in 1796, with the loss of one hundred and sixty men.

The under story was appropriated to the stabling of horses, mules, and burros, and from thence a rickety wooden stair led to the upper floor, the walls of which were cleanly whitewashed, and the floors covered, not with carpets, which in Spain would soon become intolerable with insects, but with thin matting made of the esparto grass or wild rush.

Military arms and household utensils were hung upon the

CHAPTER L.

DON BALTASAR DE SALDOS.

"We must not fail, we must not fail,
However fraud or force assail;
By honour, pride, or policy,
By Heaven itself! we must be free.
We spurned the thought, our prison burst,
And dared the despot to the worst:
Renewed the strife of centuries,
And flung our banner to the breeze."—DAVIS.

A START of extreme astonishment deepening into a black scowl, which anon changed to something of a scornful smile in the Spaniards sallow visage, was Quentin Kennedy's first greeting

from the guerilla chief, who then bowed haughtily, and said with an unpleasant emphasis—

"Oho, senor; so *you* are the messenger! Santos—why didn't you tell me your errand on the day we met by the cross of King Alphonso? You would thus have saved yourself a devil of a journey and me this knock on the head."

"It would have been unwise to reveal my mission to the first stranger I met; I deplore the result of our second interview, senor; but I would not stand by and see an unarmed man killed without interfering."

"A Frenchman!" said Baltasar with intense scorn.

"Maledito," said the Padre Trevino, a man with a pair of quiet and deeply set, but the most treacherous looking dark eyes that ever glanced out of a human head. "Maledito!" he repeated, while playing with the knife in his sash, "so this is the fellow who wounded you and rescued the French officer?"

"Yes, Padre; but that is *my* affair, not yours," said Baltasar, haughtily.

"And your precious Frenchman—you conduted him no doubt to Valencia?" said the Padre, anxious apparently to make mischief.

"I left him very near it—indeed, he was my guide part of the way here," replied Quentin with composure.

"Very accommodating of him certainly," said Baltasar, in whose face the scowl returned; it was evident, apart from his indignation at Quentin, that he had found some of the *wrong eggs*, the legends on which foretold the early abandonment of the entire Peninsula by the British, for his mind was full of ill-concealed anger and apprehension. "You see now, senor," he resumed with a malevolent grimace, "you see now that the spit has become a sword, and the sword only a spit. Por vida del demonio! but Don Tomaso Yriarte was right after all, for we must never take men or things for what they may appear."

While Quentin was pondering what reply to make to this strange speech, a drop of blood fell from the wound in Baltasar's head, and made a large scarlet spot on the open map of Alentejo. On seeing this the eyes of the Spaniard flashed fire, his nostrils seemed to dilate, and striking the table with the haft of his dagger, he exclaimed—

"But that the fact of shooting the bearer of a British despatch—a messenger of Don Juan Hope, as Lazarillo says you are—might compromise me with the Junta of Castile as well as with your general, and thus injure the budding Spanish cause, by the Holy Face of Jaen! I would send you to keep company with those sixteen dogs whom Trevino shot to-night!"

"Senor, I was innocent of intending evil against *you*," urged poor Quentin.

"And this despatch which you bring, if it be as my soul forbodes, a notification that I am only to cover the retreat of the British when falling back upon Lisbon and the sea, then say over any prayer your heretic mother may have taught you, for you, Inglese, shall not see the sun of to-morrow rise. I never forgive an insult—a word or a blow!

Though Quentin had been told at Portalegre somewhat of the contents of the despatch, he knew so little of the great game of war and politics about to be played in Spain that his mind misgave him, and he trembled in his heart lest the treasured paper which he now handed to this ferocious Spaniard, might indeed prove his death-warrant, and seal his doom! He thought of his pistols, and cast a glance around him—escape was hopeless, and a cruel smile wreathed the thin wicked lips of the Padre Trevino.

Baltasar tore open the long official sheet of paper, and when his piercing eyes had run rapidly over the contents, to Quentin's great relief of mind, a smile that was almost pleasant spread over his sallow visage, like sunshine on a lake.

"Hombres," he exclaimed to those around him, "listen! There are none here but true Castilians, so all may share my joy. On the second day of the ensuing November, the first division of the British army which is to rescue Spain will enter Castile by the Badajoz road, led by Sir John Hope, whose advance we are to cover by a collateral movement along the mountains by the hill of Albuera. Long live Ferdinand the Seventh!"

"Viva el Rey de Espana!"

"Viva el nombre de Jesus!"

Such were the kind of shouts that were raised by a hundred voices, while sundry faces, erewhile darkened by hostile and suspicious scowls, were now wreathed with broad smiles, and many a battered sombrero and greasy bandanna were flourished aloft, while to the triumphant vivas the musket-butts clattered an accompaniment on the esparto-covered floor; and many a somewhat dingy hand shook Quentin's with energy, while, in token of friendship and alliance, wine, cigaritos, and tobacco pouches were proffered him on all sides.

When the hubbub was somewhat over, Quentin (with some anxiety for his departure, as the atmosphere of the guerilla headquarters seemed a dangerous one) said to the chief—

"Don Baltasar, my orders were and my most earnest wishes are to join my regiment at Portalegre, so I should wish to set out by daybreak to-morrow."

"But the army will soon be advancing—why not remain with us till it comes up?"

"Impossible!" said Quentin, whose heart sank at the suggestion.

"Perhaps you think that you have seen enough of us; but in a war of independence, the invaded must not be too tender-hearted."

"Nay, senor; but if it would please you to give me to-night your reply to the general commanding our division, it would favour me greatly."

This simple question seemed to raise some undefinable suspicion, or recall something unpleasant to the Spaniard's mind, for, knitting his thick black brows over his deeply-set and lynx-like eyes, he regarded Quentin with a steady scrutiny, and said:

"You are not an officer, it would seem? (How often had this remark stung poor Quentin.) You have no sash, gorget, or epaulettes?"

"No, senor," replied Quentin, with a sigh; "I have not the good fortune."

"What are you then—a simple soldado?"

"Senor," replied Quentin, with growing irritation, for, in truth, he was very weary of his long days' journey, and its exciting episodes; "the letter you have just read, I believe, tells you what you require to know."

"Santos! you are a bold fellow to bear yourself thus to *me*."

"I am a British soldier on military duty," replied Quentin, loftily, as he saw that hardihood was the only quality appreciated by his new acquaintances.

"What is this? You are styled, *voluntario del Regimiento Viente y Cinco—Fronteros del Rey*—is that it?"

"A volunteer of the King's Own Borderers—yes."

"An English corps, of course, by your uniform?" remarked Baltasar, while twisting up a cigarito.

"No, senor."

"*Maledito*—what then?" he asked, pausing, as he lit it.

"Escotos."

"*Demonio!* I saw them at Vimiera, and thought all the Escotos were bare-legged, and wore Biscayner's bonnets with great plumes. But you shall have the answer you wish this instant. I am not a man for delay."

"A guide also, senor, will be necessary, so that I may avoid the French patrols."

"You made your way here without one," said the Spaniard, with one of his keen and suspicious glances; "moreover, I suppose you are not without at least *one* French friend in Valencia;

but a guide you shall have, if we can spare one," he added, dipping a pen in an ink-horn, and, drawing before him a sheet of paper, he wrote hastily the following brief despatch, for El Estudiente, as he was sometimes named, had been well educated by his father, a professor at the University of Salamanca.

"SENOR GENERAL,—I have had the high honour of receiving your despatch announcing the day of your march into Castile, and, with the help of God, Madonna, and the saints, I shall be in motion at the same time towards the hill of Albuera, with my guerilla force, now two thousand strong, with five 12-pounders, to cover your flank, if necessary, from the cavalry of Ribeaupierre, who occupy all the district in and about Valencia. With the most profound esteem, I have the honour to be, illustrious Senor and General, &c. &c.—

"BALTASAR DE SALDOS Y SALAMANCA."

While addressing this letter, which he handed to Quentin, he turned to the Padre Trevino, who had stood all the while leaning on his long musket, and said, with a sombre expression on his dark face:—

"Padre, now that I have a moment to spare, I shall be glad to learn how your plan for ridding us of General de Ribeaupierre has failed, and what has become of your remarkably luxuriant beard and whiskers, which were ample enough to have frightened Murillo himself? You are now shaven as bare——"

"As when I threw my gown and sandals over the Dominican gate at Salamanca," interrupted the ex-friar, with a grin.

"Exactly so."

"Well, Baltasar, *amigo mio*, when I entered Valencia this morning, I had, as you know, a goodly natural crop of black beard and whiskers, with a wig that for length of matted locks rivalled those of Lazarillo here. Over these I had a high-crowned sombrero, with a tricoloured cockade, emblematical of my zealous loyalty to Joseph, the Corsican. Clad in an old brown mantle, I assumed the character of a poor, meek man, the bearer of a petition to the French general, De Ribeaupierre, whom I meant to stab to the heart as he read it—ay, *por Dios!* though surrounded by all his staff and quarter-guard, for I was well mounted, and they never would have overtaken or stopped me, save by closing the city gate.

"I reached the head-quarters just as the whole staff were turning out, for tidings had come that the guerillas of that devil of a fellow Baltasar the Salamanquino, had cut off a cavalry patrol, and shot the general's only son, a lieutenant of chasseurs. The excitement was great in the garrison, where there was such

mounting and spurring, drumming and so forth, that I was almost unheeded, while noisily importuning the staff-officers that I had a petition for the general.

"'Here, Spaniard, give it to me,' said one who was covered with orders, pausing, as with his foot in the stirrup, he was just about to mount his horse.

"I measured him with a glance—I looked stealthily all round me to see that the streets were clear for a start, as he opened my petition and read it.

"I drew closer; the red cloud I have seemed to see on *former occasions*, came before my eyes; my heart beat wildly, my hand, hot and feverish, was on my knife. Another moment it was buried in his heart, and I was spurring along the street towards the southern gate, which I reached only to find it shut!"

"A thousand devils!" said Baltasar.

"*Por Baccho!*" muttered the listeners, with their eyes dilated.

Dismounting, I quitted my horse, rushed down an alley, where I saw the door of a bodega open, and plunged down into it unseen, scrambled over the borrachio skins into a dark corner and crept behind a heap of them. There I lay panting and breathless, dreading the proprietor (but he had been hanged that morning as a spy), and also the French, armed parties of whom passed and repassed, swearing and threatening; and from what they said, I learned that I had not killed the general——"

'*Not* killed him? what the devil, Padre!—I thought you always struck home!"

"So I do, and so I *did*, but the knife had reached only the heart of his military secretary."

"Well, then, 'tis one more Frenchman gone the downward road, the way we hope to send them all. And you——"

"I lay for some time in the cool wine vault, among the cobwebs and dirty borrachio skins. One of them—for the temptation was too great—I pierced with my yet bloody knife, and a long, long draught of the vino de Alicante, cold, dry, mellow, delicious, golden-coloured——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Bravo, Padre Trevino!" chorussed all the laughing listeners, as they clattered away with their musket-butts in applause of his atrocious narrative.

"Thou wert revived, no doubt?" said Baltasar, impatiently.

"*Amigo mio*, I should think so; it brightened my intellects; it gave me new ideas—I drew inspiration from that beloved borrachio skin. I cast away my ample wig, drew from my wallet shaving apparatus, and in a thrice I was shaven to the eyes, as you see me. Abandoning my cloak, I concealed my dagger in

my left sleeve, took a wine skin under my arm, and walking deliberately to the officer in command of the guard at the south gate, offered the wine for sale at half its value, seeming to all appearance a very quiet citizen, anxious in these hard times to do a little business, even with the enemy. He took the skin from me, bid me go to the devil for payment; the sentinel opened the wicket, and I was thrust out of Valencia—the very thing I wanted. I said nothing about my poor wife or starving little ones, lest their hearts might relent, but turned my face to the mountains, and I am here."

This savage story met, we have said, with great applause, and Quentin, after the scene he had witnessed in the street of the pueblа, felt no surprise that it did so; but his horror of the Padre was great, and he felt his repugnance for the guerillas increase every moment.

Policy and necessity forced him to dissemble; yet, in that mountain village there seemed such an atmosphere of blood, dishonourable warfare, and patriotism, gone mad, that he longed intensely to be out of it, and once again in the more congenial and civilized society he had left.

"Supper, senor," said Don Baltasar, rising from the table and gathering up his papers; "let us rest now, for you must be weary, and in truth so am I; and then to bed, for the hour is late, and we have both work to do upon the morrow. Trevino, who has the quarter-guard?"

"El Conde de Maciera, senor," replied the Padre.

"Good—not a bat will stir between this and Valencia without his hearing of it. This way, then," added Baltasar, ushering them into an inner apartment, where a very different face from any Quentin had yet seen in the Peninsula shed a light upon the scene.

CHAPTER LI.

DONNA ISIDORA.

"She sung of love—while o'er her lyre
The rosy rays of evening fell,
As if to feed with their soft fire
The soul within that trembling shell.
The same rich light hung o'er her cheek,
And played around those lips that sung,
And spoke as flowers would sing and speak,
If love could lend their leaves a tongue."—MOORE.

UNPLEASANT though his new acquaintances were in many ways, Quentin felt a certain sense of lofty satisfaction that he was a

successful though humble actor in the great European drama. His mission was achieved! The junction with the first division would doubtless be effected by the guerillas, and as he thought of the castle of Rohallion and those who were there, of gentle Flora Warrender and his boyish love, he began to hope—indeed to believe—that he was actually destined for great things after all.

In such a mind as Quentin's there was much of chivalry, nobility, and enthusiasm that mingled with his deep love for a pure and beautiful young girl like Flora.

In some respects, the companionship, aspect, equipment, and bearing of those half-lawless, but wholly patriotic soldiers, seemed a realization of those day-dreams of imaginary adventures his romance reading had led him to weave and fashion; but the awful episode of the night, though fully illustrative of the Spanish character, and of the mode in which the patriots were disposed to carry on the war, was a feature in guerilla life never to be forgotten!

"My sister, the Senora Donna Isidora," said Baltasar, assuming much of the courtly bearing of a true Spanish gentleman, while introducing Quentin to a very handsome girl; "Donna Ximena, the mother of our comrade Trevino," he added, with a deeper reverence, on presenting him to a woman, so old, little, dark, and hideous, that, after bowing, he hastened to look again at the younger lady.

"The senor will kiss your hand, Isidora," said Don Baltasar.

Quentin did so, just touching with his lip a very lovely little hand, but, happily for him, the leathern paw of the venerable Trevino was not presented. Then the party, which consisted of Baltasar, Trevino, two other Spaniards, whose names are of no consequence, the two ladies, and their youthful guest, seated themselves at table.

The mother of the ungodly Trevino was a deaf old crone who seldom spoke, but always crossed herself with great devotion when Quentin looked her way, having a proper horror of all heretics, whom she believed to be the children of the devil, and all to be more or less possessed of the evil eye.

Beauty belongs to no particular country, and is to be found, more or less, everywhere, yet most travellers now begin to admit that Spanish beauty is somewhat of a delusion or a dream, which poets and novelists think it proper or necessary to indulge in and rave about; and some of the aforesaid travellers begin to assert that, beyond a pair of dark eyes and a set of regular teeth, it cannot be honestly said that the women of Spain have much to boast of.

Be that as it may, Isidora de Saldos was a singularly lovely

girl, in somewhere about her eighteenth year, a very ripe age in the sunny land of Castile. Her eyes indeed were marvellous, they were so soft and dark, and alternately so sparkling, languishing, and expressive of earnestness, all the more striking from the pale complexion of her little face. In their deep setting and with their long thick upper and lower lashes, those seductive eyes seemed to be black, while, in reality, they were of the darkest grey. Her dark brown hair was long, rich in colour, and unrivalled in softness. It was of that texture which, unhappily, never lasts long, and which often, ere five-and-twenty comes, has lost alike its length and profusion.

Her Spanish dress became her blooming years, her figure (which was rather *petite*), and the piquant character of her beauty. It consisted of a scarlet velvet corset, and short but ample skirts of alternate black and scarlet flounces, all very full; slippers of Cordovan leather, with high heels, and scarlet stockings, clocked almost to the knee, over the tightest of ankles.

A white muslin handkerchief, prettily disposed over her bosom, a high comb at the back of her head, round which her magnificent dark hair was gathered and fastened by a long gold pin, that looked unpleasantly like a poniard (indeed, it could be used as such), with silver bracelets on her slender wrists, long pendants that glittered at her tiny ears, a large medal bearing the image of the Madonna hung round her neck, and a black lace mantilla, depending from the comb and flowing over all, completed her attire.

The medal was of pure gold, and bore the inscription, "*O Marie, conçue sans péché, priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous,*" and was, as she afterwards informed Quentin, the gift of the Padre Trevino, who found it on the body of a Frenchman whom he had shot near Albuquerque.

"Did you ever taste a real Spanish olla, senor?" asked Baltasar, as the covers were removed, and the odour of a steaming and savoury dish pervaded the apartment.

Quentin declared that he had not.

"Then thou shalt taste it to-night. My sister is a famous cook," said Baltasar; "an olla she excels in—it was the favourite dish of our old father, the professor at Salamanca, and is the most noble dish in the world!"

"If Spanish, it must be," said Quentin, flatteringly.

"True," said Baltasar, gravely, while giving each of his enormous moustaches an upward twist; "we consider everything Spanish supremely good."

"We are rather a proud people you see, senor," said Donna Isidora, laughing; "and so far is pride carried, that to touch royalty is to die."

"Manuel Godoy touched royalty pretty often," said Trevino, with a grim smile, "and we never heard that Her Majesty of Spain resented it particularly."

"Did you ever hear of the escape of the sister of Philip III., senor?"

"I regret to say, Don Baltasar, that I never heard of Philip himself," replied Quentin.

"About two hundred years ago our royal family were residing at Aranjuez," said Baltasar, while filling his own and Quentin's glass with wine; "it is a country palace twenty miles south of Madrid, and is remarkable for its size and beauty. One night it caught fire; the court and all the attendants took to flight, leaving the youngest sister of Don Philip to perish. She was seen at one of the windows wringing her hands and imploring the saints to succour her, but a young arquebusier of the royal guard proved of more avail. He bravely dashed through the flames, raised her in his arms, and bore her forth in safety. But Spanish etiquette was shocked that the hand of a subject—of a man especially—had touched royalty; nay, worse, that he should have entered her bed-chamber, so the soldier was cast into a dungeon, chained to a heavy bar, and condemned to *die!* But the princess graciously pardoned him, and he was sent away to fight the Flemings under the Duke of Alva. His name was De Saldos, and from him we are descended."

Spanish etiquette made Donna Isidora rather silent and reserved; she somewhat uselessly addressed the old crone Donna Ximena from time to time, and that worthy matron only responded by mutterings, shaking her palsied head, or signing the cross beneath the table. At other times Isidora made an occasional remark to Trevino, by whom she was evidently greatly admired, for his keen stealthy eyes were seldom off her face, and a malevolent gleam shot from them whenever, in dispensing the courtesies of the table, she addressed Quentin Kennedy.

The past day's skirmish among the mountains, the capture and slaughter of the sixteen French prisoners, had appetized Baltasar and his three companions; and though Spanish cookery is seldom very excellent, Quentin was quite hungry enough to enjoy the olla podrida of beef, chicken, and bacon, boiled and sliced gourd, carrots, beans, red sausages, and Heaven knows what more, well peppered and spiced.

A few strings of rusks, a dish of raisins, with plenty of good Valdepenas in jolly flasks, closed the repast, after which the invariable cigars were resorted to, prior to repose.

As the whitewashed room, though scantily furnished, was close and warm, and as fighting was over for the night, Baltasar and

his comrades unbuttoned their jackets, and each disencumbered himself of a *peto* or wadding stuffing, which was supposed to turn a bullet, all the better that there was pasted thereon a coloured print of some local saint.

The conversation ran chiefly on the new war about to be waged by the allies in Spain, the various routes likely to be taken by the several divisions, the probable points of concentration, and so forth. These were chiefly discussed by Baltasar and his three companions, all of whom had already seen much service against the French. The extreme youth of Quentin, and his total ignorance of the country, made them somewhat ignore his presence, notwithstanding the important despatch he had brought, the scarlet coat he wore, and that he was the herald of that great strife that was not to cease, even at the Hill of Toulouse!

He sedulously avoided addressing or coming in contact in any way with the Padre Trevino, of whom he naturally had a proper horror, as an apostate priest who, exceeding his duty as a guerilla, became an assassin, and so coolly avowed his deadly design upon the father of Ribeaupierre.

The youth, the fair complexion, the gentleness of voice and eye the donna saw in Quentin, together with certain unmistakable signs of good breeding, when contrasted with the dark, fierce aspect and brusque bearing of those about her now, failed not to interest her deeply.

The solitary mission on which he had come; the distance from his own country, of the exact situation of which, in her strange Spanish notions of geography (though passably educated for a Castilian), she had not the slightest idea, for in those points her countrymen are not much improved since Vasco de Lobiera wrote of the fair Olinda taking ship in Norway, and sailing to the King of England's "Island of Windsor;" the knowledge that Quentin was come to fight, it might be to *die*, for her beloved Spain, all served to present him in a most favourable light to her very lovely eyes, which rested on him so frequently that the sharp-sighted Trevino more than once bit his ugly nether lip with suppressed irritation, while Quentin felt his pulses quicken with pleasure, for the dark little beauty, in her picturesque national costume, was a delightful object to gaze upon; thus, a longer residence than he intended in that mountain puebla might perhaps have led we are not prepared to say to what species of mischief.

As the wine circulated, and the conversation still turned on the war, Quentin ventured the remark—a perilous one amid such gentry—that he thought the scene he had recently witnessed was not favourable to the good success of the Spanish cause.

Every brow loured as he said this, and the gentle donna looked uneasy.

"Madre divina! you don't know what you talk about, senor," said Baltasar, gravely; "had you seen your countrymen, as I have mine, shot down in poor defenceless groups of thirty or forty at a time, on the open Prado of Madrid, you would think less harshly of us."

"And, senor," urged Isidora, in her soft and musical tones, "the poor people of the city were forced to illuminate their houses in honour of the sacrifice. Was not such cruelty horrible?"

"Horrible indeed, senora," replied Quentin, feeling that it really was so, though sooth to say he would have agreed with anything she might have advanced, for there was no withstanding those earnest eyes and that seductive voice.

"Light as noonday were the streets on that awful night," said Baltasar, as the fierce gleam came into his eyes and the pallor of passion passed over each of his sallow cheeks; "ten thousand lamps and candles shed their glare upon the heaps of slain, where women were searching for their husbands, children for parents, and parents for children, while the canon thundered from the Retiro, and the volleying musketry rang in many a street and square. What says the Junta of Seville in its address to the people of Madrid? 'We, all Spain, exclaim—the Spanish blood shed in Madrid cries aloud for revenge! Comfort yourselves, we are your brethren: we will fight like you until the last of us perish in defence of our king and country!' Senor, the massacres of the 2nd of May were a sight to shudder at—to treasure in the heart and to remember!"

"And by our holy Lady of Battles and of Covadonga, we are not likely to forget!" swore Trevino, striking the table with the hilt of his knife.

"The spirits of the Cid Rodrigo, of Pelayo the Asturian, and all the loyal and brave men of old, are among us again," said Baltasar, with enthusiasm, "and we shall crush the slaves of the Corsican to whom Manuel Godoy betrayed us!"

"Godoy," said a guerilla who had scarcely yet spoken, but who seemed inspired by the same ferocious spirit; "oh that I may yet some day dispatch him as Pinto Ribiero slew that similar traitor, Vasconcella the false Portuguese."

"Always blood!" thought Quentin, beginning to fear that from indulging in bluster and rodomontade, they might fall on him, were it for nothing more but to keep their hands in practice.

"I perceive you look frequently at my guitar," said Donna

Isidora, on seeing that Quentin evidently disliked the ferocious tone adopted by her brother and his companions; "do you sing, senor?"

"No, senora."

"Or play?"

"The guitar is scarcely known in my country; but if you would favour us——"

"With pleasure, senor," said she, with a charming smile.

"Bueno, Dora," said her brother, taking from its peg the guitar and handing it to her; on which she threw its broad scarlet riband over her shoulder, ran her white and slender fingers through the strings, and then a lovely Spanish picture, that Phillips might have doted on, was complete.

"What shall it be, Baltasar?" she asked; adding, with a swift glance at Quentin's scarlet coat, "'*Mia Madre no caro soldados aqui*'—eh?"

"Nay, Dora, that would scarcely be courteous to our guest, who is a soldier."

"What then, mi hermano?"

"Give us one of Lope de Vega's songs. There is that ballad which compliments the English king who came to seek a wife in Spain."

Then with great sweetness she sang Lope's verses, which begin—

"Carlos Stuardo soy,
Qui siendo amor mi guia,
Al cielo de Espana voy,
Por ver mi estrella Maria."

While she sang, Quentin thought of the old Jacobite enthusiasm of Lady Winifred and Lord Rohallion, and how they would have admired alike the song and the singer; and while his eyes were fixed on her soft pale face and thick downcast eyelashes, he neither heard the accompaniment Baltasar beat with a pair of castanets, or by the Padre Trevino with the haft of a remarkably ugly knife, which seemed alike his favourite weapon and plaything.

In a few minutes after this they had all separated for the night, and Quentin, without undressing, as he proposed to start early on the following morning, stretched on a hard pallet and muffled in his great-coat, with his sabre and pistols under his head, soon sank into slumber, the sound, deep slumber induced by intense fatigue; and from this not even the horrors of the recent massacre, the louring visage of the suspicious Trevino, the voice, the eyes, of the lovely young donna, or any other memory, could disturb him.

CHAPTER LII.

THE JOURNEY.

"Meanwhile the gathering clouds obscure the skies,
From pole to pole the forky lightning flies,
The rattling thunders roll, and Juno pours
A wintry deluge down and sounding showers;
The company dispersed to coverts ride,
And seek the homely cots or mountain side."

ÆNEIS, iv.

FROM this long and dreamless sleep Quentin Kennedy started and awoke next morning, but not betimes, as the sun's altitude, when shining on the whitewashed walls of the posada, informed him. He sprang up and proceeded to make a hasty toilet.

"Breakfast, a guide, and then to be gone!" thought he, joyfully.

On issuing from his scantily-furnished chamber into the large room of the posada, or rather what was once the posada, he found a number of the guerillas busy making up ball-cartridges. Heaps of loose powder lay on the oak table, and the nonchalant makers were smoking their cigars over it as coolly as if it were only brickdust or oatmeal.

The guitar that hung by its broad scarlet riband from a peg on the wall, brought to memory all the episodes of last night, and Quentin sighed when reflecting that a girl so lovely as its owner should be lost among such society, for to him, those patriot volunteers of his Majesty Ferdinand VII. had very much the air and aspect of banditti.

He looked forth from the open windows into the street of the puebla; the morning was a lovely one. The unclouded sun shone joyously on the bright green mountain sides, while a pleasant breeze shook the autumnal foliage of the woods, and tossed the large and now yellow leaves of the ancient vines that covered all the walls of the old posada, growing in at each door and opening; but Quentin could not repress a shudder when he saw the four large graves at the foot of the archway, for the faces and forms of the poor victims came before his eye in fancy with painful distinctness—the rigid figure of the grey-haired captain, the other officer who wept for his wife and children, the conscript whom they named Louis—the manly and unflinching courage of all!

Baltasar de Saldos twisted up his enormous whiskerando-like moustaches, and smiled grimly as only a taciturn Spaniard can

smile, when he perceived this, as he conceived it to be, childish emotion of his guest.

"The ladies await us, senor," said Baltasar; and Quentin, on turning, found the dark and deeply-lashed eyes of Isidora bent on his, as she smilingly presented her plump little hand to be kissed, and then the same party who had met last night again seated themselves at table, and a slight breakfast of thick chocolate, eggs, and white bread, was rapidly discussed. As soon as it was over, the brilliant young donna and the withered old one withdrew, bidding Quentin farewell, and adding that as he was to depart so soon, they should see him no more.

Quentin, with a heart full of pleasure, belted on his sabre and assumed his forage cap; he also drew the charges of his pistols and loaded them anew.

"And now, Don Baltasar, with a thousand thanks for your kindness, I shall take my departure," said he. "But how about a guide to avoid the main road, and escape the enemy's patrols?"

"As we are so soon to leave this, and commence active and desperate operations, the end or extent of which none of us can foresee, the Padre Trevino, who is the very model and mirror of sons, has decided on sending that excellent lady his mother (a slight smile spread over the Spaniard's sombre visage as he spoke) across the frontier for safety. She goes to the convent of Engracia, at Portalegre; and, as she knows the whole country hereabouts as if it were her own inheritance, she shall be your guide."

"She—Donna Trevino?" exclaimed Quentin, who was by no means enchanted by the offer of such an encumbrance.

"Si, senor. You will be sure to take great care of her."

"But—but, Don Baltasar, that old dame! (devil he had nearly said)—why not send one of your band?"

"I cannot spare a single man. Spain will need them all. The senora is very deaf and old, you need scarcely ever address her, and, as she is taciturn, she will not incommode you. Besides our Spanish mistrust of strangers, she has—excuse me, senor—a horror of all who are beyond the pale of the Church."

"But, senor," urged poor Quentin, "to travel for two or three days with a deaf old lady!"

"What are you speaking of, senor? We are only a little more than thirty miles from Portalegre as a bird flies. You lost your way, and rambled sadly in coming here; but I shall mount her on a mule, and you on a horse, and you may easily be there, even though proceeding by the most steep and devious route, before the sun sets."

"To-night!"

"Exactly. There is, as you are aware, a vast difference in travelling on horseback with a guide, and a-foot, in a strange country, without one."

"I thank, you, senor, said Quentin, considerably relieved, "and shall commit myself to the guidance of the old lady, though I fear that she views me with no favourable eye."

"Here come your cattle."

"A noble horse, by Jove!"

"I have filled your canteen with aguardiente."

"Thanks, senor."

"I know that you Inglesos can neither march nor fight, as we Spaniards do, on mere cold water, with the whiff of a cigar."

They were now at the door of the posada, where a group of dark, idle, slouching, and somewhat villanous-looking guerillas were loitering, to witness the departure.

"Ah, if these fellows only knew that my pockets were so well lined with moidores!" thought Quentin.

Lazarillo held the horse (which had evidently been a French cavalry charger) and the mule by their bridles. The former had a fine switch tail, which was now tied or doubled up in the Spanish fashion, as he had to perform a journey. The latter was a tall, sleek, and handsome animal, whose figure indicated great speed and strength.

The saddles were Moorish (the fashion still in Spain), made with high peak and croup behind; the stirrup-irons were triangular boxes, and the bridles, bridoons, and cruppers, with their brass bosses, scarlet fringes, tassels, and trumpery ornaments, closely resembled the harness of the circus.

At the pommel of the horse's saddle, hung a leather bottle of wine, and behind was a handsome alforja, or travelling bag, ornamented with an infinity of tassels, and containing bread, sausages, a boiled fowl, and other edibles to be consumed on the journey. Nothing was forgotten, and as Quentin mounted his horse, the old lady was led forth by Trevino, who, with Baltasar's assistance, lifted her into the mule's saddle.

The venerable donna was muffled up in a large loose garment of striped stuff, purple and white; it covered her from head to foot, and but for her thick veil, which entirely concealed her withered visage, she might have passed for an old Bedouin in a burnous.

"Senor, this lady is one in whom I am so deeply interested," said Trevino, with the keen, fierce, and impressive glance peculiar to him, and with a hand, by force of habit, perhaps, on his knife; "I say, one in whom I am so deeply interested, that I trust to

your care and honour in seeing her, without hindrance or delay, safe to Portalegre."

"I shall see her safe to the gate of the Engracia convent," said Quentin; "and how about returning the cattle, Don Baltasar?"

"Leave them there, too—my free gift to the convent. And now, adios," said he, with a low bow; "doubtless we shall meet again when the army is in motion."

"I hope not," muttered Quentin. "Adios, senores."

A few minutes more and they had left the puebla, with its lawless garrison, its cannon, and earthern bastions, on which the scarlet and yellow ensign of Castile and Leon was waving, far behind them, and were riding at a rapid trot down the green mountain path which Quentin had travelled alone last night.

Soon he saw the place where the road branched off to Valencia, and where he had parted from Ribeaupierre; and, ere long, he passed the dead horse, already torn and disembowelled by the wolves or the wandering dogs which infested all the wild parts of Estremadura.

How changed were the scene, the circumstance, and the companionship since he had last been in the saddle, cantering along the road to Maybole, escorting Flora Warrender!

Leaving this path, and striking off to the left, Donna Ximena, to whose guidance he silently and implicitly committed himself, and who rode a little way in front, managing her mule with ease, and, considering her years, with undoubted grace, conducted him up a steep and narrow track that led into the wildest part of the mountains, where the summits of slaty granite were already beginning to be powdered by frost and snow in the early hours of morning, and where the valleys, which the industry of the Moors made gardens that teemed with fertility and beauty, are now desert wastes, abounding only in rank pasturage.

Their cattle soon became blown, and, as the pleasant breeze that fanned the foliage in the forenoon, had already died away, and been succeeded by an oppressive and sultry closeness, they proceeded slowly, and now Quentin thought he might venture to converse a little with his silent companion, for the monotony of travelling thus became tiresome in the extreme.

"Donna Ximena," said he, as their nags walked slowly up the mountain path. "Donna Ximena!" he repeated, in a louder key, before she said, without turning her head—

"Well, senor?"

"It surprises me much that Don Baltasar permits a girl so lovely as his sister to reside among those dangerous guerillas."

To this remark the haughty old lady made no response, so, raising his voice, he added—

"He may now be without a home to leave her in; but, certainly, Isidora is, without exception, the most beautiful and winning girl I ever saw—in her own style, at least," he concluded, as he thought of Flora Warrender.

He had to shout this remark at the utmost pitch of his voice before the old lady replied, with a gloved hand at her right ear,—

"Yes, senor—she put a large and beautiful sausage into the orja."

"Bother the old frump!" said Quentin; then shouting louder ll, he added, "Your head, senora, is so muffled in that mantle d veil, that it is quite impossible you can hear me."

"Where you speaking, senor?"

"The devil! I should think so—yes!"

"Speak louder."

"I cannot possibly speak louder, senora; but I was remarking the danger that might accrue to a girl of such wonderful beauty as Donna Isidora among the companions of her brother."

"It is Valdepenas, senor."

"*What* is Valdepenas?"

"The wine in the bota—taste it if you wish—I filled it for you."

Quentin relinquished in despair any further attempt to make himself heard or understood, and for some miles they proceeded, as before, in total silence, while the gathering of the clouds betokened a storm, and Quentin was certain he heard thunder at a distance; but a few minutes after, the sound proved to be that of a brass drum reverberating between the mountain slopes! As these drums were then used by the French alone, he instinctively reined up, and his silent guide, to whom he did not deem it worth while to communicate his alarm, did so too.

"Ah—you heard that my venerable friend," said he aloud.

The sound now became continuous and steady, and his horse, an old trooper we have said, snorted and pricked up his ears intelligently. It was the regular but monotonous beating of a single drummer, who was timing the quickstep for the troops in the old fashion still retained by the French, when on the line of march, as it proves an excellent method, in lieu of other music, for getting soldiers rapidly on.

Desirous of reconnoitring, Quentin somewhat unceremoniously pushed his horse past the mule of his fair, but exceedingly tiresome companion, and dismounting, led it forward by the bridle.

The path, rugged and narrow, here went right over the steep crest of a hill between some volcanic rocks that were covered with dark-green clumps of the Portuguese laurel and wild olive tree; and from thence it dipped abruptly down into a little green valley where stood a farm-house in ruins.

There by the wayside was a human skull, white and bleached, stuck upon the summit of a pole, the grim memorial of some act of retributive justice for murder and robbery.

Proceeding slowly and listening intently as he went, for the sound of the drum was coming every moment nearer, Quentin peeped over the eminence and found himself almost face to face with the first section of the advanced guard of a French regiment of infantry; they were scarcely a hundred yards distant, and were toiling up the steep ascent.

In heavy marching order, with their blankets and blue great-coats rolled, they were clad in long white tunics of coarse linen, with large red epaulettes, high bearskin caps, each with a scarlet plume on the left side; the legs of their scarlet trousers were rolled up above the ankles; all had their muskets slung, and they were chatting, laughing, smoking, and marching, some with their hands in their pockets, and others arm-in-arm, in that slouching and free manner peculiar to all troops when "marching at ease," but more especially to the French.

On seeing the alarming sight, Quentin leaped on his horse, and cried—

"Away, Donna Ximena for your life—here are a body of the enemy—we shall be either shot or taken prisoners!"

And very ungallantly caring little whether his venerable friend, the mother of the worthy Trevino, fell into the hands of the French, provided that *he* escaped them, Quentin goaded the sides of his horse with his Spanish stirrup-irons, and lashed its flanks with a switch which he had torn from an olive tree.

It sprung off with a wild bound; the lady's mule also struck out, and away they went headlong down the mountain side together at a break-neck pace, followed by shouts from the French, the first section of whom were now on the crest of the eminence, and who unslung their muskets and opened a fire upon them.

Every shot rung with a hundred reverberations between the mountain peaks; Quentin, however, never looked back, but rode recklessly and breathlessly on, thinking as the old lady scoured after him on her mule, and as he lashed his horse without mercy, that he somewhat resembled Tam o' Shanter pursued by Cuttie Sark.

There was no contingency of war of which he had a greater horror than that of becoming a prisoner. If taken by the enemy, years might pass on and still find them in their hands, and when released or exchanged, he would be little better than a private soldier—not so good, in fact. His time for promotion would be irrevocably past, and all the stories he had heard of the sufferings to which the French Republican and Imperial officers subjected our troops when prisoners in the impregnable citadel of Bitche,

the fortress of Verdun, and elsewhere, crowded on his mind, with a consciousness of the beggared and hopeless life to which the event might ultimately consign him, even if he survived the captivity, which, in his restless and irritable horror of all restraint, he very much doubted.

Fortunately for him the long-barrelled muskets of the French infantry were very dissimilar to Enfield rifles in the precision of their fire; thus, he and his companion were soon beyond all range, and an opaque vapour, alternately between purple and brown in its tint, that descended on the mountains, while a storm of blinding rain and bellowing wind broke forth, put an end to all chance of pursuit; but they rode on fully ten miles without knowing in what direction, when the fury of the storm compelled them to take refuge in a thicket.

Dismounting, Quentin was too breathless and blown to attempt to outbellow the wind in making excuses to old Donna Ximena; he simply lifted that good lady off her mule, and conducted her under the stately chestnut trees, which gave them shelter. He then unslung the bota and the alforja from his crusader-like demipique, and was proceeding to secure the bridles of their nags to a branch, when there burst a shriek from his companion, with the exclamation—

"Madre divina! O Madre de Dios!"

At that instant there shot forth a terrific glare which seemed to envelop them, and to fill the whole thicket with dazzling light, showing every knot and twisted branch, and every gnarled stem. Then there was a tremendous crash, as a thunderbolt ground a giant chestnut to pieces, literally splitting its solid trunk from top to bottom; next rang the roar of the thunder peal as it rolled away over the vapour-hidden mountain peaks, leaving the dense and murky air full of sulphurous heat and odour.

Stunned by the torrent of sound, and half blinded by the lurid glare, more than a minute elapsed before Quentin discovered that, startled alike by the flash and thunder-clap, the horse and mule had torn their bridles from his hands and galloped madly away, he knew not whither.

Even the faintest sound of their hoofs could no longer be heard amid the ceaseless hiss of the descending rain, every drop of which was nearly the size of a walnut; so now, there were he and old Donna Ximena (who crept closer to him than he cared for) left a-foot he knew not where, in that gloomy thicket, evening coming on and night to follow, a storm raging, and the French in motion in the neighbourhood!

"Here's a devil of a mess!" sighed poor Quentin.

CHAPTER LIII.

A SURPRISE.

"*Preciosa.* Is this a dream? O, if it be a dream
Let me sleep on, and do not wake me yet
Repeat thy story! say I'm not deceived!
Say that I do not dream! I am awake;
This is the gipsy camp; and this is Victorian."
The Spanish Student.

To address or to consult his old and deaf companion would have been worse than useless, so Quentin angrily sat down to reflect, and, unfortunately, in sitting down, did so on a prickly pear. Now, there are more pleasant sensations in the world than to sit upon such an esculent, or a Scots thistle (when one is inclined to ponder and to "chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy"), with their bristling stamens, especially if one wears the stocking-web regimental pantaloons then worn; so Quentin sprang up, and issuing from the thicket, perceived with great satisfaction, that though the rain was then falling, the clouds were rising and the wind abating; in fact that the storm, which had most probably concealed their flight from the French, was gradually passing away; but whether or not, one fact was evident—that the donna and he must pass the night in the thicket.

It was fortunate that he had rendered the flight of their cattle of less consequence, by previously securing the bota of wine and the bag of provisions, and also that he had ridden with his pistols at his girdle, and not in holsters.

As the light increased a little when the clouds dispersed, he perceived a ruined arch, the use or origin of which it would be difficult to determine. It seemed to be a portion of a small aqueduct or vault, Roman, Gothic, or Moorish perhaps—anything but Spanish. It stood amid the great old trees of the chestnut grove, and was half hidden by the luxuriant grass, the gorgeous wild flowers, and odoriferous creepers. It was about six feet in height, but several more in depth, and heaps of fallen masonry, covered with moss and lavender-flowers, enclosed it on one side.

Quentin examined the ruin, and finding it strewed with dry and withered leaves, blown thither by the wind, he led in his trembling companion, who seated herself near him, and with muttered thanks drank a mouthful of wine from the bota, while he drew forth the contents of the alforja, to wit, a huge loaf of fine white bread, a boiled fowl, and a red sausage, that, of course,

smelt villanously of garlic. It was in vain, however, that he pressed Donna Ximena to partake of the guerillas' good cheer. The old lady had evidently no objection to a comforting drop of the generous Valdepenas, but when he offered her food she only buried her head in her veil and rocked herself to and fro, as i overcome by weariness or alarm.

Placing his mouth near her ear, Quentin endeavoured, by roaring as if he were in a gale of wind at sea, to discover if she knew whereabouts they were—whether near Valencia de Alcantara or Albuquerque; whether near Marvao or San Vincente; whether on the Spanish or Portuguese side of the frontier; but she only shook her head, and made signs of the cross, as the twilight deepened.

Quentin thought that Don Baltasar had certainly selected his guide, as the Dean of St. Patrick counselled all housemaids should be, for their years and lack of personal charms.

"By Jove—the plot thickens!" said he, as he tugged away at a drumstick of the boiled galina and consoled himself with a hearty pull at the bota, while his companion laid her old muffled head on a heap of leaves, and appeared to fall sound asleep; at least Quentin never cared to inquire whether she was so or not.

There were moments when he seriously considered whether he was not justified in marching off quietly without beat of drum, and leaving this venerable bore to shift for herself, while he made the best of his way to Portalegre, as he had left it, a-foot; but there seemed to be something so ungallant and ungenerous in leaving an elderly female (not that the fact of her being the maternal parent of Padre Trevino enhanced her value) alone, in such a place and at night too, that he resolved to wait till morning dawned, and then he would see what a night might bring forth; and this resolution he formed all the more readily that the rain was still pouring in a ceaseless torrent.

Hour after hour passed in silence, no sound coming to his ear save the monotonous patter of the rain falling on the brown autumnal leaves; to Quentin it proved alike a weary and dreary time, until the shower began to abate, and for the first time in his life he heard a nightingale pouring its plaintive and varying notes upon the air.

Quentin placed their provender and his pistols in a dry place, gathered a heap of flowers for a pillow, and coiling himself up at the other end of the ruin, *i.e.*, as far away as possible from old Donna Ximena, he followed her example and courted sleep.

With the first blink of the day he started from his nest of leaves. Grey dawn was stealing between the great rough stems of the chestnut wood. The rain and the wind were over; the

vapours of the night had dispersed, and no trace remained of the past storm save the scathed and thunder-riven tree, the ruins of which were scattered around its root.

The green slopes of the distant hills were visible, dotted by the drenched merino sheep, thousands of which are annually driven into Estremadura, to fatten on the rich wild grass of its pastures. In the distance, and darkly defined against the increasing pink and violet tints of the sky, were two windmills, quaint and old, like those which the Knight of La Mancha assailed; their wheels were broken, and the fans hung motionless and in tatters.

A herd of wild swine rushed through the grove, snorting and grunting in their headlong career, but the Donna Trevino still slept soundly, if Quentin might judge by her breathing, which was low and regular. After stepping forth to reconnoitre, and finding the whole vicinity of the thicket silent, and no appearance of either friend or foe on the roads in any direction, he deemed this the wisest and safest time to set forth, and returned to wake his companion, whom he really began to wish—we shall not say where, or with whom—but safe at least with her son, the Padre Trevino.

On approaching he perceived that the loose and ample garment of alternate white and purple stripes in which she was enveloped, was partly deranged, and the thick black lace veil which covered her head was open in front, for now one half of it floated over her right shoulder. Then, on drawing nearer, how great was his astonishment to behold in the sleeper, *not* the wrinkled and withered visage of the deaf old woman, whom all yesterday and all last night he supposed to be his bore and companion, whom he had left to shift for herself when the French appeared, and from whom he had crept as far away as possible in the singular den they tenanted—not the faded visage, we say, of Donna Ximena, but the pale and delicately cut features, the wondrously long black eyelashes, and the lovely little face of Donna Isidora!

The red pouting lips were parted, and the pearly teeth below were visible, imparting to her expression a charming air of child-like innocence and repose. Ungloved now, one white and slender hand, grasping her gathered veil, was pressed upon her bosom; her left cheek reposed upon her outstretched arm, and the partial disarrangement of her picturesque costume, as she had turned in her sleep, left visible rather more than her short Spanish skirts usually revealed of two remarkably pretty ankles, cased in their tight scarlet stockings.

The hardships to which her brother's recent guerilla life had

subjected her, evidently enabled the adventurous girl to "rough it," as soldiers say; thus she still slept soundly, while Quentin, half kneeling down, surveyed with wonder, perplexity, and pleasure, the beauties thus suddenly revealed by the open veil.

Touching her hand, he awoke her.

She started up with an exclamation of alarm, and her hand seemed instinctively to feel for the bodkin which confined her hair. Aware that she was discovered now, she assumed a sitting posture, threw back her thick veil, and a singular expression, half angry and half droll, came into her dark eyes, as she said—

"You have been looking at me as I slept! Was it proper to penetrate my disguise, senor?"

"Pardon me, senora; I did not, indeed; I came but to wake you, and found your veil open; could I refrain from looking—from admiring?"

"And you have discovered me——"

"To be young and beautiful——"

"When you thought me old and hideous—is it not so?" she asked, laughing.

"I confess it, and with pleasure, senora. This is very enchanting—but what romance is it—what absurd comedy is this you are acting?"

"Absurd?"

"Pardon me again; but though it is a game or drama that charms me very much, it is not without peril."

"To whom?"

"To both—perhaps most of all to you, senora."

She replied only by a haughty smile, so Quentin continued—

"Now we shall make our way together delightfully to Portalegre, and there can be no more deafness; or can it be that you and Donna Ximena changed places here in the night? Oh, tell me what does all this mean?"

"I shall tell you, senor," said the now blushing girl; "it means simply that my brother was most anxious that I, and not Donna Ximena, should reach the St. Engracia convent, as a place of permanent safety till these wars and tumults are over. He also wished to supply you with a guide to Portalegre, where, but for the loss of our horses, we should have been last night. Thus my brother——"

"Deemed that as old Donna Ximena you would be safer with me than in your own character?"

"Exactly," she replied, laughing; "we thought there would be little chance of your attentions annoying her."

"Do you imagine that when the French appeared I would have

turned my horse's head and left *you* without thought or ceremony, as I left her—she whom I considered an old, deaf bore and encumbrance? You have acted well your part, senora. How you made me roar and shout, as if I was commanding a whole brigade!"

"And now, senor, that you know I am *not* Donna Ximena, will you respect me the less?"

"On the contrary, I shall respect you a great deal more," said Quentin with enthusiasm, as he took her hand in his; but she withdrew it as if to adjust her veil.

"Then, am I to understand that in your country, youth is more honourable than age?"

"Nay, it is not, but youth is more pleasing, certainly."

"You have been most kind to me, senor."

"Kind, senora?" Quentin thought she was quizzing him.

"Yes; I cannot forget how, even as old Ximena, you lifted me from my mule, conveyed me in here, made a couch and pillow for me, and so forth. *Beso usted la mano, caballero* (I kiss your hand, sir)," she added, taking his hand in hers.

"Oh, Donna Isidora, I cannot permit you to do this—unless——"

"Do you not know the customs of Castile? *Well*, unless what?"

"You permit me to kiss yours."

"How simple! there, senor," she added, presenting a very lovely little hand, which he pressed to his lips.

"Your cheek now—ah, you will permit me?" urged Quentin, becoming a little bewildered by the whole situation, and by the clear dark eyes that looked so softly into his.

"Do so, senor."

Quentin was promptly pressing forward, when the point of a very unpleasant-looking little stiletto met his cheek!

"Senora," he exclaimed, "what do you mean?"

"That I shall stab you to the heart if you molest me—that is all?" said she, as a gleam came into her dark eyes that vividly reminded Quentin of Baltasar.

"So, so, senora," said Quentin, with an air of pique, "you are certainly able to take care of yourself."

"I live in times when it is necessary I should be so," was the dry retort.

Quentin surveyed her with growing interest, for her beauty was very remarkable in its delicacy and darkness. She had a short crimson upper lip, that seemed to quiver with every passing thought, for she was an impressionable, enthusiastic, and high-spirited girl. After a pause, ...

"Now that you have done admiring me, I suppose," said she, "you will kindly say what we are to-do?"

"How?"

"We cannot remain here among the leaves, like a couple of gitanos, or two rooks in search of a nest."

"We shall continue our journey to Portalegre, with your permission, senora; and now that you have recovered your hearing, and that I am not obliged to bellow like a madman, you will perhaps, if in your power, tell me where we are?"

Donna Isidora laughed and presented her hand; Quentin assisted her to rise, and on issuing from the ruined arch, she looked about her for some time.

"By those two windmills," said she, "I know that we are not far from Salorino."

"A town, senora?"

"Yes; it lies at the base of yonder lofty mountain, on the left bank of the river Salor."

"Is it large?"

"A considerable place for manufactures. This purple and white striped woollen stuff is made there; but the town must be avoided, as it is occupied by a troop of Polish Lancers."

"Then did we ride the wrong way in the rain last night?"

"Yes; we are still fully thirty miles from Portalegre."

"Thirty miles yet, senora!"

"Yes, and Valencia de Alcantara, where the French Light Cavalry are, lies exactly midway, on the main road, between us and it."

Quentin's heart sunk at this information.

"You are certain of all this, senora?" said he, laying his hand lightly on her arm.

"Quite, senor."

"We cannot—you, at least, cannot—proceed thirty miles on foot; so what in heaven's name shall we do?" said Quentin in great perplexity.

"The Conde de Macicra, who serves in my brother's band of guerillas as captain of a hundred lancers, has a villa at the foot of yonder hill near the Salor; I remember that the wildest bull we ever had in the arena at Salamanca came from thence. The place is scarcely two miles distant from this, and could we but reach it, doubtless some of his domestics might assist us."

"The idea is excellent; let us set out at once!"

"Be advised by me, senor, and take some breakfast first," said the Spanish girl, laughing; "it is a custom we guerillas have, always to eat when provisions can be had, lest we halt where there are none."

Quentin at once assented, and opening the alforja produced the

fowl and other edibles, on which they made a slight repast before setting forth.

Seating herself within the ruined arch, her head reclining upon her left hand, Isidora displayed to perfection a lovely rounded arm, and a pair of taper ankles and little feet, towards which Quentin's eyes wandered from time to time.

"You look at me very earnestly, senora," said he, while his cheek reddened and his heart fluttered on finding the dark searching eyes of the young donna fixed on him more than once.

"There is, I can see, a sad expression in your eyes, senor."

"Do you think so?" asked Quentin, smiling.

"Yes."

"But how, or why do you suppose so?"

"I don't know; I perceive that you are a mere boy (muchacho), and yet—and yet——"

"What, senora?"

"Ave Maria purissima! I can't say—there is something that speaks to me of thought, reflection, care beyond your years."

"It may well be so, dear senora; I have never known a relative in the world; I have been an orphan from infancy, and——"

"And now," said she, presenting him with her hand, "you are a soldier who comes to fight for Spain!"

"And for *you*, too, senora," he added, as he touched her fingers with his lips, and with a devotion that somewhat surprised himself. "But are you afraid of me, as old Donna Ximena was?"

"No—why do you think I am?"

"You sign the cross so often."

"Because, senor—excuse me, but the morning air is excessively chilly here, and I yawn frequently."

"And you do so?——"

"For fear Santanas should dart down my throat unseen and unfelt. It is a belief—superstition you may deem it—that we have in Castile; though you, perhaps, who have, unfortunately, been educated among heretics, may know neither the dread nor the holy sign. I know that it is not used in your country, senor —because I can read."

"I should think so," said Quentin, amused by her simplicity; "is not every lady educated?"

"No—not in Spain."

"Why?"

"Lest, if handsome, they should write to their lovers."

"And yet, senora, they had the rashness to teach you."

"Do you mean that I am handsome, or that I must have lovers?"

"I mean both—that being the first of necessity leads to you possessing the last."

"My poor father, the good old professor, who was so barbarously slain by the French, was careful to teach me many things, though our female literary accomplishments are usually confined to our prayers and rehearsing legends of the saints, songs of the Cid Rodrigo, or by Lope de la Vega. In England I believe you have women who could lead the Junta or shine in the Cortes itself; but what matters their education, when it only serves to confirm their heresies? And now, senor, place the bota in the alforja, and sling that over your shoulder; let us go, and I shall be your guide to Villa de Maciera."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE VILLA DE MACIERA.

"Innocence makes him careless now.
* * * *
Youth hath its whimsies, nor are we,
To examine all their paths too strictly:
We went awry *ourselves* when we were young."
Old Tragedy.

DONNA ISIDORA had now divested herself of the large and loose woollen weed in which she had travelled yesterday, and threw it gracefully over her arm. In her short but amply flounced skirt she tripped—as we are writing of a Spanish girl we should have it glided—along by the side of Quentin, who moderated his space to suit hers.

The rain of last night had completely laid the dust; the morning air was cool and delightful, and save a Franciscan friar of Medellin, travelling like themselves on foot, with a canvas wallet slung on his back and a long knotted staff in his hand, they met no one.

The heavy clouds were banking up from the westward, but the sky was beautiful overhead, and, refreshed by the torrents of last night, every herb, flower, and leaf wore their brightest hues. The Salor, a river which flows from the mountains southward of Caceres, in Estremadura, and joins the Tagus near Rosmaninhal, in the province of Beira, and the bed of which frequently becomes quite dry in summer, now came in sight, swollen by the recent rains, and flowing red and muddy between groves of olive trees, which were still in full leaf, as in those regions the olive harvest usually occurs about the month of December.

On the surface of the rushing river the large flowers of the white and purple lotus floated, or sunk to rise again, bobbing in the eddies; and some brightly feathered birds, though summer was long since past, twittered about, filling the air with melody and song.

But the western clouds, we have said, came gathering fast and heavily, and in sombre masses that alternated between purple and inky grey, while the wind rose in hot or cold puffs that gradually grew to gusts; and these, with other indications that rough weather was again at hand, made the two pedestrians hasten on.

Ere they crossed the old Roman bridge that spans the Salor, by arches that must whilom have echoed to the marching legions of Quintus Sertorius, the sound of distant thunder was heard among the mountains, and then the clouds gathered so fast, that ere long every vestige of blue was completely hidden in the sky.

"If rain comes, what a situation for you, Donna Isidora!" said Quentin, turning to his companion, to whose usually colourless cheek, the early morning air and the exercise of walking had imparted a lovely flush; in fact she seemed radiantly beautiful!

"Oh, fear not for me, senor, though to have one's only dress wetted, *is* rather unpleasant," she replied; "besides, the villa of the Conde is close at hand."

At that moment one or two large drops of warm rain plashed on the road they traversed, causing them to quicken their steps.

Striking off from the main highway, Isidora led Quentin between two gate pillars, each of which was surmounted by a marble lion, seated on its haunches, with its fore paws resting on a shield. This gave access to an avenue, where two rows of giant beeches, now brown and yellow, mingled with ilex (whose leaves seem as red as blood when viewed in the sunshine), cast their shadows on two lesser rows of dense and dark-leaved Portuguese laurels, myrtle and wild gentian; but in this silent and untrodden avenue, the rank grass and weeds were already sprouting.

"This is the villa," said Donna Isidora, as they came suddenly in sight of a château of very imposing aspect; "but Madre Maria! what is this? It seems quite deserted!"

A double flight of white marble steps led from a green lawn to a noble terrace, the balustrades of which were elaborately carved, and had at regular intervals square pedestals bearing each an enormous porphyry vase filled with flowers that diffused a delicious aroma. From the architecture of the villa, a large square mansion with wings, which rose from the plateau of this stately terrace, and by its Palladian style, many of the pediments, cornices, capitals, and especially the statues that adorned it, seemed to have been taken from the various Roman ruins in the vicinity.

Around this terrace was a row of orange trees, the fruit of which had never been gathered, as it lay in heaps under each, just as it had fallen from the branches when dead ripe.

The plashing water of a beautiful bronze fountain, where four

Tritons shot each a jet of pure crystal from a trumpet-shaped conch into a yellow marble basin, alone broke the silence and stillness of the place. Torn from its elaborate hinges, the front door lay flat on the tesselated marble floor of the vestibule, having evidently been beaten in by the simple application of a large stone which still lay above it; and the tendrils of the gorgeous acacias that covered the front wall of the villa, had already begun to find their way in at the open door, and to creep through the shattered windows.

"The French have been here!" said Isidora, with a dark expression in her eyes; "De Ribeaupierre's dragoons have done this."

"The villa is quite deserted, senora," said Quentin, as they stood in irresolution and perplexity on the terrace. "How far are we from Salorino?"

"Six miles at least."

Quentin hallooed loudly two or three times, but the echoes of the tenantless abode alone responded, and the deathlike stillness there made Isidora shrink close to his side.

"I was not prepared for this," she said, while her eyes filled with tears; "yet what else can we expect while a Frenchman remains alive on this side of the Pyrenees?" she added, bitterly.

"There seems to be no living thing here, senora; not even a household dog."

"What shall we do, senor?" she asked, earnestly.

"Whatever we do ultimately, senora, we must take shelter now, for here comes the storm again, and with vengeance, too!"

So intent had they been in observing the indications of desertion and decay about this noble villa, that they had failed to see how fast the storm had gathered round them. A gust of wind tore past the edifice, strewing the terrace with withered acacia flowers and orange leaves, and then the rain descended in torrents, driving the travellers for shelter into the open vestibule.

In blinding sheets it rushed along the earth, from which it seemed to rise again like smoke or mist, then the thunder hurtled across the darkening sky, and the yellow lightning played like wild-fire about the bare granite scalps of the distant sierras, throwing forward every peak in strong outline from the dusky masses of cloud, amid which they "were an instant seen, and instant lost."

"*Madre de Dios!* there seems a fatality in all this!" exclaimed Isidora, as the overstrained and half Moorish ideas of etiquette and female propriety which prevail in Spain and Portugal occurred to her; then, looking at Quentin, while a

blush suffused her cheek, she added, "to be wandering in this manner is a most awkward situation, especially for me."

Quentin made some well-bred reply, he knew not what; but with all its awkwardness he felt that "the situation had its charm," as he took her hand and suggested that they should investigate the premises and see whether the villa was really so deserted as it appeared.

From the splendid vestibule, the lofty walls and rich cornices of which were covered with armorial bearings of the past Condes de Maciera, many of their escutcheons being collared by the orders of Santiago de Compostella, Santiago de Montesa, the Dove of Castile, and the Golden Fleece, with the crossed batons that showed how many had of old commanded the Monteros de Espinosa, or Ancient Archers of the Spanish Royal Guard, Quentin and Donna Isidora ascended a marble stair to a large corridor, off which several suites of apartments opened, and through these they proceeded, every moment fearful of coming suddenly upon some sight of horror, as the French were seldom slow in using their bayonets against any household that received them unwillingly, and the battered state of the entrance door showed that the villa had been entered forcibly.

The great corridor, like many of the rooms, was hung with portraits of grisly saints and meek-eyed Madonnas, and of many a lank-visaged and long-bearded hidalgo, with breast-plate, high ruff, and bowl-hilted toledo, looking with calm pride, or it might be defiance, from the flapping canvas, which had been slashed in mere wantonness by the sabres of the French dragoons.

Save that a number of chairs were overthrown, that several lockfast places had been broken open, and that many empty bottles strewed the floors, the furniture appeared to have been left untouched. The gilt clocks on the marble mantel-pieces ticked no more, and the spiders had spun their webs over the hour-hands and dials, thus showing that the villa must have been deserted by the family and servants of the count for some weeks. The damask sofas and ottomans were covered with dust, and many books lay strewn about on the dry and now musty esparto grass that covered some of the floors, which were nearly all of highly polished oak.

Quentin picked up a lady's white kid glove, and a black fan covered with silver spangles.

"These have belonged to the mother of the Conde, who resided here; where can the poor lady have fled—what may have become of her?" said Isidora as they wandered on, her voice and Quentin's sounding strange and hollow in the emptiness of the great villa.

All the oed-chambers were untouched, save in some instances where a mirror or cheval glass was starred or smashed by a pistol-shot; and so, ere long, the visitors in their search found themselves in the chapel, a little Gothic oratory of very florid architecture, which had evidently formed a portion of a much older edifice than the present villa; for there, on a pedestal tomb, having a row of carved weepers round it, and little niches and sockets for twelve votive lamps, lay side by side the effigies of two knights in chain-armour, with their cross-hilted swords and military girdles on, and their hands folded in prayer. Quentin drew near them with interest, for he remembered the quaint effigy of Sir Ranulph Crawford, Keeper of the Palace of Carrick, in the old kirk of Rohallion, and while Isidora knelt for a moment before the little altar, he read on a brass plate this inscription:

"Aqui yazen el noble y valiente Conde, Don Fernando de Estremera, y su hijo, Don Antonio, Condes de Maciera y Estremera; fueron muertos en una batalla con los Infieles, en tiempo del Rey Don Alfonso de Castile, Leon, y Galicia. Requiescant in pace."

"More than seven hundred years ago," thought Quentin. "Sir Ranulph's tomb is a thing of yesterday compared with this."

He surveyed with emotions of pleasure and interest this little oratory, the sanctuary of which, with its half Moorish and arabesque-like carvings was a miracle of art and a mass of gilding It must have been erected almost immediately after the expulsion of the Arabs from that part of Castile, and so those Counts of Maciera had lived and died before the days of the Cid himself,

> "The venging scourge of Moors and traitors,
> The mighty thunderbolt of war!
> Mirror bright of chivalry,
> Ruy, my Cid Campeador!"

for he had been born when Canute the Dane swayed his sceptre over England, and when Malcolm of Scotland—Rex Victoriosissimus—was nailing the hides of the Norsemen on the doors of his parish churches. It was a remote period to look back to, and yet, in some of her national features, particularly in her proneness to bloodshed, Spain was pretty much the same as when the Cid shook his lance before the walls of Zamora.

Light, many-hued, crimson, blue, and green, streamed, with flakes of dusky yellow, through the chapel's deep-arched windows, shedding a warm glow on its carved pillars, ribbed arches, and lettered stones that marked the graves of the dead below, where the Condes de Maciera, "el noble—el magno," were mingling with the dust; but now their dwelling-place was desolate, and the heir of all their titles, a half-desperate outlaw and soldier,

was serving as a guerilla in the band of Baltasar the Salamanquino.

Various stools and hassocks were still disposed near the oak rail of the sanctuary, as if to mark where several of the fugitive household had knelt but recently.

The chapel suddenly grew very dark, but was lightened as quickly by a terrific flash without. Against this glare of light the mullions and tracery of the windows were darkly but distinctly defined, and, as it passed away, a peal of thunder that seemed directly over their heads, shook the place.

Crossing herself, Donna Isidora sprang close to Quentin's side, and taking her by the hand, he led her back to a more cheerful part of the voiceless mansion.

The weather was completely broken now, and to Quentin it seemed that unless there was some change, of which there was no probability, as the year was closing, the army were likely to have a fine time of it, after breaking up from their snug cantonments in Portugal to open a campaign in Spain.

There was not the slightest appearance of the rain abating, so feeling the necessity for making themselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit, Quentin set about closing all the doors and windows, and selecting a room that had evidently been the boudoir of the Condesa, as its walls were covered by white silk starred with gold; there too, were pale-blue damask hangings, starred with silver, a piano and guitar, with piles of music, illuminated books, sketches, statuettes, and ornaments, all indicative of a graceful taste and refined mind.

These were all untouched, so there Quentin installed his companion, whose eye was the first to detect a gilt cage, at the bottom of which a former friend and favourite, a little singing bird, lay dead and covered with dust.

She seated herself near the window to watch the black clouds whirling in masses around the peaks of the great mountain ranges that lay between her and her temporary home in Portugal, and on the rain plashing frothily on the marble terrace, gorging the gurgoyles of the parapet and the basin of the bronze fountain, which had long since overflowed.

Meanwhile Quentin bustled about; to have the run of such a house was not without interest. He soon procured a brasero, which he filled with charcoal, and lighted by flashing some powder in the pan of a pistol; and for warmth, he made Isidora place her dainty little feet upon it. Canisters of biscuits and of fruit of various kinds, several flasks of Valdepenas and Champagne, a ham, and several other matters which he found in overhauling the cook's department and butler's pantry, with all the

appurtenances of the table, he appropriated with a campaigner's readiness, and insisted upon his fair companion partaking of a repast with him.

The storm—the rain, at least, as we shall have to show—continued much longer than they anticipated. But if it lasted for a fortnight, there seemed to be still provisions enough in the old villa to prevent them from being starved out even in that time.

For a period both were now perplexed and thoughtful.

Donna Isidora was considering how all this unlooked-for deviation and delay were to be explained to her brother, who, as a Spaniard, was naturally suspicious, and of whom she stood in considerable awe. The latter emotion made her conceive that the most peaceful and prudent course would be, to say nothing whatever about the casual discovery of her disguise, or her wanderings on the way before reaching Portalegre; but then, how was she to account for the absence of the horse and mule, but for the loss of which, after their flight from the French, she and Quentin would have been last night safe and separated at the place of their destination!

Then when remembering the haughty temper of Cosmo, and the cold and hostile manner in which he was treated by him, Quentin felt some alarm lest his honour might be impugned by the protracted delay in rejoining the Borderers; while his own experience, and the hints he had received from Major Middleton, made him now resolve, however great his reluctance would be in leaving that fine old soldier and Askerne, Monkton, and other 25th men, to volunteer into some other regiment—perhaps in the 94th, if his friend Captain Warriston could scheme it for him.

The moidores which Ribeaupierre had so generously shared with him, made a transfer of this kind appear the more easy in a monetary point of view; and luckily the army had not yet begun to move, so his courage was still unimpeachable.

Reflection showed that Cosmo would render his life intolerable, and make promotion an impossibility.

"I shall seek out another colonel, if he can be found in the service. I can only fail in the attempt, and be no worse than I am," said Quentin, unintentionally aloud, so that the dark eyes of the Spanish girl rested inquiringly on him.

He now seated himself in the same window opposite Isidora, who having her own thoughts, was silent. Evening was drawing near—the short evening of a dark November day, and the ceaseless rain still plashed heavily down, while the wind howled drearily around the solitary villa.

CHAPTER LV.

OUR LADY DEL PILAR.

"The foe retires—she heads the sallying host,
Who can appease like her a lover's ghost?
Who can so well appease a lover's fall?
What maid retrieve when man's flushed hope is lost?
Who hang so fiercely on the flying Gaul,
Foiled by a woman's hand before a battered wall."—BYRON.

WHAT a singular adventure this is," thought Quentin; "and what a perplexing position for us both! It is very romantic, certainly. A deserted house, a lovely girl, and all that. 'Tis very like some incidents I have read of, and some I have imagined; but, by Jove! I wish I could see my way handsomely out of it."

The last desire resulted from the unpleasant recollection of the Padre Trevino's face and intonation of voice, when he spoke so impressively of the *interest he* felt in the lady committed to his care, and the sternly expressed anxiety that she should reach Portalegre "without hindrance or *delay*."

Was the fellow only acting a part, or could it be that the ugly ogre actually had some tender fancy for Isidora? Whether he had or not, an unfrocked friar, especially of his peculiar character, had not much chance of success with the sister or support from the brother, so Quentin dismissed the idea.

"How charming she looks!" he thought, stealing a glance at the long lashes of the now pensive eyes, the soft features half shaded by the black lace veil, and the graceful contour of her bust and shoulders, in her low-cut scarlet velvet corset. "How delightful, if, instead of being lost in this barbarous place, she were at Rohallion or Ardgour; what a lovely friend and companion for Flora!"

Poor Quentin! Alas, this was but the sophistry of the heart, and was, perhaps, its first impulse towards the donna herself, and might end by her image supplanting Flora's there.

"Such desecration, that her hand should even be touched by such a wretch as Trevino?"

He had muttered his last thought aloud, so Donna Isidora looked up and said—

"You mentioned the Padre Trevino?"

"Did I?—surely not?" replied Quentin, as the colour rushed into his face.

"Yes—what of him, senor?" she asked, fixing her soft, dark eyes on him inquiringly.

"I must have been dreaming."

"Scarcely," said she, smiling, "while the thunder makes such a noise; you were thinking aloud."

"Perhaps."

"Of what? I insist on knowing."

"I cannot help reflecting, senora, that such actions as those in which Trevino seems to exult, must damage the Spanish cause in the eyes of Europe and of humanity, and thus—excuse me—— but I begin to lose faith in your countrymen, even before we test alliance with them fully."

"And what say you of the recent siege of Zaragossa?"

"Ah, Don José Palafox is a brave man, certainly; and brave too, is Augustina, the Maid of Zaragossa, who led the canoneers in the defence of the Portillo against Lefebre."

"She had lost her lover in the siege, so apart from inspiration, her courage was no marvel."

"And you, senora—if you lost a lover?"

"I have lost several; but if I lost one whom I loved, you mean?"

"Yes—and who loved you well and truly?"

"I would face ten thousand cannon to avenge him!—Augustina did nothing that I would not dare and do!" replied Isidora, as her eyes sparkled, and she pressed her clenched hand into the soft cheek that rested on it.

"A beautiful little spitfire!" thought Quentin.

"But, senor, you must be aware that neither Palafox the Arragonese nor the girl Augustina could have achieved all they did, save for the aid of our Lady del Pilar?"

"What lady is she?" asked Quentin.

"Madre divina, listen to him! It grieves me sadly, amigo mio, to think—to think——"

"What?" asked Quentin, as she paused.

"That you are a heretic, innocently, through no fault of your own, and yet born to perdition."

"You are not very complimentary, yet I pardon you, my dear senora," replied Quentin, laughing as he kissed her hand—which we fear he did rather frequently now.

"Shall I try to teach you, and lead your heart as I would wish it?" she asked, with a gentle smile.

"If you please, senora."

"I mean, to instil a proper spirit of adoration in it?"

"If it is adoration of yourself, senora, I fear my heart is learning that fast enough already," replied Quentin, with such a caballero air that the donna laughed and coloured, but accepted the answer as a mere compliment; "then tell me," he added, "about this Lady del Pilar, who aided Don José Palafox."

"She is the guardian saint of the city of Zaragossa, and save but for her assistance, he had never withstood the arms of France so long; for it was faith in her, and her only, that inspired Palafox to make a resistance so terrible!"

"But tell me about her, Donna Isidora."

"You must learn, senor, that after the resurrection of our blessed Lord, when the twelve apostles separated and went to preach the gospel in different parts of the world, St. George set out for England, St. Anthony for Italy, and the others went elsewhere; but Santiago the elder set out for Spain, a land which, say our annals, the Saviour commended to his peculiar care.

"Before departing from Judea, he went to the humble dwelling of the blessed Virgin—the same little hut that is now at Loretto—to kiss her hand, on his knees to obtain her permission to set forth, and her blessings on his labours. After bestowing it, she adjured him to build a church unto her honour in that city of Spain where he should make the most important, or the greatest number of converts.

"So the saint set sail in a Roman galley, but was driven through the Pillars of Hercules into the Atlantic Ocean, and after enduring great perils along the shores of Lusitania, he landed in the kingdom of Galicia. Proceeding through the land, he went barefooted, preaching the gospel, teaching and baptizing, but with little success, until he came to a fair city of Arragon, on the banks of the Ebro and the Guerva, in the midst of a vast and lovely plain. Surrounded by fertile fields of corn, and by groves of orange and lime trees, its stately towers were visible from afar, glittering white as snow in the sunshine; but in its marble temples false gods and goddesses were worshipped by the people.

"Enchanted by the sight of a city so fair, the saint rested on his staff and asked of a wayfarer how it was named; and he was told that it was Cæsarea Augusta; so entering, he began to preach in the public thoroughfares, and ere long made eight disciples, who gave all they possessed to the poor, and followed him.

"Full of joy with his success he retired, one evening, to a little grove on the banks of the Ebro, with his eight new friends, and there, after long and holy converse, they fell asleep under the orange trees; but between the night and morning they were awakened by hearing a choir, possessed of a harmony that was divine, singing 'Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum;' yet they saw not from whence they proceeded.

"Louder swelled this mysterious harmony, and louder still, until they seemed to be in the midst of it.

"Listening in wonder and awe they fell on their knees, and lo,

senor! a marvellous silver light, brighter than that of day, filled all the orange grove, and amid a choir of angels, whose golden hair floated over their shoulders, whose wings and robes were white as the new fallen snow, and whose faces bloomed with the purity and radiance of heaven, there, on the summit of a white marble pillar, stood the blessed Madonna, with her fair brow crowned by thirteen stars, and her robe all of a dazzling brightness. With a divine smile on her face, she listened to the choir, who went through the whole of her matin service.

"When it was ended, when the voices of the angels were hushed, their eyes cast down, and their hands meekly folded on their besoms,

"'Santiago,' said she, 'here on this spot raise thou the church of which I told thee, and build it round this pillar, which I have brought hither by the hands of angels; here shall it abide until the end of the world, and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it!'

"The saint and his eight disciples, who were all on their knees in reverence and awe, bowed low at this command; when they looked up, the Virgin had disappeared with all her shining choir, and nothing remained but the miraculous pillar of polished marble, standing cold, white, and solitary, amid the moonlight, by the bank of the Ebro.

"So around that column he built the famous church of Our Lady del Pilar, which has been the scene of a thousand miracles; about it, ere long, grew the vast Christian city now named Zaragossa, which, as my father the professor always assured me, is but a corruption of the original name, Cæsarea-Augusta.

"Santiago rests from his holy labours in Compostella, where he was martyred by the barbarous Galicians, and where his bones were discovered in after years by a miraculous *star* that burned over his grave. When danger threatens Spain, the clashing of arms and of armour is heard within his tomb, for he is her tutelary guardian, and so greatly do we venerate him, that of the canons of his cathedral seven, at least, must be cardinal priests: and there, at Compostella, he appeared in a vision to the king, Don Ramiro, before his famous battle with the Moors, and promised him victory for withholding the annual tribute of a hundred Christian girls.

"Time passed over Zaragossa, and even the infidel Moors respected the holy pillar, for it was found uninjured when the city was re-captured from them by Don Alphonso of Arragon.

"And so last year, when the French had pushed their batteries along the right bank of the Guerva, and had beaten down the rampart; and when, at their head, General Ribeaupierre had cut

a passage through the ranks of Palafox into the wide and stately Coso; when Lefebre assailed the Portillo, and was repulsed with the loss of two thousand men, but returned with renewed fury, when a carnage ensued that must have ended in the fall of Zaragossa and the capture of Don José, *then* it was, senor, that the young girl Augustina, inspired by vengeance for her lover's fall, appeared among the soldiers, calling on Our Lady del Pilar to aid her chosen city.

"Then springing over dead and dying, she snatched a lighted match from her dead lover's hand and discharged a twenty-six pounder loaded with grapeshot full at the advancing foe, and animated the citizens to continue that awful struggle by which Zaragossa was saved, though the flower of Arragon perished. Foot to foot and breast to breast they fought, contesting every street and house, from floor to floor, till the French retired. Augustina received a noble pension, and now wears on her sleeve a shield of honour with the city's name."

By the time this story was ended, darkness had almost set in; the rain was still rushing down in a ceaseless flood, and the vivid lightning, with its green and ghastly glare, lit up from time to time the gloomy chambers of the silent villa.

Remembering that he had seen a lamp in one of the rooms, Quentin was about to go in search of it, when the sound of a heavy door closing with a bang that echoed through all the mansion, made him pause, and as he was Scotsman enough to have certain undefined but superstitious notions, he turned to his companion, who on hearing this unexpected noise, had started from her seat with her eyes dilated and her lips parted.

"You heard that, senora?" said he.

"It is the private door of the chapel—the door through which we passed," she replied.

"What has caused it to open and shut?"

"The wind, probably."

"It can be nothing else, senora, though in truth I was thinking of those two effigies that for seven hundred years have stood, with their stony eyes uplifted and their mailed hands clasped in prayer."

"What of them?" she asked, with surprise.

"What if they got off their pedestals and took a promenade through the villa on this stormy night?"

"Ah, senor, don't talk of such things!" said Donna Isidora, as she shrunk close to him and laid her hand on his arm.

CHAPTER LVI.

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

"Fraught with this fine intention, and well fenced
In mail of proof—her purity of soul,
She, for the future of her strength convinced,
And that her honour was a rock or mole,
Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed
With any kind of troublesome control;
But whether Julia to the task was equal,
Is that which must be gathered in the sequel."—BYRON.

For two entire days the rain continued to pour as it only pours in the Peninsula during the wet season, and our wet travellers were compelled to keep close to the doors of the Villa de Maciera. Could Quentin have lifted the veil that hides the future, and foreseen the turmoil and danger in which this unexpected delay would eventually involve him, he would certainly have made some vigorous efforts to procure horses or mules at Salorino, to push on for Portalegre, in spite of wind or rain; but what, then, was he to do with Donna Isidora? In such a November deluge she could neither travel on horse or foot, and "leathern conveyances" were not to be had in Spanish Estremadura in those days, nor in the present either, probably. To leave her alone in that deserted house was not to be thought of.

So Quentin stayed.

Time did not pass slowly, however. They did not read, you may be assured, though books were plentifully strewed about, as the French had been lighting their pipes with them; but Isidora took to teaching Quentin the language of the fan, as spoken or used at the bull-fight, the theatre, on the prado, or elsewhere, and with such a pair of eyes beaming on him, over, under, or through the sticks of the aforesaid fan, he proved an apt scholar. Who would have been otherwise?

He taught her his name, at which she laughed very much, and thought it an odd one.

Ere the noon of the second day, they had made great progress in their friendship, and, circumstanced as they were, could they have failed to do so? Isolated and without resource, save in each other's dangerous society, they could scarcely be ever separate in that huge deserted house, in which they were besieged by the weather.

That the impulsive Spanish girl had conceived a strong affection for Quentin was evident from her occasional silence, her palpitation her changing look, and the half-suppressed fire of

her dark eyes, when he approached or spoke to her; then it would seem, as he grew bewildered and timid, she became bold and unconstrained.

It would be difficult to trace the workings and describe the struggles of Donna Isidora's heart in the growing passion she felt for Quentin—the mere result of accidents which she could not control, and a propinquity which she could not avoid; or how rapidly the brief self-delusion of sisterhood and platonic affection melted away before the warm and impulsive nature of her character; how reason weakened as passion grew strong, and how she resolved to bend him to her will, for in mind and *race*, rather more than years, she was much his senior.

She knew that Spain was almost lawless now; that ties were broken, the bonds of society loosed, and that civil order, such as it was, had disappeared amid the anarchy consequent to the French invasion: hence a hundred wild schemes coursed through her busy brain. She even hoped to lure him into the guerilla ranks, or to fly with her to some remote part of the provinces, where they could never more be traced; to the mountains of Estrella, the Sierra de Oca, or the dark and wooded ranges of the Sierra Morena, where, forgotten alike by friend or foe, they could live on unknown. Such were her vague ideas for the future. For the present, it sufficed her that she loved Quentin, and that he must be taught to love her in return.

On the other hand, it is difficult to define exactly the feeling Quentin entertained for his young Spanish friend. Of her wonderful beauty he was by no means insensible. Was it platonic regard that *he* felt? We should not think so at his years, and more especially as we are disinclined to believe in such love at all. Then what the deuce was it? the reader may ask.

Flirtation, perhaps—"playing with fire," certainly.

Young though he was, Quentin could not forget Flora Warrender, and that sweet evening by the Kelpie's Pool, and the first thrill of boyish love, with all the anxious moments, the feverish hopes that stirred his heart—the tender memories of his grande passion, for such it was; and thus something of chivalry in his breast made him struggle against the present tempter and her piquante charms, for Flora's gentle image always seemed to rise up between him and her; and yet—and yet—there was something very bewildering in the hourly companionship, the complete isolation and reliance of this lovely young girl with whom he was now wandering in solitude—a companionship known to themselves alone. It was delightful but perilous work, and Quentin could not analyse, even if he cared to do so, the emotions she was exciting in his breast.

Where, when, and how was it all to end? He feared that he felt too little anxiety for reaching Portalegre and delivering the reply to Sir John Hope's despatch; and yet, if the storm abated, why tarry?

Quentin was soon assured that Isidora loved him; and he was not without that useful bump on his occiput denominated self-esteem, he felt flattered accordingly; yet, withal, he struggled manfully against the passion, with which this dangerous knowledge and Isidora's attractions, were both calculated to inspire him.

He was anxious to appear to advantage in her eyes. Why? She was nothing to him, yet, for some time, she had been the object of all his solicitude. In the course of conversation, she admitted that she had many admirers, which, for a girl so attractive, was likely enough. But why permit the development of a passion in her that could lead to nothing good? Why respond to her growing tenderness? Why—ay, there was the rub, the lure, and the peril.

His affections, such as a lad not yet twenty may possess, were promised elsewhere. Was Flora true, and remembering him still? This was rub number two.

Quentin Kennedy, I tremble for thee; and, if the truth must be told, much more for the future peace and reputation of Donna Isidora de Saldos, for neither a wholesome terror of Baltasar's wrath or the Padre Trevino's knife may avail her much.

"What if she loves me—loves me as dear Flora did?" thought Quentin; and when this pleasing but alarming idea occurred to him, he really dreaded that her heart might be too far involved in those tender passages, coquetries, and other little matters incident to their hourly intercourse: white hands taken almost inadvertently or as a matter of course; and darkly-lashed eyes that looked softly into his, were rather alluring, certainly.

In Spain, women do not shake hands with men; their dainty fingers (dingy frequently) are kissed, or not touched at all; hence we may suppose that Quentin and Isidora, when they began to sit hand-in-hand looking out on the pouring rain as twilight deepened, had got a long way on in lovemaking—in engineering parlance, that he had pushed the trenches to the base of the glacis.

Some one remarks somewhere, that the fogs and sleet of England mar many a ripening love; but that under the clear skies, in the balmy air, in the long sultry days, the voluptuous evenings, and still more in the gorgeous moonlights of Spain, the gentle passion is of more rapid growth, and becomes more impulsive, heartfelt, and keen.

In the present instance, however, chance and a storm—such as

that which waylaid Dido and the Trojan hero—had been the inspirers of Donna Isidora, who, sooth to say, found Quentin somewhat slow to follow her example.

"Mi hermano—my brother—you will be and must be," she would whisper at times, in a manner that, to say the least of it, was very bewitching.

"I shall try, Donna Isidora."

"Try, say you? Wherefore only *try?*" she asked, with her eyes full of fire and inquiry. "Is it a task so difficult to feel esteem or love for me? Go! I shall hate you!" Then she would thrust aside his hand, and pouting, half turn away her flushing face, only that the little hand might be taken again, an explanation made, and reconciliation effected.

On the evening of the second day, after one of those little poutings, and after Isidora, in anger, had been absent from him nearly two hours, she rejoined Quentin in the boudoir, which was their usual apartment, and where he welcomed her reappearance so warmly, that her face was overspread by happy and beautiful smiles.

Poor Quentin, who was at that age when a young man is apt to slide rather than fall into a regular love fit, was gradually being ensnared.

"The companionship of these few days I shall remember for ever," said he. "You shall indeed be sorrowed for, hermana mia."

"Think only of the present, and not of parting," said she, letting her cheek sink upon his shoulder, as they sat, hand in hand, in the window of the little boudoir, the objects of which were half hidden in the twilight.

Quentin felt his heart beat quickly, and his respiration become thick, but he said with a tender smile—

"Isidora, I am almost afraid of you."

"Afraid—and of *me?*"

"Yes."

"But why, mi querido?"

"You carry a stiletto," said he, laughing, "and I don't like it."

"There—behold!" she exclaimed in a breathless voice, as she drew the long steel bodkin from her hair, which fell in a dark and ripply volume over her shoulders and bosom; "I am defenceless now," she added, throwing it on the sofa; but Quentin was slow to accept the challenge.

"Oh, Isidora, to what end is all this?" he asked, struggling with himself, and almost remonstrating with her. "Why allure me to love you, as love you I shall?"

As he said this, the dark and lustrous eyes of the Castilian girl filled with half-subdued fire; her lashes drooped, and she heaved a long sigh.

"You speak of love," she said, in a low voice, while her bosom swelled beneath its scarlet corset and the thin muslin habit-shirt that was gathered round her slender throat; "all men are alike to a woman who is not in love; but in my heart I feel an emotion which tells me that if I loved there would be to me but *one* only in the world—he, my lover!"

Her calm energy, and the deep sudden glance she shot at Quentin, quite bewildered the poor fellow.

"Tell me," she resumed, while his left hand was caressed in both of hers, and her right cheek yet rested on his shoulder, while the massive curls of her hair fell over him, "is there not something delicious in the mystery and tremulousness of love; to feel that we are no longer two, but one—ONE in heart and soul, in thought and sympathy? Speak—you do not answer me—estrella mia—mi vida—mi alma!" (my star—my life—my soul) she added, in a low but piercing accent.

Trembling with deep emotion, Quentin pressed his lips to her burning brow, and there ensued a long pause, during which she lay with her forehead against his cheek.

"Listen to me, Quentin," said she, looking upward with swimming eyes; "I would speak with you seriously, earnestly, from my heart."

"Niña de mi almo—about what?"

"Religion, love."

"You choose an odd time for it—but wherefore?"

"I would teach you mine," she whispered.

"Yours—and for what purpose?"

"That—that——"

"Nay, I have courage enough to hear anything, dearest; for what purpose, mi querida?"

"That endering term decides me—that we may be married, Quentin."

"I—senora!"

"You and I—what is there wonderful in that?"

Had a shell exploded between them, poor Quentin could not have been more nonplussed than by this proposition.

"Flirtation is a very fine thing," says his Peninsular comrade, Charles O'Malley, "but it's only a state of transition, after all; the tadpole existence of the lover would be very great fun, if one was never to become a frog under the hands of the parson."

"But, Isidora, people require money to marry."

"Of course—sometimes."

"Well, I am not the heir of a shilling in the world.

"Nor am I the heiress of a pistole."

"Well, dearest Isidora——"

"Who should marry if we don't, whose circumstances are equal, and whose position in the world is so exactly similar? Ah, that we had the Padre Florez here!"

Though this was said with the sweetest of smiles Quentin failed to see the force of her reasoning; but it was impossible to refrain from kissing the rounded cheek that lay so near his own.

Then an emotion of compunction stole into his head, and rousing her from the delicious trance into which she seemed sinking, he withdrew a little (for he had never been made love to before, so surprise gave him courage), and then said—

"Isidora, this must not be—be calm and listen to me: I promised your brother—what was it that he said to me?—oh, Isidora, I must not love you; moreover, I am pleged to love a girl who is far, far away, and—but be calm, I beseech you, and think of the future!"

She now sprung from his side to snatch her stiletto from the sofa where it lay. Whether she meant to use it against herself, or him, or both, for a moment he could scarcely tell; her dark eyes were filled with a lurid gleam, and her cheek was now deadly pale; one little hand, white and tremulous, tore back her streaming and dishevelled hair; the other clutched the hilt of the weapon. She gave a keen glance at the blade, and then, as if to place the temptation to destroy beyond her reach, she snapped it to pieces and cast them from her.

Then snatching up a lamp which Quentin had lighted but a short time before, she rushed from the room, leaving him alone, bewildered and in darkness.

Quentin hurried after, and called to her repeatedly; but there was no response. He heard a door closed with violence at a distance, and then all became still—terribly still, save the now familiar sound of the rain lashing the walls and windows of the villa in the darkness without, and the howling of the wind, as it tore through the bleak October woods.

Nearly an hour elapsed after this, and knowing her wild an impulsive nature, his excitement and alarm for her safety became all but insupportable.

"Oh heavens, if she should have destroyed herself! Her death will be laid to my charge."

There seemed to be no length her fiery rashness was not capable

of leading her, and not unnaturally Congreve's well-known couplet occurred to his memory:—

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd!"

CHAPTER LVII.

THE POISONED WINE.

"Whatever can untune th' harmonious soul,
And its mild reasoning faculties control;
Give false ideas, raise desires profane,
And whirl in eddies the tumultuous brain;
Mixed with curs'd art, she direfully around,
Through all *his* nerves diffused the sad compound."—OVID.

WHEN Donna Isidora rushed from Quentin, she took her way unerringly (as she knew the villa well) up several flights of stairs, through passages and suites of apartments, where he could not have followed her without a guide, until she reached a little room, which had been the library and confessional of the family chaplain.

Remote from the rest of the house, its shelves full of books, its tables and desk littered with letters and papers, with little religious pictures on the walls, a Madonna crowned by a white chaplet on a bracket, a vase of withered lilies, and other little matters indicative of taste, were all untouched as when the poor Padre Florez had last been there. In rambling over the villa, if Ribeaupierre's dragoons had been in the chamber, they found nothing in it which they deemed valuable enough to destroy or carry off.

Here it was that Donna Isidora had been, when, in a fit of petulance, she had before absented herself from Quentin. She set down the lamp, and taking up a book which she had been previously perusing, and which she had found lying upon the desk where the padre had left it open, for its pages were covered with dust, she muttered—

"Let me read it again, and let me be assured; but oh, if I should destroy him or myself! What matter, then? Better both die than that *she* should have him, whoever she is—wherever she is! Oh, Padre Florez—Padre Florez, if this anecdote you have left in my way should be but a snare to death."

Then she ground her little pearly teeth as she spoke, and turned with trembling hands the dust-covered page which the chaplain's hand had indicated for some scientific purpose with certain marks in pencil, ere he had cast the volume on his desk,

doubtless when scared from the villa by the irruption of Ribeaupierre's dragoons.

It was a quarto volume on poisons, printed at Madrid, and the paragraph which interested Isidora ran as follows:—

"Note of a medicated wine, which produceth various emotions and quaint fancies, but chiefly love and madness for a time in those who partake thereof.

"Celius, an ancient Latin writer, telleth us of a company of young men, who were drinking in a taberna of the luxurious city of Agrigentum in Sicily, in those days when the tyrant Phalaris usurped the sovereignty thereof, and who, on a sudden, were seized by a malady of the brain. Being in sight of the sea, they believed themselves to be on board of a ship which was about to be cast away in a storm, and while clamouring and shouting wildly, to save themselves, they flung out of the windows the whole of the furniture; and in this belief they continued for some hours, even after being brought before a magistrate, whom they mistook for a pilot, and besought in moving terms to steer the galley aright, lest she should founder.

"On others, this wine acted as a philtre, and on seeing women, they fell madly in love with them, threatening their own destruction if their love was not responded to.

"I was persuaded in my own mind, says Celius, that this singular malady could only arise from some adulteration of the wine, and therefore had the landlord summoned before a magistrate, who compelled him to confess that he was in the habit of adulterating wines with a mixture of henbane and mandrakes (the root of which is said to bear a resemblance to the human form), and which must thus doubtless be considered the cause of this singular disease."

"Mandrake and henbane—a little of this mixture, and Quentin might love me! There is no sea here, and he could never fancy the villa to be a ship," thought Isidora, weeping tears of bitterness and wounded pride. "If I can only bring this delirium on him, the real truth of his heart may come out, and I shall learn whether he loves me or loves me *not*, and who this other is that he prefers to me. But if in his madness—pho! I can defend myself. Oh, Padre Florez, was it a good or bad angel that tempted you to leave this open book in my way, and lured me to read it?"

A strange and deep dark smile came over the lovely face of this wild and wilful girl as she took up the lamp and approached the cabinet of the worthy Padre Florez, whose room seemed quite as much a laboratory as a library, for goodly rows of phials and bottles contested for place with the Bollandists, Acta Sanctorum, the Acts of the Council of Trent, the Annals of Ferreras,

&c., for doubtless he had been the doctor—a curer of bodies as well as of souls—in his comarca, or district of Estremadura.

Hastily and impatiently she passed her lamp along the rows of little drawers containing herbs and simples, and the shelves of phials, the labels of which were quite enigmas to her; but on the third occasion a cry of joy escaped her.

"Las Mandragoras—el Beleño!" she exclaimed, as she snatched two small bottles, each full of a clear liquid, which bore those names. But now a terrible yet natural doubt seized her.

"How much of these may I pour in this wine without destroying us *both?*—what matter how much—what matter how much, so far as I am concerned? My life is neither a valuable nor a happy one; but he—have I a right to destroy him, perhaps body and soul—ah, Madre divina, body and soul, too! No matter—I must learn the truth, and whether he loves or only fears me."

In fact, the sudden passion which she had conceived for Quentin seemed to have disordered her brain. She heard him calling her at that moment, and as there was no time to lose in further consideration, she filled a small phial from both bottles, thrust it in her bosom, and left the room, previously, by what impulse we know not, concealing the book of the padre, who could little have foreseen the dangerous use to which its open pages would be put. With a heart that palpitated painfully between hope and fear, love and anger, Isidora quitted the room of the padre to return to Quentin. He, in the meantime, had become greatly alarmed by her protracted absence, and procuring a light by flashing powder in the pan of one of his pistols, he was proceeding in search of her through the chambers of the villa, from the walls of which many a grim old fellow in beard and breast-plate looked grimly and sternly at him out of his frame:—many a grave hidalgo by Diego Velasquez were there, and many a scriptural Murillo, sold, perhaps, by that great painter for bread in the streets of his native Seville.

Of all the chateaux en Espagne, this Villa de Maciera was, perhaps, the last of which Quentin could have imagined himself to be even temporarily master. Gloomy and deserted, it seemed to be veritably one of the mysterious mansions of which he had read so much in the romances of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe, who was then in the zenith of her fame.

"It is, indeed, a devil of a predicament," he muttered.

Again and again he called her name aloud, without hearing other response than the echoes. The place was mournfully still, and now the wind and rain had ceased, and the night had be-

come calm. Well, there was some comfort in that; with morning he might resume his journey; but this Spanish girl—his heart trembled for her, for there seemed to be no extravagant impulse to which she was not capable of giving way.

To have responded to her wayward love, and then to have "levanted" on the first opportunity, "a way we (sometimes) have in the army," might have been the treacherous measure adopted by many: but Quentin, apart from his admiration of her beauty, had a sincere regard for the girl, and though young in years, felt older by experience than those years warranted. He thought she might have retired to her room—to rest, perhaps; yet he could not hear her breathing: for when he listened at the door, all was still within. He knocked gently, but there was no response, so pushing it open, he entered. Isidora had told him that this was the apartment she usually occupied when residing with the Condesa de Maciera.

It was the perfection of a little bed-chamber; elaborate candelabra of cut crystal glittered like prisms on the marble mantelpiece, the central ornament of which was an exquisite crucifix of ivory. The floor was of polished oak, and the walls were hung with water-colour landscapes of the adjacent mountain scenery, in chaste and narrow frames; and the little bed, half buried amid muslin curtains of the purest white, was much more like an English than a Spanish one. Tent-form, the flowing drapery depended from a gilt coronet; the pillows, edged with the finest lace, were all untouched and unpressed, so Donna Isidora was not there.

Quentin started as he saw her figure suddenly reflected in a large cheval-glass. She was standing behind him, near the door of the apartment, regarding him with an expression of mournful interest in her eyes; her face pale as death, her hair flowing and dishevelled over her shoulders, her hands pressed upon her bosom, and seeming wondrously white when contrasted with the deep scarlet velvet of her corset; her flounces of black and scarlet, and the taper legs ending in the pretty Cordovan shoes, making altogether a very charming portrait.

"Senor," she said, in a low voice, "what were you seeking here?"

"I sought you, Isidora: I became seriously alarmed——"

"You do, then, care for me, senor—a little?"

"Care for you, dearest Isidora——"

"Yet you drove me away from you!" she said, in a voice full of tender reproach.

"Do not say so," replied Quentin, taking her hot and trembling hands in his, and feeling very bewildered indeed.

"Your studied coldness repelled me. Ah, Dios mio! how calm, how collected you are, and I—! get me some water, friend—or some wine, rather; and this other—this other—she——"

"Who, senora?"

"Some wine, my friend. I am cold and flushed by turns. Some wine, I implore you!"

"Permit me to lead you from this," said Quentin, conducting her back to the boudoir, where he seated her on the sofa by his side, and endeavoured to soothe her: but the memory of the late scene, and the fire of jealousy that glowed in her heart, filled it with mingled anger and love.

While Quentin, all unconscious of what was about to ensue, was untwisting the wire of a champagne flask, she emptied the entire contents of her secret phial into a crystal goblet, and when the sparkling wine, with its pink tint and myriad globules, frothed and effervesced, as Quentin poured it in, the poison—for such it was—became at once concealed.

"Drink with me," said she, kissing the cup and presenting it to him; then, feverish and excited as he was, he took a deep draught; after which, with another of her strange smiles, the donna drank the rest, and, as she did so, the pallor of her little face, and the unnatural light in her eyes, attracted the attention of Quentin. He took her hands in his, and began to speak, saying he knew not what, for he seemed to have lost all control over his tongue; then the room appeared to swim round him, while objects became wavering and indistinct.

"What—what is this that is coming over me?" he exclaimed.

"Death, perhaps," said Isidora, laying her head on his shoulder, and pressing his hand to her lips; "but, mi vida—mi querido—you will not go from me to her?"

"To whom?"

"She—that other whom you love?"

"Flora—Flora Warrender!" exclaimed Quentin, wildly, as the potent wine and its dangerous adjuncts began to affect his brain.

Whether the padre's beleno was the exact compound referred to by his ancient authority, we are not prepared to say, but the effect of the cup imbibed by Quentin was sufficiently disastrous. The objects in the room began to multiply with wonderful rapidity; the white silk drapery of the walls seemed to be covered with falling stars; the pale blue damask curtains of the windows assumed strange shapes, and appeared to wave to and fro. The bronze statuettes on the mantelpiece appeared to be performing fandangos and other fantastic dances, and, as the delirium crept over him, Quentin grasped at the back of a sofa to save himself from falling, while Isidora still clasped him in

her arms; and now he believed her to be Flora Warrender, and as such addressed, and even caressed her.

Another draught of pure champagne, which he took greedily to quench the burning thirst that now seized him, completed the temporary overthrow of his reason. Isidora seemed to pass away, and Flora Warrender took her place. He wept as he kissed her hands, and spoke with sorrow of their long, long separation; of the dangers and privations he had undergone, and of Cosmo's tyranny; of the joy with which he beheld her again, and now, that they never more would part; and thus, with every endearing word, he unconsciously stabbed his rash and impetuous Spaniard, who, although he spoke in English, and she was half delirious with the wine, knew too well that when Quentin kissed her thick, dark wavy hair that curled over her broad low forehead, and pressed her hand to his heart, he was thinking of *another*, for whom these endearments were intended. At last, stupefaction came over him, and sinking on a fauteuil, he remembered no more.

CHAPTER LVIII.

PADRE FLOREZ.

"Not yet—I never knew till now
How precious life could be;
My heart is full of love—O Death,
I cannot come with thee!
Not yet—the flowers are in my path,
The sun is in the sky;
Not yet, my heart is full of hope—
I cannot bear to die."—L. E. L.

On recovering from the insensibility that had come upon him, Quentin had no idea of what period of time had elapsed since the occurrence of the episode we have just described. In fact, he had considerable difficulty in remembering where he was, so maddened was he by a burning heat, by pricking pains through all his system, an intolerable thirst, an aching head, and a throat and tongue that were rough and dry. His temples throbbed fearfully, his pulse was quick; there was a clamorous anxiety in his mind he knew not why or wherefore; he had a recurrent hiccough; and, though he knew it not, these were all the symptoms of being dangerously poisoned.

The morning was bright and sunny. Refreshed by the past rains, the rows of orange-trees around the stately terrace, the lawn of the villa, and the clumps of arbutus and beech about it,

looked fresh and green. Producing a grateful sensation, the cool morning breeze fanned his throbbing temples, and on rousing himself, Quentin found that he was lying on the marble terrace near the bronze fountain, of the cool and sparkling water of which he drank deeply, as he had frequently done before, while almost unconscious, by mere instinct, for now he had no memory of it. Weak, faint, and giddy, and feeling seriously ill, he staggered up and laved his hands and brow in the marble basin; then he endeavoured to reflect or consider how his present predicament came about. Donna Isidora, where was she? and where was Flora Warrender? for he had misty memories of the endearments of *both*. It seemed that overnight he had a strange dream that the former—or could it be the latter?—had been carried off by French soldiers, and that he had neither the power to succour nor to save her. This, however, was no dream, but a reality, for a patrol of French cavalry, seeing lights in the villa, which they believed to be deserted, had ridden upon the terrace and proceeded to search the place. A few dismounted, and, armed with their swords and pistols, entered the house. Amid her terror on witnessing the unexpected stupefaction that had come over Quentin, the donna heard the clank of hoofs on the terrace, and then the jingle of spurs and steel scabbards on the tesselated floor of the vestibule.

Alarm lest her brother had come in search of her, and had tracked them hither, was her first emotion. Covering the insensible form of Quentin with the blue damask drapery of a window, near which he had sunk to sleep upon a fauteuil, she stooped and kissed his flushed forehead; then taking a lamp, she endeavoured to make her way to the room of the Padre Florez, which she considered alike remote and secure; but her light was seen flashing from story to story up the great marble staircase.

"En avant, mes braves!" cried an officer, laughing; "'tis only a petticoat—follow and capture."

The dismounted Chasseurs uttered a shout, and giving chase, soon secured the unfortunate Isidora. Shrieking, she was borne into the open air; her resistance, which was desperate, only serving to provoke much coarse laughter and joking. A few minutes after this, she found herself trussed like a bundle of hay to the crupper of a troop-horse, and en route for Valencia de Alcantara, the captive of a smart young officer of Chasseurs à cheval, who further secured her close to his own person by a waist-belt. By alternate caresses and jests he endeavoured to soothe her grief, and her passion, but seeing that the girl was beautiful, he was determined not to release her, for he was no other than our former jovial acquaintance, Eugene de Ribeau

pierre, the sous-lieutenant of the 24th Chasseurs. Partially roused by the noise and by her cries, Quentin had staggered to the terrace like one in a dream, and had fallen beside the fountain, so that his misty memories of having seen her carried off by French chasseurs was no vision, but reality. Yet, somehow, he thought she might be in the villa after all, and he called her by name repeatedly. And then there were memories of Flora Warrender that floated strangely through his brain. It seemed that he had but recently seen her, spoken with her, had embraced and clasped her to his breast—that Flora, whom he thought was far, far away—the Flora for whom he sorrowed and longed through the dreary hours of many a march by night and day, whom he had dreamed of and prayed for.

What mystery—what madness was this?

The musical jangling of mule-bells was now heard, and ere long other actors came upon the scene, as some jovial muleteers, cracking their whips and their jokes, ascended the steps of the terrace, accompanied by a tall, thin, and reverend-looking padre, wearing a huge shovel hat and a long black serge soutan, the buttons of which, a close row, extended from his chin to his ankles.

The old Condesa de Maciera, who, after being again and again terrified and harassed by the outrages of the plundering French patrols and foraging parties, had at last fled with all her household to the small Portuguese town of Marvao, had now sent her chaplain back to see what was the state of matters at her villa, and he arrived thus most opportunely for Quentin Kennedy, whose uniform at once secured him the interest both of the padre and the muleteers. The latter proved luckily to be Ramon Campillo, of Miranda del Ebro, his confrère Ignacio Noain, and others, whom Quentin had met before, and who at once recognised him and overwhelmed him with questions, to which he found the utter impossibility of giving satisfactory replies. His present state was as puzzling to himself as to the padre, who had him conveyed within doors, and, strangely enough, into the boudoir, the features of which brought back to Quentin's memory some of the exciting and bewildering passages of last night. The unextinguished lamp yet smoked on the table, broken crystal cups and champagne flasks, chairs overturned, and a phial of very suspicious aspect, all attracted the attention of Padre Florez. As he examined the latter, and applied his nose and lips to the mouth, while endeavouring to discover what the contents had been, he changed colour, and became visibly excited.

"Look to the stranger—what a mere boy he is!—but look to him, Ramon, mi hijo," said he, "while I go to my room—my laboratory—and see what I can do for him."

The padre, who had a deep and friendly interest in the household of his patrona the countess-dowager, and of the young Conde now serving with the guerilla band of Baltasar de Saldos, looked anxiously through the suites of rooms as he proceeded, sighing over the slashed Murillos and smashed mirrors, and the too evident sabre-cuts in the richly-carved cabinets of oak and ebony, in the gilded consoles, the beautiful tables of marqueterie, and he groaned at last over the ruins of some alabaster statuettes and great jars of Sèvres and majolica, which, in the last night's search, the French had wantonly dashed to pieces.

Ere long, he reached his own room, and on looking about, he missed at once his quarto volume on poisons, the work he had been studying—particularly that fatal passage from Celius—when the French dragoons drove the whole household from the villa. It was gone; but in its place on the desk he found the two bottles left by Isidora, the decoctions of mandrake and henbane. Here was a clue to the illness of the Ingles below; but how had the matter come to pass? Had he poisoned himself? This the padre doubted; but as an instant remedy was necessary, an inquiry and explanation would follow the cure.

Selecting certain simples, the Padre Florez hurried back to his patient, who was stretched on the sofa of the boudoir in a very bewildered condition, endeavourig to understand and reply to the somewhat earnest inquiries of Ramon and his brother muleteers, who were now en route from Marvao to Portalegre; but he replied only by a languid and haggard smile. He told them, however, that the sister of Don Baltasar de Saldos was in the villa, and implored them to search for her, which they did, in considerable excitement and surprise, leaving, as Ramon said, not even a rat-hole unexamined, but no trace of her could be found. Then Quentin rather surprised them by saying, impetuously, that she had been carried off by the French.

"Is it a dream, is she dead, or has she fled?" he asked of himself again and again; "no, no; she would never leave me willingly, her insane love forbids the idea."

Ramon, in searching for the sister of the formidable guerilla chief, whose name was already finding an echo in every Castilian heart, found Quentin's cap, sabre, and pistols, and fortunately the despatch or reply of Don Baltasar to Sir John Hope. Ignacio Noain found a lady's shoe of Cordovan leather, which the padre identified as having belonged to Donna Isidora. This served to corroborate the strange story of Quentin; but Florez remembered that the donna was in the habit of visiting the countess at the villa, and this little slipper might have been left behind by her on some occasion. It was found, however, in the

vestibule, where it had fallen from her foot as the dragoons somewhat roughly dragged her away.

"In what way came this young stranger to speak of De Saldos' sister at all? Had they eloped together? If so," thought the padre, "then Heaven help the Englishman, for his doom is sealed!"

"I am ill—ill, padre—ill in body and sick at heart!" said Quentin faintly, as Florez, watch in hand, felt his pulse.

"You appear to have been poisoned, my poor boy," said he.

"Poisoned?" repeated Quentin, as a terrible fear and suspicion of Isidora's revengeful pride rushed upon him.

"Yes—beyond a doubt."

"Shall I die, padre?" he asked in an agitated voice.

"Oh no, my son, there is no fear of that—I shall cure you by a few simple remedies."

Quentin felt greatly relieved in mind on hearing this; but at present thirst was his chief ailment, with an internal heat and pain that gave him no rest.

"Of what were you partaking last night?"

"Of wine only—champagne, which I found in a cabinet of the comedero" (dining-room).

"There is but one crystal cup remaining here unbroken."

"From that I drank it," said Quentin, who, in his delirium, had smashed a supper equipage of his own collecting.

It was a large goblet of Venetian crystal, studded with brilliantly-coloured stones. The Padre Florez looked at the dregs and shook his white head.

"This wine has been drugged—there is a fresh mystery here! And Donna Isidora de Saldos was with you last night—you are assured of that?"

"As sure as that I live and breathe, Senor Padre."

"Alone?" continued the priest, with knitted brows.

"Alone."

"How came it to pass that her brother entrusted her with you?" asked the padre, suspiciously.

Quentin was too ill to explain that she had been sent with him in disguise as the mother of the guerilla Trevino; and Padre Florez, who naturally conceived the idea that they had eloped as lovers, and had quarrelled, to prevent a great tragedy, set about curing him.

He compelled him to drink quantities of new milk and salad oil, both of which he procured from the muleteers who were bivouacking on the terrace; after this, he gave him warm water mixed with the same oil, and fresh butter, to provoke intense sickness, to destroy the acrimony of the poison, and to prevent it doing injury to the bowels.

"If the pain continues, Ramon, we shall have to kill a sheep," said the padre, "and apply its intestines, reeking hot, to the stomach of the patient; 'tis a remedy I have never known to fail in allaying spasms there, especially if the sheep be a *moreno*."

By nightfall, however, thanks to the good padre's real skill, which was superior to his superstition in the efficacy of black-faced mutton, Quentin was quite relieved, and after a time related his whole story from the time of his leaving Herreruela. Florez listened to him with considerable interest, approved of all he had done, and gave him much good advice; but added that he feared De Saldos would hold him accountable for the loss of his sister, for whose treatment, and of whose ultimate fate among the French, he had the greatest apprehension. He added that his visit to the villa seemed to have been a special interposition of heaven in Quentin's favour, as he would inevitably have died in mortal agonies but for the prompt and simple applications which saved him.

He desired Ramon to take special charge of the patient to Portalegre; to see that by the way he got nothing stronger for food than milk, gruel, or barley broth, and no wine whatever; and then giving them all his benediction, he stuck his shovel hat on his worthy old cranium, mounted his sleek mule, and pricking its dapple flanks with his box stirrup-irons, departed for Marvao, by the way of Valencia de Alcantara, where he hoped to trace, and perhaps release the unfortunate girl from her captors.

Impatient though the muleteers were to proceed with their train of mules, which were laden chiefly with wine for Sir John Hope's division, they agreed to remain for a night at the villa, where their cattle grazed on the lawn. With dawn next day they set forth, with Quentin riding at the head of the train, mounted on Madrina, and feeling very much like one in a dream.

"Come, Ignacio Noain, a stirrup-cup ere we go," said Ramon, as he came forth, cracking his enormous whip, a blunderbuss slung on his back, and his sombrero rakishly cocked over his left eye.

Ignacio handed a cupful of wine to his leader.

"Demonio!" said the latter, "this smacks of the borrachio skin."

"To me it was luscious as a melon of Abrantes in June, after the coarse aguardiente we drank last night," said Ignacio.

"Of course you haven't tried the casks of Valdepenas on the three leading mules?" said Ramon, with a cunning leer.

"They are for the English general and his staff, so every cask is guarded by an outer one"

"And thus your gimlet failed to reach the wine?"

"Precisely so."

"Maldita! the merchant who sold that wine must either be a rogue at heart, or an old muleteer, to be so well up to all the tricks of the road. And now, senor, here is milk for you; no wine; we must remember the orders of Padre Florez," said Ramon, presenting Quentin with a bowl of new goat's-milk, as he sat, pale as a spectre, on the demipique saddle with which Madrina was accoutred, and which, in addition to all her other fringe and worsted trappings, gave that stately pet-mare very much the aspect of a mummer's nag.

Quentin, though refreshed and revived by the cool morning air, and cheered by the hope of being soon at head quarters with his present jovial guides, felt sad and bewildered when he thought of Isidora, her beauty, her impetuous spirit, the wild and sudden love she had professed for himself, and the too probable horror of her fate in the hands of the French, who were so unscrupulous towards the Spaniards and Portuguese. Then the mystery of the poison; it was no doubt, he hoped, some fatal mistake, but one which might never be solved or explained. In fancy he seemed still to see her wondrous dark eyes, with their thick black lashes, while her soft musical voice seemed to mingle with the melodious bells of the long train of mules at the head of which Madrina paced as guide; and as they descended the vine-clad hills towards the frontiers of Portugal, he turned in his saddle to give a farewell glance at the deserted Villa de Maciera.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE ARMY MARCHES.

"No martial shout is there—in silence dread,
Save the dull cadence of the soldier's tread,
Or where the measured beat of distant drum
Tells forth their slow advance—they come! they come!
On! England, on! and thou, O Scotland, raise,
'Midst Lusias' wilds, thy shout of other days,
Till grim Alcoba catch thy slogan roar,
And trembling, glisten to thy blue claymore."

LORD GRENVILLE.—1813.

On the 2nd day of November, 1808, the division of Sir John Hope broke up from its cantonments at Portalegre, and by successive regiments began its march towards Spain. The whole British army in Portugal was now pouring forward, and it was calculated that when Sir John Moore effected a junction with the Spanish

armies, the united forces would amount to one hundred and thirteen thousand men, to oppose the vast power of France, which was divided into eight corps, led by the first soldiers of the Empire, the Marshal-Dukes of Belluno, Istria, Cornegliano, Treviso, Elchingen, Abrantes, Generals St. Cyr and Lefebre.

To prevent this junction was the first measure of the French, twenty-five thousand of whom attacked the main body of Blake's army on the 31st of October, and, after an obstinate conflict of eight hours, forced him back upon Valmeseda. He was without artillery, otherwise this famous Irish soldier of fortune might have held the ground against them, even though outnumbered as he was by eight thousand bayonets.

Meanwhile, Napoleon advanced to Burgos, where he established his head-quarters, and from whence he issued an edict in the name of his brother Joseph, as King of Spain, granting a pardon to all Spaniards, soldiers, guerillas, and others, who, within one month after his arrival at Madrid, would lay down their arms and renounce all connexion with Great Britain. Soon after Madrid fell into his hands, either by a memory of the terrors of Zaragossa or the treachery of Morla, though sixty thousand Spaniards were ready to defend its streets and gates!

Sir John Moore was a young Scotch officer of great experience. He had served at the capture of Corsica, and led the stormers of the Mozzello Fort amid a shower of shot, shell, and hand-grenades. He was present at the capture of many of the West India islands; he had served in the Irish Rebellion, the disastrous expedition to Holland, and the glorious one to Egypt, which wrested that country from the French; and he had been commander-in chief in the Mediterranean and Sweden. Though superseded temporarily by the vacillating ministry who sent Sir Harry Burrard to Portugal, he was still modestly content to act as third in command, nobly saying, that "he would never refuse to serve his country while he was able, and that if the King commanded him to act as ensign, he would obey him."

It was this chivalrous spirit which, on arriving in Portugal after the battle of Vimiera, made him declare to Sir Hew Dalrymple, that as Sir Arthur Wellesley had done so much in winning that victory and the battle of Rolcia, it was but fair that *he* should still continue to take the lead in the task of freeing Portugal from the French; and Moore offered generously, "if the good of the service required it, to execute any part of the campaign allotted to him, without interfering with Sir Arthur."

After he obtained the command, the utmost activity prevailed at head-quarters to forward the expedition for the relief of the Spanish Peninsula, though he was left by Government almost

without money. "He was very desirous," says Napier, "that troops who had a journey of six hundred miles to make, should not, at the commencement, be overwhelmed by torrents of rain, which in Portugal descend at this period with such violence as to destroy the shoes, ammunition, and accoutrements of the soldier, and render him almost unfit for service."

In eight days he had his troops ready, and most of them in motion; but difficulties soon occurred. The lazy Portuguese asserted that it was impracticable to carry siege, or even field artillery, by the mule and horse paths which traversed their vast mountain sierras; but Sir John Moore discovered on his march that the roads, though very bad, were open enough for the purpose; but the knowledge came rather too late. The artillery, consisting of twenty-four pieces, with a thousand cavalry, he sent with the division of Sir John Hope, whose orders were to march by Elvas on the Madrid road. Moore retained one brigade of six-pounders at head-quarters. Two brigades of infantry, under General Paget, were to march by Elvas and Alcantara. Two others, under Marshal Beresford, by the way of Coimbra, and three more, under General Fraser, were to move by the city of Abrantes, near the right bank of the Tagus. The *whole* to unite at Salamanca, where Sir John Hope and Sir David Baird, with their divisions, were to join, if they failed to do so at Valladolid. Such was the scheme of Sir John Moore for commencing operations against the Emperor of France at the head of his mighty legions.

Before the troops marched, he warned them in general orders, that the Spaniards were a nation by habit and nature grave, austere, orderly, and sober, but prone to ire and easily insulted; he therefore sought to impress upon his soldiers the propriety of accommodating themselves to the manners of those they were going among, and neither by intemperance of conduct or language, to shock a people who were grateful to Britain for an alliance which was to free them from the bondage of France, and to restore them to their ancient liberty and independence.

"Upon entering Spain," concludes this most judicious order, "as a compliment to the nation, the army will wear the *Red cockade*, in addition to their own. For this purpose, cockades are ordered for the non-commissioned officers and men; they will be sent from Madrid; but in the meantime officers are requested to provide them and put them on, as soon as they pass the frontier."

Such expedition did the gallant Moore make, that he outmarched his magazines; and to use his own words, "the army ran the risk of finding itself in front of the enemy, with no more ammunition than the men carried in their pouches."

And now, to resume our humble story, it was on the 2nd of November, the very day on which the second division was to march, that the Muleteer Ramon of Miranda and his train entered Portalegre about daybreak, with Quentin Kennedy riding on Madrina, looking pale, weary, and exhausted.

"Por Dios! we have just come in time, senor," said Ramon; "another hour, and even the rear guard would have been difficult to overtake. Here I shall leave you and my casks of Valdepenas, and then, ho for Lisbon!"

The sun had not yet risen, and the dull haze that rolled from the valleys along the sombre slopes of the rocky sierras, yet hovered over the quaint little episcopal city of Portalegre. The church bells and those of the Santa Engracia convent (at which Quentin was to have left poor Isidora) were ringing out a farewell peal to the departing British, and prayers for the success of their arms were mingled with the morning matins at every altar in the bishopric. The narrow streets were blocked up with sombre crowds of people, and by troops in heavy marching order. All betokened hasty preparations for advancing to the front, and amid the loud vivas of the Portuguese could be heard the wailing of the poor soldiers' wives who were to be left behind, for on the 10th October, Sir John Moore, who, though brave as a lion, was tender as a woman, and whose love and devotion for his mother was a leading characteristic throughout his short but brilliant life, issued the following order:—

"As in the course of the long march which the army is about to undertake, and where *no carts* will be allowed, the women would unavoidably be exposed to the greatest hardship and distress, commanding officers are, therefore, desired to use their endeavours to prevent as many as possible, *particularly those having young children*, or such as are not stout or equal to fatigue, from following the army. An officer will be charged to draw their rations, and they will be sent back to England by the first good opportunity; and, when landed, they will receive the same allowance which they would have been entitled to if they had not embarked, to enable them to reach their homes."

Unfortunately, implicit obedience was not paid to his humane order, and thus many women, with their children, followed the troops in secret, and thus many, if not all, perished by the way, during the horrors of the retreat to Corunna. Among these, who courageously followed the army on foot and in secrecy, or sometimes mounted on a poor lean burro, was the wife of Allan Grange, the poor sergeant, reduced at Colchester barracks, a fragile and ailing creature, who bore a pale, sickly, and consumptive little baby at her breast.

The advanced guard of Light Dragoons, with oats and forage trussed in nets and bags upon the croppers, had already been detailed, and were in their saddles, half a mile in front of the city, at the base of the hill on which it stands. The twenty-four pieces of artillery were all in readiness, the trails limbered up and the horses traced, with water-buckets, spare wheels and forge-waggons, the gunners in their seats and saddles. The massed columns of infantry were in heavy marching order, with great-coats rolled, canteens and havresacks slung crosswise, with colours, in some instances cased, and locks hammerstalled; the cavalry were in the great plaza, in close column of troops, every man riding with a net of forage behind him; the baggage-animals, already laden with tents, bags, beds, boxes, and camp-kettles, amid the cracking of whips, and oaths uttered in English, Irish, Spanish, and Portuguese, were driven forth to make way for the troops, who, while staff and other officers galloped about as if possessed by so many devils, began their march for Spain.

Bewildered by the confusion of the scene amid which he so suddenly found himself, and thrust by the pressure of the crowd against the wall of the Santa Engracia convent, Quentin sat in the saddle of Madrina, and saw nearly the whole division of Sir John Hope defile before him, a long and glittering array, for as the golden light of the sun poured along the picturesque vista of the ancient street, and the white rolling mists were dispelled or exhaled upward, the burnished barrels, bayonets, and sword-blades, the polished brasses of the accoutrements, and the glazed tops of the shakos, all flashed and shone, while the thoroughfares resounded to the tramp of horse and foot, spurs, scabbards, and chain bridles—to the sharp blare of the cavalry trumpets, and the hoarse war pipes of the plaided Highlanders—the wild, strange music that Scotsmen only *feel* or understand. Many of the soldiers were pale and wan, from the comfortless wards of Belem hospital, and many a bandaged head and plaster on a cheek showed the part they had borne at Roleia and Vimiera, and in the struggle which had just freed Portugal from those who aimed at the conquest of Europe. Uniforms already old and thriftily patched with cloth of divers colours, chabraques worn bare, gun carriages minus paint and oil, as they rumbled along; all spoke of service and hard work—of harder work and keener service yet to come!

And now advanced a corps, on hearing the well-known air played by whose drums and fifes, Quentin made a leap from the saddle of Madrina, and forced a passage through the dense crowd, for it was the 25th, "The King's Own Borderers," with the

Castle of Edinburgh shining on their colours, and all their old honours—"Nisi Dominus Frustra," Egypt, and Egmont-op-Zee, that debouched into the main street of Portalegre in a dense close column of sections, nine hundred men, all marching as one to their old quick step of a thousand memories—

"All the blue bonnets are bound for the border,"

or General Leslie's march to Long-Marston Moor in the days of the great civil war.

Endued with fresh strength by the sight of the regiment, Quentin burst through the crowd, and, reaching the grenadiers, grasped the hand of Rowland Askerne, on whose breast he saw a Portuguese order glittering.

"Quentin Kennedy, by all that's wonderful!" exclaimed the tall captain, grasping his hand warmly in return. "Quentin, my boy, how goes it?"

"Hallo! talk of the——" began Monkton, clapping him on the back; "we were just talking about you—thought you lost, gone, and all that sort of thing, a martyr to duty; but welcome back, my dear lad!"

"Where is old Major Middleton?

"With Buckle in rear of the column."

"And little Boyle?"

"Oh, Pimple is with Colyear carrying the colours; but *where* have you been, and *what* the deuce have you been about, eh?"

"You look pale and weary to begin a march this morning, sir," said some of the soldiers, kindly, for Quentin was a favourite with them all.

"You must have a horse," said Askerne: "you look absolutely ill, Quentin; how is this?"

"It is a long story, Askerne," replied Kennedy, with a haggard smile.

"Egad, I thought, and we *all* thought, the duty one beyond your years and experience."

"Make way here in front, please; mark time, the grenadiers," said an authoritative voice as the column issued from the city gate, and an officer who nearly rode our hero down, pushed his horse between the band and the first section of the grenadier company. Quentin looked indignantly up, and found the cold, stern, and uncompromising eye of Cosmo, the Master of Rohallion, steadily bent upon him.

"You have returned, sir, *at last!*" was his stiff response to Quentin's hasty salute.

"It is little short of a miracle that I ever returned at all, Colonel Crawford; I have undergone no small danger I beg to assure you, and have but this instant entered Portalegre. I have

acquitted myself of the duty with which the general did me the honour to entrust me. The junction will be formed with our division on the march, and I have a despatch from the Guerilla Chief."

"For whom?"

"Sir John Hope, sir; shall I give it to him in person?"

"No—I shall myself deliver it," replied Cosmo, who feared naturally the favourable impression which Quentin might make on the good general, to whom he had been represented as unworthy; "get your musket and fall in with your company as soon as possible. We shall have some *other* work cut out for you ere long," added Cosmo, with a dark and scornful smile, as he took, or rather snatched the despatch from Quentin, who seemed more fit for a sick bed than for marching among the sturdy grenadiers of the Borderers; but for that day he was attached to the baggage guard, which was under Lieutenant Colville, and this arrangement for his comfort was made by the kindness of the old halberdier Norman Calder, who was now sergeant-major. He rode the spare horse of Major Middleton, a boon but for which he could never have kept up with the troops.

With the baggage marched the rear guard of the division, having with it the sick, the drunk, disorderly, and prisoners, together with a medley of followers of a not very reputable kind, who noisily scorned alike control or discipline.

As Quentin was riding thus, he was passed from the rear by the general and his staff. The former gave him a keen and inquiring glance, answered his salute briefly, and passed on. Whether Cosmo had mentioned him favourably, or the reverse, in delivering the despatch of Don Baltasar, he knew not; but he knew that when once the spiteful element attains ascendancy in the human heart, there is no mode in which it will not seek to be gratified and no measure to its malignity, and he sighed over an enmity that he dared neither to grapple with nor hope to overcome; and all this he owed to the preference of Flora Warrender for him—her early friend and playmate in youth. Well, there was some consolation in the cause! Though his reception by the Master of Rohallion neither disappointed nor shocked him, it chilled the poor lad's heart, which grew heavy as he saw how unavailing and how fruitless were all his efforts to deserve praise or to win honour!

CHAPTER LX.

HALT AT AZUMAR.

"Pleasures fled hence, wide now's the gulf between us;
Stern Mars has routed Bacchus and sweet Venus:
I can no more—the lamp's fast fading ray
Reminds me of parade ere break of day,
Where, shivering, I must strut, though bleak the morning,
Roused by the hateful drummer's early warning.
Come, then, my boat-cloak, let me wrap thee round,
And snore in concert stretched upon the ground."—*An Elegy.*

THE noisy racket maintained by those who were in custody of the rear-guard, the voices of others who whipped or cheered on the long string of baggage animals (Evora horses, Castilian mules, and sturdy burros or donkeys), the various novel sights and sounds incident to the march of Hope's division, together with the appearance of the division itself winding down the deep valleys and up the steep mountains, amid clouds of white dust, out of which the sheen of arms and the waving of colours came incessantly, won Quentin from his sadder thoughts, and he began to feel, after all he had undergone, an emotion of joy on finding himself among his old comrades—a joy that can only be known by a soldier—by one forming a part of that great and permanent, but almost always happy family, a regiment of the line.

The morning was bright and breezy; the large floating clouds cast their flying shadows over the sunlit landscape at times, adding alike to its beauty and the striking effect of the marching columns. Weary of the dark and sallow Spaniards, Quentin's eyes had run along the ranks of the 25th, and their familiar faces, which seemed so fair and ruddy when contrasted with those of the nations they had come to free, were pleasant to look upon. Their colours, with the castle triple-towered and the city motto; the familiar bugle calls, and more than all, the old quick-step of General Leslie, which came floating rearward from time to time when the corps traversed an eminence, all spake to him of his new but moveable home, and the new associations he had learned to love. Cosmo—the impracticable and inscrutable Cosmo Crawford—alone was the feature there that marred his prospects and blighted his pleasure! He felt a sincere regret for poor Isidora, and this was not unmingled with a little selfish dread of her brother, De Saldos, the scowling Trevino, and others, when those guerillas joined the division, which they would probably do in the course of a day or so; and what answer would he make to them when they—and chiefly her brother—asked for the missing

donna? He felt himself, indeed, between the horns of a dilemma, and many unpleasant forebodings mingled with his dreams of a brilliant future. Amid these ideas recurred the longing to write home that the good Lord Rohallion and the gentle Lady Winifred—that dear Flora, and the old quartermaster too, might learn something of what he had seen, and done, and undergone since last they parted. Had Cosmo, in any of his letters, ever written to announce that he was serving with the Borderers? This was a question Quentin had frequently asked of himself, and he felt certain that the colonel had *not* done so, as in the other instance, and unless he had been cruelly misrepresented, Lord Rohallion or worthy John Girvan, and his old mentor the quaint dominie, would assuredly have written to him long since. Thus it was evident that in his correspondence with those at home in Carrick, the haughty Master had totally ignored his name.

Quentin's passion for Flora Warrender was a boyish devotion that mingled with all his love and all memories of home. She was still a guiding star to his heart and hopes, the impulse of every thought, the mainspring of every act and deed; and thus Quentin felt that while this dear girl at home loved him, the spiteful hauteur of Cosmo was innocuous and pointless indeed.

As the paymaster of the regiment was riding with the rear-guard, Quentin lost no time in placing in his hands a sufficient number of those gold moidores that were found in the repositories of the late Corporal Raoul, of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval (the spoil so liberally shared with him by Ribeaupierre), for the purpose of having them transmitted by bill or otherwise to the quartermaster at Rohallion, to repay the good man for the forty pounds he had placed at his disposal on the night he left the castle to return no more; and the fact of this debt being off his conscience made his spirit more buoyant than ever.

They were now marching through the province of Alentejo, the land of wine and oil, the granary of Portugal. Proceeding on a line parallel with the Spanish frontier, they passed through the fortified town of Alegrete, which is moated round by the small river Caia, and there each regiment made its first brief halt for a few minutes before pushing on to Azumar, where the division was to pass the night. Those halts on the line of march were so brief that the bugles of the leading corps always sounded the advance when those of the rear were sounding the halt—ten minutes being the utmost time allotted. On reaching Azumar, the lieutenant-general with his staff, and the colonels of corps, found quarters in the castle of the counts of that name, while the rest of the troops remained without the walls of the town.

The night was clear and starry; a pinkish flush, that lingered

beyond the summits of the Sierra Alpedriera to the westward, showed where the November sun had set. Tents were pitched for the whole force; but, before turning in for the night, Captain Askerne, Monkton, and other Borderers, preferred to sup in a cosy nook, sheltered by a ruined vineyard wall and a group of gigantic chestnuts, under which their servants had lighted a rousing fire of dry branches and wood, hewn down by the pioneers' hatchets. Each added the contents of his havresack to the common stock of the party, and in the same fraternal fashion they shared the contents of their canteens, flasks, and bottles; thus various kinds of liquor, wine—brandy, and aguardiente, were contributed. What the repast lacked in splendour or delicacy was amply made up for by good humour and jollity, and to those who had an eye for the picturesque, that element was not wanting. In the foreground the red glaring fire cast its light on the soldierly fellows we have introduced to the reader, as they sat or lounged on the grass in their regimental greatcoats, and their swords and belts beside them. The great chestnut trees were well-nigh leafless now, and with the rough masonry of the old wall, coated with heavily-leaved vine and ivy, formed a background. Further off, in another direction, were the glares of other watchfires, around which similar groups were gathered—fires that shed their light in fitful flashes on the long rows of white bell-tents, on the dark figures that flitted to and fro, and on the forms of the distant and solitary sentinels, who stood steadily on their posts, the point of each man's bayonet shining like a red star as the flame tipped it with fire.

"Here comes Colville," said Monkton, as that individual, who was somewhat of a dandy and man of fashion, lounged slowly up, and cast himself languidly on the grass. "You have just been with the colonel, I suppose?"

"Yes—a deuced bore—to report the baggage all up with the battalion, the guard dismissed to their tents, and luckily, no casualties, save a mule that we lost in a bog."

"And you found him bland, as usual?"

"I found him quartered, not in the castle, as I expected, but in a deserted house half ruined by the French," replied Colville, smiling; "the only habitable apartment was the kitchen, where our colours are lodged, and there he was eating a tough bullock steak, embers and all, just as his man had cooked it, on the ramrod of an old pistol. Egad, it was a picture!"

"A dainty kabob we should have called it in Egypt," said Major Middleton, laughing, with a huge magnum bonum bottle of brandy-and-water placed between his fat legs. "Ah, the Honourable Cosmo should not have quitted his guardsman's

comforts at the York Coffee-house, or Betty Neale's fruit-shop in St. James's Street,* to rough it with the line in the Peninsula!"

"Did he compliment you on bringing up your disorderly charge without other loss than the mule?" asked Askerne.

"The devil a bit," yawned Colville; "with his glass stuck in his eye, he gave me one of his cool stares, and said, briefly, 'That will do, sir—to your company.'"

"Ah," grumbled Middleton, shaking his old head, while his pigtail swayed to and fro, "the colonel may have in his veins good blood, as it is called, but he has in his heart about as much of the milk of human kindness as if it belonged to an old lawyer."

The last part of the sentence, we are bound to add, was partly mumbled into the mouth of the magnum, which at that moment the major applied to his own.

"Here comes Dick Warriston," said Monkton, as an officer muffled in a cloak approached. "Hallo, Dick—how goes it, man?"

"Good evening, gentlemen—thought I should find you out. I heard on the march that our friend the volunteer had turned up again. How are you, Kennedy? glad to see you safe and sound once more," said Quentin's old friend, as they shook hands, and he cast his ample blue muffling aside, displaying his well-built figure, with the scarlet coat, green lapels, and massive gold epaulettes of the Scots Brigade.

"Be seated, Dick."

"Thanks, Askerne."

"Do you prefer a chair, or a sofa?" asked Monkton.

"The sofa, by all means," replied Warriston.

"There is brandy in that jar beside you, and Lisbon wine in the bottle. Here, under these fine old chestnuts, we are quite a select little pic-nic party, out of range of shot, shell, and everything——"

"Except fireflies and mosquitoes, Willie—a poor substitute for the girls, God bless them."

"Whose trumpets are these? what's up now?" asked Monkton, as a sharp cavalry call rang upon the night.

"The 3rd Dragoons of the German Legion, Burgwesel's regiment, are watering their horses."

"Those Germans are regular trumps in their order and discipline," said Monkton; "but as for the Portuguese, damme, they are not worth their liquor. Even the Johnny Crapauds despise them. You have just come in time, Warriston, to hear Kennedy relate to us his interview with the guerilla chief; go on, lad, we are all listening," he added, as he and others proceeded to

* Two favourite resorts of the Household Brigade in those days.

light their cigars or charge their pipes for a thorough bout of smoking.

Quentin told them briefly as much of his adventures as he deemed it necessary to relate or reveal, from the time of his parting from Askerne to the hour of his return to Portalegre. The slaughter of the French prisoners at Herreruela drew forth loud execrations and unanimous condemnation. His illness at the Villa de Maciera was alone a mystery which he could not explain, and the manner in which he consequently and naturally blundered in narrating this part of his story, drew forth the laughter and the empty jests of the younger portion of his audience.

"Damme," said Monkton, "you were a bold fellow, Kennedy, to become spoony on the sister of such a melo-dramatic individual—such a regular 'heavy villain' as this guerilla De Saldos! Egad, the sight of the fellow, with those black moustachios you have described, would be enough to frighten the French!"

"Very singular style of person, your Spanish friend, I should think," lisped Colville, with his glass in his eye.

"Remarkably so," added Ensign Pimple, raising his white eyebrows; "decidedly a dangerous fellow to have a shindy with!"

"A most interesting individual, no doubt," said Buckle the adjutant; "but begad, not at all suited to a quiet rubber or a little supper party; takes mustard to his lamb, perhaps, and pepper to his eggs, but knows nothing, I'll be bound, of a devilled kidney, and a tumbler of decent whisky toddy. 'Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard;' he is all spasms, big boots, and blue fire—eh?"

While they jested thus, and Quentin, with something of annoyance and vexation, looked from one to another, Askerne and Warriston, who were men of graver mood, had been eyeing him attentively.

"My poor lad," said the former, laying a hand kindly on his shoulder, "all this that you have related was a sad trial for you—a great test of courage and discretion for one so young to be subjected to, especially in a foreign country, and among a people so fierce and lawless."

"Your pistols were always my friends," said Quentin, laughing; "I thought of them in every extremity, Captain Askerne; but fortunately never had to use them."

"Then keep them, Quentin, my boy, as a little present from me," said the grenadier.

"But to deprive you——"

"Matters nothing—I took a handsome pair of silver-mounted pops from the holsters of a French officer the other day."

"Askerne has but anticipated me," said Warriston; "I had resolved to give you mine, though they were a gift to me from my father's old friend the Conservator of Scottish Privileges at Campvere, when the Scots Brigade came home and turned their backs upon honest old Holland for ever."

"Well, Kennedy," said Monkton, "we've heard all your adventures, at least *so much* as you wisely, prudently, and discreetly choose to tell us; but I cannot help thinking that we could make a few interesting notes on the time spent in that ruined Château en Espagne. Was the donna young, black-eyed, beautiful, and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"By Jove," added Colville, in the same tone, "you are a regular St. Francis, or St. Anthony! But unlike you, if the donnas on the other side of the frontier think *me* worth their while, I am ready to be subjected to any amount of seduction the dear creatures may choose to put in practice."

Affecting neither to hear Monkton's banter nor Colville's addition, Quentin turned to Askerne, admiring the order that glittered on his left breast.

"This is Portuguese?" said he.

"Yes, Quentin—the Tower and Sword—given to me by the Junta of Oporto for capturing an exploring party, consisting of an officer and ten French dragoons of Ribeaupierre's regiment, whom I cut off in a narrow valley near Portalegre (on the very day after you left us), where I had been sent with twenty of ours to bring in forage."

"Askerne, I do envy you this decoration!" said Quentin, whose eyes sparkled with genuine pleasure and admiration, for medals were almost unknown in the British army then, and the Bath, as now, was only given to field officers; "and they were, you say, dragoons of Ribeaupierre?"

"The same corps with some of whom you fell in among the Spanish mountains. They are quartered in Valencia de Alcantara."

"Ribeaupierre!" said the bantering Monkton; "there is a name for an intelligent young man to go to bed with! It smacks of Anne Radcliffe's mysterious romances of 'Sicily' and 'The Forest.'"

"Yet it is the name of an officer as brave as any in France," said Quentin; "the general who bears it was a subaltern with Napoleon in the Regiment of La Fere, a town on an island of the Oise, where it was originally raised."

"Like that corps, the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval were originally under the monarchy," said Warriston.

"Their uniform is light green, faced and lapelled with white?"

"Exactly, Quentin—the same uniform worn by the Emperor on almost every occasion," replied Warriston; "the 24th were long known as the Disinterested Regiment of Chartres."

"An honourable title," said Askerne; "how came they to win it, thou man of anecdote?"

"About nineteen years ago, the regiment was quartered at Le Mans, a town of France, situate on the river Sarthe, if you have not forgotten your geography, Rowland. The corps then belonged to Louis Philip Joseph, Duke of Orleans,* the notorious 'Egalité' who was guillotined by the mob in 1793; but it was denominated 'of Chartres,' from the county of the name gifted to his ancestor by Louis XIV. The outrages of the Revolutionists were at their height around the whole of Mans. Day and night the dragoons of Chartres remained with their accoutrements on and their horses saddled ready to assist the magistrates and all peaceable citizens. Every day brought tidings of new horrors, and every night saw the sky reddened by the flames of burning châteaux, and abbey-churches, whose occupants were given to pillage and death. So resolute and orderly were the dragoons of Chartres, so sturdily and bravely did they protect the weak against the strong, enforce the public peace, and conduct the transit of corn for the poor, that the magistrates deemed it necessary to make some acknowledgment of their services. A vote of thanks from the municipality preceded a gratuity of eight hundred livres (no great sum among us, certainly, but a handsome one on the other side of the Channel) to be distributed among the three hundred chasseurs of the corps. In a large bag the money, made, by the way, from the church bells of France, was sent to the colonel, who gave it to the men to dispose of as they pleased; upon which, instead of dividing it among themselves, they resolved unanimously to bestow it upon a portion of the very people who had been tormenting their lives for the last six months. One of the dragoons, a mere youth named Raoul, waited upon the Rector of St. Nicholas in the city of Le Mans and handing him the bag with its contents, said—

"'Monsieur le Recteur, we want not this money. The pay of his Majesty, whom God and St. Louis long preserve! secures us in all that a soldier requires; but the poor, though they are the children of God, are not so blessed. We, the dragoons of Chartres, beg, therefore, that you will accept of this for their use, and put it to the common stock for the aged and the indigent.'"

"And this soldier was named Raoul?" said Quentin, who felt something like a shock when he heard him mentioned.

* Father of Louis Philippe I., late King of the French.

"So the newspapers said," replied Warriston.

Quentin was silent, but the face of one of the dead dragoons whom he had seen at Herreruela—he who had been dragged by his stirrup—came vividly to memory; while, such is the effect of fancy, the moidores that remained in his pocket seemed to become heavy as lead. The hour was late now, and he was completely overcome by fatigue. With a knapsack for a pillow he dropped asleep, while his more hardy comrades sat smoking and drinking, and discussing the fortune of the coming struggle in Spain. As the light of the watch-fire waned and fell in flickering gleams on his features, they seemed pinched, pale, and wan.

"God help the poor fatherless boy," said Captain Warriston, with considerable emotion; "what hard fate brings him here? He seems quite a waif among us, and one that is hardly used by you fellows of the 25th in particular. I wish I had him with me in the Scots Brigade. This last devilish piece of duty has broken him completely down!"

"No, no, Warriston; there is good stuff in him yet," said Rowland Askerne, as he divested his broad shoulders of his own ample cloak, and kindly spread it over the sleeper. "At his age, I had neither father nor mother nor friend to do *this* for me, and I too was, like him, a poor volunteer!"

CHAPTER LXI.

THE ADVANCE INTO SPAIN

Oh, life has many a varied tint,
Has many a bright and lovely hue,
Though care upon the brow may print
A sadder, darker colour too.

But hope still casts her rainbow wings
O'er many a scene of care and strife,
And gilds the hours round which she flings
The bright and varied tints of life."—CARPENTER.

SIR JOHN HOPE'S division continued to march by the strong old frontier town of Elvas, which crowns a rocky hill not far from where the Guadiana sweeps south towards the sea.

"To-morrow," said Monkton, as he placed the glaring red cockade of Ferdinand VII. on his shako, "we shall be airing our most dulcet Spanish in Old Castile, learning to dance the bolero, to tilt up our legs in the fandango, and to twangle on the guitar."

"I fear, Dick, that Marshal Soult will cut out more serious work for us," said Major Middleton.

"Do we halt at Elvas?" asked some one, as the regiment approached the town.

"Yes, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Monkton. "We have marched twenty miles to-day, and to-night I am going to the camp of the 28th."

"On duty?"

"No; but because they have fallen in with a cask of whisky."

"Whisky!" exclaimed several voices. "Whisky here?"

"The best Farintosh. It was taken from the wreck of a Scotch transport in Maciera Bay, and, may I never see morning, if I don't beg, borrow, or steal at least a canteenful. The Slashers wont refuse me, I am sure."

Next morning, a march of ten miles brought them in sight of the great castle of Badajoz—that place of terrible but immortal memory! Flanked by the waters of the Rivollas and Guadiana, flowing between vineyards and olive groves, it towered in clear sharp outline against the pure blue sky, on cliffs three hundred feet in height, with all its grim batteries and tiers of cannon bristling, row on row; its eight great bastions, each standing forth with one angle bathed in strong yellow sunlight, and the other sunk in deep purple shadow; the rich gothic spires and countless pinnacles of its churches and convents, all shining in the warm glow, while, in the background, extended far away the long green wavy outline of the mountains of Toledo.

Kellerman and Victor had alike been foiled before it, as the Portuguese had been in the days of the Archduke John of Austria, and now the scarlet and yellow banners of King Ferdinand VII. were still waving triumphantly upon the towers of San Cristoval, San Roque, and the Forts of Picurina and Pardaleras. The united clangour of, perhaps, five hundred bells, came merrily upon the morning breeze, a welcome to the British. Then a white puff of smoke from the battery of the grand old citadel announced the first gun of a royal salute. Another and another followed, flashing from the dark embrasures, while the pale wreaths curled upward and floated away, till the whole round of twenty-one pieces was complete; but, as the city was two miles distant, each report came faintly to the ear, and at an interval after the flash. Ere long, the twenty-eight arches of the noble bridge of the Guadiana rang beneath the hoofs of our Light Dragoons, as the advanced guard began to cross, and, amid the clangour of bells in spire and campanile, and the "vivas" of the assembled thousands, the reiterated shouts of "Viva los Ingleses!" "Viva los Escotes!" the infantry found themselves

defiling through the lower streets of Badajoz and entering Spain.

Eyes dark and bright sparkled with pleasure and welcome from many an open lattice, and many a fan and veil were waved, and many a white hand kissed to the passing troops, as, with colours waving and bayonets fixed, they passed under the gaily crowded balconies on their way to the Guadiana. Escorted by a guard of Spanish lancers, mounted on beautiful jennets, a quaint old coach, such as we only see depicted in fairy tales or pantomimes, came slowly rumbling forward on its carved and gilded wheels. It was gorgeous with burnished brasses and coats armorial, but was shaped like a gigantic apple pie, drawn by six sleek fat mules; and each pair had a little lean dark postilion, in cocked-hat and epaulettes, floundering away in boots like water-buckets, while, at the doors on both sides, hung two tripod stools, as the means of ingress and egress. But, in front of this remarkable conveyance, the advanced guard halted with carbine on thigh, the officers saluting and the trumpets sounding, while the general and staff approached bareheaded, with hat in hand, for in the recesses of this apple-pie were the most Reverend Padres en Dios, the Archbishop of Santiago, the Bishop Suffragan of Compostella, Senores the Captain-general, the Alcalde of Badajoz, and a great many more, in civic robes and military uniforms, with crosses and medals, and all of these persons clambered out of the interior, and descended on terra firma by means of the three-legged stools aforesaid, coach-steps being as yet unknown in the realms of his Most Catholic majesty.

"Well," said Monkton, "this turn-out beats all the buggies I ever saw. By Jove! it is like Noah's ark on wheels. Such a team it would be to 'tool' to Epsom with!"

We shall skip the long and solemn, the flattering and bombastic speeches made by the Spanish officials, and the curt but manly responses given by the British on this auspicious occasion. Suffice it to say that, after a brief halt, the division continued its route by easy marches. The green hill of Albuera ere long became visible on the right flank; but the day passed without any tidings being heard of the guerillas of Don Baltasar de Saldos, a circumstance which, in the course of conversation with Buckle the adjutant, the Master of Rohallion contrived that Quentin should know. Naturally he felt anxious about the matter, and feared in his heart that perhaps he had personally something to do with the non-appearance of this famous partisan chief. Twenty-four miles beyond Badajoz brought the division, with all the heavy artillery of the army, to Montijo, a little town of Estremadura, where a camp was formed for the night near the

Guadiana. As contrasted with "the Granary of Portugal," through which they had latterly passed, the barrenness of wasted and long-neglected Estremadura impressed all with poor ideas of Spain.

"The great Condé was right," said Warriston, as the little group of the other evening assembled again, in nearly a similar manner, to sup by their watchfire, which was lighted near a deserted pottery in a field where the Indian corn had grown and been reaped; "right indeed, when he said if you wish to know what actual want is, carry on a war in Spain!"

"And the comforts of a Peninsular tour like ours are in no way enhanced when one's exchequer is low," said Monkton.

"True, Willie, and there is a wonderful sympathy between the animal spirits and the breeches-pocket."

"And I, for one, can show 'a regular soldier's thigh;' my purse has long since collapsed."

"Line it with these, Monkton," said Quentin, slipping a half-dozen moidores into his hand.

"What are these?"—moidores, by the gods of the Greek! But thanks, my friend, I shall pay you at San Pedro, where I shall bring our paymaster to book. I could lavish a colonel's pay, if I had it, which is never likely to be the case, for we're a devilish slow regiment, Quentin."

"But some of our Highland corps are slower still," remarked an officer.

"I have known a fellow to be four years an ensign in one of them, and every month at least once under fire all the time," said Askerne.

"They never sell out or purchase in, and then there is no killing them by bullets, starvation, or fatigue."

"For the baggage guard to-morrow, Mr. Monkton," said old Sergeant-major Calder, approaching the group, who were lounging on the grass; "for the colours, Mr. Hardinge and Mr. Boyle." He saluted and retired, while Monkton apostrophized the baggage guard in pretty round terms.

"I should like to have halted one night at Badajoz," said Colville; "there is a theatre there, and other means of spending money which smack of civilization. Conyers——"

"Who's he?"

"Conyers of the 10th Hussars, one of Hope's extra aides-de-camp, says there are some beautiful girls to be seen on the promenade of poplars, the Prado beside the river, in the evening where they all go veiled, with fireflies strung in their hair, producing a very singular effect."

"I would rather be whispering soft nothings into their pretty

ears and over their white shoulders than be bivouacking here," said Monkton.

"I believe you, my friend; but perhaps the knife of some devil of a lover or *cortejo* might give your whisperings a point you never expected," replied Askerne.

"Try a sip from my canteen," said Monkton; "it contains some of the stuff I got the other night at the camp of the 28th, and better you'll find it than the aguardiente of the Spanish Hottentots. Take a pull, Quentin, as a nightcap, and then turn in under that laurel bush and sleep if you can, under your own bays, till the bugle sounds the 'rouse.'"

Remembering the injunctions of the worthy Padre Florez, Quentin declined.

"Well, well, boy, as you please," said Monkton, slinging his canteen behind him; "but what the devil's that? Cavalry!"

"It is the staff—the general," exclaimed Askerne, as they all started to their feet, and proceeded to buckle on their swords, as Sir John Hope, with several mounted staff officers and commanders of corps, among whom was Cosmo Crawford, approached slowly, checking their horses, and talking with considerable animation, while their flowing scarlet and white plumes, their cocked-hats, aiguillettes, and orders, were all visible in the glare of the watchfire, on which the servants were heaping fresh branches for the night.

"What is this you say, Conyers?" Sir John was heard to ask; "repeat it to Colonel Crawford of the 25th. You bring us——?"

"Most serious intelligence, sir," replied Conyers, who wore the blue and scarlet of the 10th Hussars, and who seemed flushed and excited by a long ride. "I have just come on the spur from Badajoz, and there tidings have reached the Captain-general that yesterday the Spaniards, under Don Joachim Blake, were again completely discomfited at Espinosa, and that the Estremaduran army, which was beaten the day before at Gamonal, is demoralized or cut to pieces; and that the first, second, and fourth corps of the French army, seventy thousand strong, are free to act in *any* quarter."

"First, second, and fourth—these are the corps of Victor, Bessières, and Lefebre."

"Exactly, Sir John."

"If they march against us, the whole siege and field artillery of the army may be lost!" exclaimed Hope.

"Nor is this all, sir," continued the aide-de-camp, speaking rapidly and with growing excitement; "the movement made by the guerillas of Baltasar de Saldos towards the hill of Albuera, to cover our advance, has been anticipated!"

"*Anticipated!*"

"Yes, Sir John."

"How, how?" asked several voices.

"General de Ribeaupierre with his whole brigade, consisting of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval, the Westphalian Light Horse, numbering five hundred and sixty sabres, and the Dragoons of Napoleon, five hundred strong, aided by Laborde's corps and some field guns, issued from Valencia de Alcantara, attacked the guerillas in a valley near San Vincente, and captured their five pieces of artillery, killing the Conde de Maciera, a captain of Lancers, who made three charges to retake them; so De Saldos informs the Captain-general at Badajoz, that there must be treachery somewhere."

"Treachery," reiterated the general, while Cosmo Crawford glanced with a malicious smile towards the group where Quentin, with others, stood listening to all this with the deepest interest, for until the "Courier," or some English paper reached them, they were often ignorant for months of what was enacted in other parts of Spain.

"Don Baltasar is on the march, however, to join us," resumed Captain Conyers; "he has made a détour by the left bank of the Valverde, and by to-morrow evening hopes to make his report to you in person."

"I thank you, Captain Conyers," said the general; "come, gentlemen, this is not so bad after all! To-morrow night we halt at Merida."

"Had you not better despatch a message to De Saldos, saying so," suggested an officer.

"My horse is used up, sir," said Captain Conyers, smiling; "he has gone forty-five miles, on a feed of chopped whin, over the most infernal roads too!"

"There is that young volunteer of ours," said Cosmo; "he acquitted himself so well before, Sir John——"

"That we should give him an opportunity of doing so again," interrupted the lieutenant-general.

"A good idea!" muttered some of the staff.

"Mr. Kennedy," said Cosmo, beckoning forward the anxious listener; "a message saying where we shall halt to-morrow is to be despatched to the guerilla De Saldos; you will, of course, only be too happy to bear it?"

"I beg most respectfully to decline, sir," said Quentin, emphatically, and with growing anger.

"What the devil, sirrah?" Cosmo was beginning.

"Ha—indeed, and wherefore?" asked the general.

"I am scarcely able to keep up with the regiment, General

Hope," replied Quentin; "I have been seriously ill, and am more fit for hospital than for duty."

The general knit his brows, and Cosmo dealt Quentin, through his eyeglass, a glance of cool scrutiny, that deepened into withering scorn or hate without alloy.

"Very well, we must send an orderly dragoon," said Sir John Hope, turning away.

"Take care, Mr. Kennedy," said Cosmo, "lest at a future time this refusal may be remembered against you to your disadvantage."

"Crawford doesn't like you, Quentin," said Askerne, after the staff rode away; it is a great pity, for, though cold and haughty, he is a brave and good officer."

"Damme, don't scoff at the service, Askerne," said Monkton, with mock severity.

Poor Quentin had a heavy heart that night; we are not sure, that he did not shed some bitter and unavailing tears, for the forebodings of coming evil banished sleep when he most needed it, and crushed the soul within him. But his comrades as usual sat long by the watch-fire, passing the night with song, jest, and anecdote. They had neither care for the present nor fear for the future, and their jollity formed a strong contrast to his forlorn sadness.

"I think we should now turn in," said Monkton; "we march betimes to-morrow; to your tents, O Borderers! But what the deuce is that?"

"The générale," said Colville.

"Already!"

"Already, Monkton; and there sounds the gathering of the Gordons in the streets of Montijo."

"The nights are very short in the Penin-in-insula," said Monkton, scrambling up and making several attempts to buckle his belt.

"You'll have to sober yourself on the march, Willie," said Askerne, giving him a rough shake.

"By Jove! to have to fall in when one should go to sleep—to nod and drowse and dream while tramping on and on, your nose coming every minute down on the tin canteen or the knapsack of the man in front of you! It is miserable work; but what with contract powder that wont explode, ammunition shoes warranted not to last, diseased bullocks shot while at fever heat and eaten half raw, we are little likely to beat the French, either in fighting or marching."

"Unless, like them, we learn to hang an occasional commissary or contractor," said old Middleton, as he sprang with agility on his horse; and the regiment formed open column of companies in the dark, for daybreak was yet an hour distant.

CHAPTER XLII.

RETROGRESSION.

"Lucius, the horsemen are returned from viewing
The number, strength, and posture of our foes,
Who now encamp within a short hour's march.
On the high point of yonder western tower,
We ken them from afar, the setting sun
Plays on their shining arms and burnished helmets,
And covers all the field with gleams of fire."—*Cato*, Act v.

Ere noon next day, while the division was traversing the grassy plain amid which lies the ancient city of Merida, the sound of distant firing on their right flank announced the repulse of some of the cavalry of Laborde's corps, when making a reconnoissance. The light white puffs of the musketry that curled along the green hill-sides, came nearer and nearer, and it soon became known that the band of the formidable De Saldos el Estudiente, above two thousand strong, had joined the division of Sir John Hope; as the newspaper of Lord Rohallion had it, a measure fully arranged "by the skill and courage" of our young volunteer. But though the army continued its march for several days, no recognition of his service, in orders or otherwise, ever reached him from head-quarters, and happily for himself, he saw nothing of the dreaded Baltasar, who fortunately was left in the rear, with an open sabre cut.

Ribeaupierre's cavalry brigade abandoned Valencia de Alcantara without firing a shot, on its flank being turned, and fell back, no one knew exactly where or in what direction.

Hope's division halted at Merida, a place eminently calculated to excite the deepest interest in the thinking or historical visitor; its great bridge of more than eighty arches spanning the broad waters of the Guadiana; the ruins of its Roman castle, which Alfonso the Astrologer gifted to the knights of Santiago, and in the vaults of which Baltasar's guerillas had thrust some unfortunate French prisoners; its triumphal arch of Julius Cæsar, under which the division passed with drums beating and colours flying, and its crumbling amphitheatre:—Merida, of old the Rome of Spain, and the home of the aged and disabled soldiers of the 5th and 10th legions of Augustus Cæsar, whose great pyramid still towers there, amid the ruins of its contemporaries.

There was ample accommodation in the town for the officers of the division; but yet not enough to prevent a dispute about rank,

or precedence, or something else, between a Captain Winton of the Borderers, and an officer of the German Legion. So they met about daybreak near the Baths of Diana. The former was attended by Askerne of the Grenadiers, and the latter by Major Burgwesel of his own corps, and at the second fire Winton shot his man dead, Cosmo coolly lending his pistols for the occasion, without comment or inquiry, either of which would have been ungentlemanly, according to the temper or spirit of the service then. Prior to this event, on the evening the division halted, Quentin, about the hour of sunset, had wandered to the old Roman aqueduct which lies near the city, and he remained for a time lost in thought while surveying its mouldering arches, and the piles of columns, bases, flowered capitals, enriched friezes, Corinthian entablatures, and broken statues, lying amid the weeds and long grass, the remains of the once superb temples, ruined by the Goths and Moors; and perhaps he was thinking of his old dominie at Rohallion, and the worthy pedant's profound veneration for the ancient days of Rome, the mistress of all the then known world. The place was solitary and almost buried amid old vineyards and groves of now leafless trees. Under one of the mouldering arches, from which, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, masses of luxuriant creepers were yet hanging, Quentin lingered to admire the scenery and the glory of the golden sunset, which spread its farewell radiance over the vast plain, of which Merida, from its situation on a lofty eminence, commands a view in every direction—the olive groves yet green and waving in the breeze, and the winding Guadiana, while far away in distance, all tinted in dusky blue and russet brown, but edged with flaming gold, stretched the mountain sierras, range over range, towards the north. From the pleasant contemplation of this evening landscape he was suddenly roused by seeing a pair of fierce dark eyes glaring into his own. It was the guerilla Trevino, of whom it seems a mockery to give his once prefix of Padre!

"So, senor," said he, with a terrible grimace, "we meet again, do we?"

"It seems so, senor," replied Quentin, haughtily, as he stepped back a pace, "and what then?"

"Only that I find you in very bad company."

"I am alone, senor."

"Well, and you alone form the company I refer to," replied the Spaniard, insolently, and with a savage grin, while the fingers of his right hand clutched the haft of his knife, and his thumb was firmly planted on the pommel. There was no mistaking this action or his air for anything else than open hostility, so Quentin

warily stepped back another pace, and glanced hastily round to be assured that no other guerillas were lurking near, and then grasping the barrel of his musket, which was unloaded, he stood ready on his defence against an antagonist who possessed, perhaps, twice his bodily strength.

"What do you mean, Senor Trevino, by accosting me in this manner?" he demanded.

"I mean, *hombre*, that I have been lately at the Convent of Saint Engracia, and that Donna Isidora has *not* been heard of there; so, in the meantime, I and two or three others have sworn across our knives to kill you, that is all; leaving to time to reveal what you have done with her."

Something of this kind was what Quentin had long dreaded; but disdaining any attempt to explain or expostulate, and exasperated by the injustice to which he was subjected, he clutched his musket and said sternly—

"Stand back, fellow!"

"Ha! *perro y ladron* (dog and thief)—you will have it, then!"

With head stooped, body crouching, and knife drawn, the Spaniard was springing like a tiger upon Quentin, when the brass butt of Brown Bess, swung by no sparing or erring hand, fell full on his left temple, from whence it slid very unpleasantly down on his collar-bone, and tumbled him bleeding and senseless on the ground.

After this, Quentin, who was in no mood to feel any compunction about the affair, turned and left him to recover as he might, resolving, until in a more secure neighbourhood, not to indulge his taste for the picturesque or antique, and feeling exceeding thankful that he had not left his musket as usual in his tent.

"You were just in time, sir," said a voice, as Quentin turned to leave the ruined aqueduct; "an instant later and that Spanish thief had put his knife into you."

The speaker was Allan Grange, of the 25th, who, stooping down, took from Trevino's relaxed hand his knife, a very ugly pig-butcher-like weapon. A guerilla, doubtless some friend of Trevino's, was hastening forward at this moment, but on seeing Quentin joined by a comrade he drew back a little way, and so the affair ended for the time; but this was not the last that Quentin was fated to hear of the encounter.

By the ruinous town of Medellin, where the Guadiana was fabled of old to rise, after running twenty miles under ground; by the wretched town of Miajadas, and by Truxillo, with its feudal towers and Moorish walls, when the French had ruined alike the house in which Pizarro was born and the noble palace of the Condé de Lopesa, the division continued its march amid rough and stormy

weather, and, after passing Talavera de la Reyna—so called from the queen of Alonzo XI., to distinguish it from other places of the same name—halted, on the 22nd day of November, at the Escurial, that magnificent palace, twenty-five miles from Madrid, built by Philip II. in commemoration of the battle of St. Quentin, a holy personage, to whom he solemnly dedicated it. With his regiment, our hero bivouacked outside the little village of Escurial de Abajo. The night was a fearful one of storm. Over the bare and desolate country the winter wind swept in tempestuous gusts, and the rain fell in torrents, swelling all the streams of the Guadarama—for the weather was completely broken now. In that horrible bivouac poor Quentin lost his blanket—his whole household furniture. Near him lay a soldier's wife with a sick infant; he spread it over both and left it with them; when the regiment shifted its ground next day the mother and child dropped by the wayside, so Quentin never saw them or his blanket again. Here, as Sir John Moore had foreseen, and as General Hope had stated his fears to Cosmo, the enemy did *press forward* from Valladolid and Tordesillas, and the advanced posts of their cavalry being reported in sight, strong guards were posted and picquets thrown forward in front of the Escurial. This forward movement of the French threatened to cut off Hope's communication with Sir John Moore, who was then at Salamanca, and might lose his artillery. To prevent this, and effect a junction with the main body under the general, Hope marched from the Escurial on the 27th November, and crossed the long and lofty mountain chain of the Guadarama, the cliffs of which are so steep that the Spaniards of old likened them to straight spindles. Moving by Villa Castin, a market-town at their base, he halted at Avila, on the right bank of the Ajada, where Quentin was billeted in the same house with Monkton, in that dark and narrow street in which the spiritual Maria Theresa was born—"*Nuestra Serifica Madre*," as she is named by the old Castilians.

The enemy's light cavalry were still pressing on, and at times their carbines were heard popping in the distance, when responding to our skirmishers. It was the gloomy morning of the first day of December; the rain was still falling in torrents, and the sky looked dark and louring. Save an occasional exchange of shots between outpost and petty skirmishers, nothing of interest had taken place with the enemy, and the toil of this retrograde movement dispirited the troops. Even Monkton, one of the most heedless men in the regiment, was sullen and spiritless. Wearied by their long march, he and Quentin sat in their bare and miserable billet, silent and moody. It was in the house of a hatter, or maker of sombreros, facing the dark and narrow street, which was

overshadowed by a gigantic parish church, the bells of which were ringing in honour of the British, and their notes came mournfully on the passing gusts of wind. It was indeed a wild evening in Avila. The rain was pouring down in one uniform and ceaseless sheet, the wind bellowing in the thoroughfares with a melancholy sound, and the swollen Ajada was boiling in foam against the piers of its ancient bridge.

A miserable meal of tough beef, boiled with a little rice in a pipkin, had been served up by Monkton's servant, a poor half-starved fellow, whose single shirt had long since been reduced to its collar and wristbands, whose red coat showed innumerable darns and patches, and who now regretted the days when he forsook his plough on Tweedside to become a soldier. With their feet planted on a brasero of charcoal, cloaks muffled about them for warmth, and cigars in their mouths, our two warriors ruefully surveyed the bare whitewashed walls of their room, and then looked at each other.

"Rain, rain!" exclaimed Monkton; "what an infernal climate! And this is the land of grapes and sunshine! I've never seen such drops since I was in the West Indies with our flank companies, at the capture of Martinique."

At that moment, amid the lashing of the rain on wall and window, the roar of the wind, and the rush of the gorged gutters, the tramp of a horse was heard, and the voice of Buckle, who was brigade-adjutant for the day, was heard shouting—"Fall in, the outlying picquets of the 1st brigade—sound bugle!

But his voice and the half-strangled bugle notes were alike borne away by the tempest.

A heavy malediction escaped Monkton. This worthy sub had puffed at his fragrant Havannah till he had smoked himself into such a soothed state that he was quite indisposed "to be bothered about anything or anybody," as he said; and now he remembered that on halting the sergeant-major had warned him for out-picquet. He sprang up and kicked the brasero aside, sending the smouldering charcoal flying right and left.

"Out-picquet!" he exclaimed, "and the rain coming down in bucketfuls! Damme, who would be a soldier abroad, while there are chimneys to sweep at home?"

A smart single knock now came to the door, as he belted his sword beneath his cloak.

"Come in—is that you, sergeant major?"

"Yes, sir," said old Norman Calder, who was muffled in his grey great-coat, which, as he said, "smoked like a killogie."

"Where are these infernal picquets parading?"

"I've just come to show you, sir; they are falling in under the

arcades opposite the Bishop's palace, where the staff are quartered. Fresh ammunition has just been served out to all."

"That looks like work."

"Yes, sir; the enemy's cavalry are in force upon the road towards Villa Castin, in our rear."

"We have heard little else since we fell back from the Escurial."

As a volunteer is always the first man for any perilous duty, Quentin buttoned his great-coat over his accoutrements and musket, and set out to join Monkton's picquet, which Buckle was parading, with several others, under some quaint old arcades of stone, above which the house, with broad balconies and rich entablatures, rose to a considerable height. The daylight was nearly gone now, and already the half-drenched and half-fed soldiers looked pale and weary.

"As the weather has been frequently wet, and as the duty of to-night is an important one, you will be careful, gentlemen, to inspect the arms, flints, and ammunition of your picquets," said Buckle; "and as the prickers may not be deemed sufficient to indicate the state of the touch-holes, the butts will be brought to the front."

"Butts to the front," an order then in use, was given by Monkton and each officer in succession, after which the ranks were opened, and every man blew down the barrel of his musket, so that by applying a hand to the touch-hole the real state of the vent was ascertained by the inspector.

"Handle arms—with ball cartridge, prime, and load—secure arms!" followed rapidly, and away went the out-picquets, double-quick, through rain and mire, wind and storm, to their several posts, Monkton's being a mile and a half beyond the bridge of the Ajada, in tolerably open ground, interspersed with groups of little trees.

Under one of these he sheltered his picquet, and two hundred yards in front of it posted his line of sentinels, with orders not to walk to and fro, but to stand steadily on their posts, to look straight to their front, to fire on all who could not give the countersign, and to keep up a regular communication with each other and with those of the picquets on both flanks; and then each man was left for his solitary hour, the time allotted for such duty when in front of an enemy. About daybreak, after a short nap in the thicket, and after imbibing a sip from his canteen of rum grog, Quentin found himself on this solitary but important duty, posted on the centre of the highway, gazing steadily into the murky obscurity before him, and thanking Heaven in his heart that the rain had ceased, and that the cold and biting December wind was passing away.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ENEMY.

"'Tis true, unruffled and serene I've met
The common accidents of life, but here
Such an unlooked-for storm of ills falls on me
It beats down all my strength—I cannot bear it."

ADDISON.

THIS was not the first occasion on which Quentin had enacted the part of sentinel; but never had he done so with the knowledge that the enemy was before him, and perhaps at that moment closer than he had any idea of, among the mist that obscured the landscape. All was quiet in front and rear; save the drip of the last night's rain from an over-charged leaf, or the croaking of the bull-frogs in a marsh close by, not a sound broke the stillness. The dull grey winter morning stole slowly in; the distant mountain peaks of the Guadarama grew red, but all else remained opaque and dim, save the jagged summits of that lofty *sierra*—a Spanish word very descriptive of a range of conical hills, being evidently (as we are informed by a letter of the dominie) derived from *serra*, the Latin word for a saw.

On the slope of a hill, at a little distance from where Quentin stood, was a gibbet, a strong post about twenty feet high, having two horizontal beams crosswise on its summit, and from these four arms there hung four robbers, each by the neck, and their long black hair waved over their faces as they swung slowly to and fro in the morning wind, with the ravens wheeling around them, and perching on the arms of the gibbet. The bull-frogs in the marsh croaked vigorously, and like every other place in Spain, even this fetid swamp had its legend; for here it was that the Cid, Rodrigo de Bivar, when proceeding at the head of twenty young and brave hidalgos, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James at Compostella, saw an aged and half-naked leper in the midst of the slough. Leaping from his horse, Rodrigo dragged the poor man forth, and to the wrath and disgust of his mail-shirted companions, seated him on his own charger, Babieca; thereafter he set him at table with them, and finally, in the extremity of his humility and Christian charity, shared his bed with him. In the night the cavalier awoke, and beheld the leper standing on a cloud above his bed, midway between the floor and ceiling, surrounded by a blaze of light and clad in white and shining robes; and ere he vanished he informed the Cid that he was Saint Lazarus, who had taken the form of a leper to test his

charity, which was so commendable that God had granted he should prosper in all things, but chiefly in his wars against the infidel dogs who were troubling all Spain. As the mists drew upward, Quentin could see about half a mile distant in front, a line of French cavalry videttes, each sitting motionless in his saddle, and both horse and rider looking like one huge and misshapen figure, as the scarlet cloak of the latter was spread over the crupper of his charger behind him. While gazing steadily and with deep interest at the enemy, he was somewhat surprised to see two French dragoons suddenly ride from their own lines straight along the road towards his post. That they were deserters—his first idea—was impossible, as they rode leisurely and were not fired on by their picquets. By their light green uniforms and brass helmets with flowing plumes he soon saw that they were Chasseurs à Cheval, and that one, who rode a few paces in front of the other, was an officer, with a white handkerchief tied as an extempore flag of truce to the point of his sabre. Monkton, and the main body of the picquet, were rather beyond hail, and for a minute Quentin was irresolute what to do; but before he could decide upon anything, the officer came fairly up to him, and checking his horse on the bit, said in tolerable English—

"Monsieur le soldat, we have come hither on an errand of mercy. An old and valued officer of our corps is sinking under the fatigue of last night and the suffering incident to an old wound, so we have ridden over to see if there is not at least one brave and generous man among you, who will give us a mouthful of eau-de-vie or any other spirit to keep him alive; for though our surgeons order this, *sangdieu*, we haven't a drop in the whole brigade."

The interchange of many civilities, wine, biscuits, tobacco, and newspapers, frequently took place between our outposts and the French during the Peninsular wars. To such a length was this eventually carried, that they frequently went over to smoke at each other's watchfires; but a very stringent order of the Duke of Wellington put a stop to these visits.

Before the speaker had concluded his singular request, Quentin had time to recognise in him the French lieutenant whom he had so signally befriended at Herreruela.

"Monsieur de Ribeaupierre," said he, "don't you remember me?"

"*Parbleu*! yes—this is fortunate, my friend," said the other, grasping Quentin's hand; "I am glad to see you again, but not with the musket still—what! no promotion yet?"

"I am still but a volunteer."

"Ah—you should serve the emperor!"

"And then, we have not yet fought a battle."

"Had you not fallen back so rapidly on our advance from Valladolid and Tordesillas, we should have had the pleasure of capturing and escorting you all to France."

"Thanks for your good intentions."

"I still hope to see them carried out," said Ribeaupierre, laughing; "but here come some of your people," he added, waving his handkerchief, as Monkton, who had witnessed this interview, came hurrying forward, with his sergeant, and a section of the picquet with bayonets fixed.

Quentin rapidly acquainted Monkton with the object of the Frenchman's visit, adding—"He is Ribeaupierre, the French officer of whom I told you—son of the brigadier of the same name."

"Ah—indeed; then I have much pleasure in meeting him," said Monkton, as he and the officer saluted each other very courteously.

On inquiry being made, it was discovered that the sergeant of the picquet, Ewen Donaldson, alone had any brandy, so he readily poured the contents of his canteen into the flask of Ribeaupierre, who, after thanking him profusely, handed it to his orderly, saying—

"Paul, mon camarade, away with this for our patient; use your spurs, and I shall follow."

The dragoon galloped away. Ribeaupierre offered a five-franc piece to Donaldson, who being a gruff Scotchman declined it so bluffly that the young officer coloured to the peak of his helmet.

"You will join me in a cigar then, mon camarade?" said he, politely proffering his open cigar case. Then saluting Monkton again, he said, "Excuse me, monsieur l'officier, if, before returning, I speak a word or two in your presence with the friend to whom I owe my life—whom my good mother remembers every night in her prayers, for I told her of our adventures near Valencia."

"Your mother, monsieur? Is it possible that she is with the army at this season?"

"She is with the Emperor's court at Madrid, and hopes to see you all set sail from Lisbon. By the way," added Ribeaupierre, with a smile of waggery, "your lively Spanish friend, Donna Isidora, will be quite consoled when I tell her that I have seen you—alive and well too! She thinks of you with remorse and tears, as one whom she had poisoned in mistake, she says. How came all that to pass? We sent a patrol to search the Villa de Maciera for you, but no trace of you could be found,"

"Is she still in your hands?" asked Quentin, with an expression of interest.

"Yes, monsieur," replied the other, caressing his moustache.

"A prisoner?"

"*Peste!* What an idea!"

"I trust you—you have treated her well and kindly?"

"She shall answer for herself, some time hence."

"A prisoner! Poor Isidora! She will be quite inconsolable."

"Inconsolable? Mon ami, you forget in whose charming society she is! We fellows of the 24th Chasseurs are unrivalled in conversational powers and the general art of pleasing. She spoke of you very often—thought you a very nice fellow—but so quiet—so *triste!*"

Quentin was glad that Monkton, whom he did not wish to hear all this, had gradually gone beyond earshot.

"And she—she——" he was beginning with emotions of annoyance and mortification.

"Be assured that she became quite consoled among the 24th, and now, as Madame Jules de Marbœuf (for my comrade Jules took her off my hands), she has learned to think that we Frenchmen are not such bad fellows, after all."

"This is indeed news!" exclaimed Quentin; "Isidora married—married, and to a Frenchman!"

"Ah—la belle tigress is quite tamed now; but *I* must begone. *Ouf—peste—tonnerre de Dieu!* what a night we have had, monsieur," he added to Monkton, who again approached. "I have been so soaked that I felt as if the rain was filtering through the marrow of my bones. If you effect your junction with M. le Général Moore, I suppose we shall have the little variety of a general action."

"It is extremely probable," replied Monkton, smiling at the French officer's free and easy manner.

"That will indeed be gay—we are so anxious to measure swords with your cavalry. Do you know that General Foy, in one of his despatches, attributes your accidental victories——"

"*Accidental?*"

"That is the word, my friends——"

"For Roleia and Vimiera—eh?"

"Yes, for anything you like—Trafalgar and the Nile, if you please."

"Well, and Foy attributes them——"

"To two great elements you Anglais possess."

"Powder and pluck?"

"No—rum and ros-bif—ha, ha! *Au revoir*—we shall meet again," and, putting spurs to his horse, Ribeaupierre, keeping his

white handkerchief still displayed, rode across to his own lines, turning repeatedly to kiss his hand, as his horse caracoled along.

Relieved from his post, Quentin rejoined the main body of the picquet in the grove of trees, where he remained apart from the men and full of thought; for though his self-esteem was somewhat piqued on learning that Isidora had so easily forgot him, he was greatly pleased to hear of her safety, and hoped that the circumstance, when known, would relieve him from the hostility of Baltasar and his ragamuffins, of whom he not unnaturally had a constant dread. These ideas were mingled with something of amusement—that the brother-in-law of Baltasar, the most ferocious of Spanish patriots, should be a Frenchman!

Just as the picquets rejoined their regiments, prior to the whole division moving from Avila, Rowland Askerne called Quentin aside, and, with a face expressive of extreme concern, said—"I wish to speak particularly with you, Quentin—there is evidently something most unpleasant on the tapis."

"Regarding what—or who?"

"You, my friend."

"Me—how—in what way?" asked Quentin.

"Baltasar de Saldos, the guerilla, who has been so long in the rear, wounded, has now joined the division, and has been at the quarters of Sir John Hope in the Bishop's palace."

"Surely, that matters nothing to me," said Quentin, with growing anger and alarm.

"Listen. I was in the street, speaking with the colonel, when the general, who was bowing out the formidable guerilla, beckoned him, and on their meeting I heard him say—'The information just given me, Colonel Crawford, by the guerilla, fully corroborates the character you gave me at Portalegre of that young fellow—what is his name?'

"'Kennedy.'

"'Ah, yes; you remember?'

"'Yes, Sir John,' replied the colonel, turning rather pale, I thought, as he glanced towards me.

"'But I have spoken with Major Middleton of yours, and unlike you, he gives him the very highest character. How am I to reconcile these discrepancies?'

"Crawford then mumbled I know not what; but it was something about a previous knowledge of you—of old contumacy and insolence unknown to others; then I turned away, as it was alike impossible and improper to listen."

These tidings filled Quentin's breast with rage, alarm, and intense mortification. Here was a secret enmity against which there was no contending, bringing with it accusations of which

he knew neither the nature nor the name. One moment he felt inclined to rush into the presence of the general, and boldly demand to know of what his hostile colonel had accused him; and then there was De Saldos too! But in approaching Sir John Hope, he remembered that the proper mode could only be in writing, the letter being transmitted by the captain of the company to which he was attached, under cover to Cosmo, his particular enemy (who might then forward it with such comments as he chose), for such is the rule and etiquette of the service.

Before he could resolve on what was to be done, while fretting and chafing in his billet, and just as the bugles were sounding the warning for the march, the old sergeant-major, Norman Calder, entered, accompanied by two soldiers of the light company, with their bayonets fixed. The faces of his three visitors expressed considerable compunction, for our young volunteer was a favourite with the whole corps.

"Mr. Kennedy," said Calder, "I have come on a sorrowful errand to you; but I only obey the orders given to me by my superior officers."

"And these orders are, sir?" demanded Quentin, furiously.

"To disarm you and march you a close prisoner with the quarter-guard."

"For what reason?" asked Quentin, in a faint voice.

"I dinna ken, sir—I have only Colonel Crawford's orders."

"Of what am I accused?"

"That is more than I say, sir; but if you are innocent you have nothing to fear. Take courage and set a stout heart to a steep brae, as we say at home, and you may turn the flanks of fortune yet," added the worthy old non-commissioned officer, patting Quentin on the shoulder, for he saw that this open and public, and most unmerited humiliation before the entire division, cut him to the soul, and crushed all his spirit for the time.

* * * * * *

The division marched about sunrise, and Quentin, instead of being as usual with the grenadiers of the gallant Borderers, found himself trudging with the quarter-guard, a special prisoner, and kept apart from all others under a small escort, that marched on each side of him with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed; for not being a commissioned officer, there could be no other arrest for him than a close one. And thus, with a heavy heart, full almost to bursting with mortification and grief, ignorant of the accusations against him and of what was to be his fate, he marched with the division towards the ancient city of Alva on the Tormes, which they entered on the evening of the 4th of

December, and there, as they were to halt for seven days, Quentin was informed by Lieutenant Buckle that he was to be tried by a general court-martial. He felt that all, indeed, was over with him now!

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE PRISONER.

"I would my weary course were o'er,
Yet scarce can look for end save this,
To dash to pieces on the shore,
Or founder in the dark abyss.
Fond thoughts, sweet hopes! oh, far more blest
My bosom had it never known
Your presence, since in vain possest,
To lose you while you seemed my own."

RODRIGUEZ LOBO.

HE rapidly learned that the court-martial was in the garrison orders to assemble on the 5th instant, and that charges of the most serious nature, involving, perhaps, the terrible penalty of —death, were to be brought against him! What sudden mystery—what inexplicable horror was this?

On the night he entered Alva he was relieved from the humiliation of an armed escort or guard by the influence of Askerne and Warriston, who both bound themselves by their parole of honour for his appearance whenever required. He was thus at liberty to go about the town, but he cared not to avail himself of it, and remained in his quarters.

The evening of the 4th of December was dull and gloomy. Setting amid saffron haze and shorn of all his beams, the lurid sun looming large and crimson like a wondrous globe, shed a steady light along the waters of the Tormes, a deep stream, which there rolls under a high and ancient bridge, that was afterwards blown up when the British retreated from Burgos. An old Moorish wall surrounds Alva, which stands on the slope of a hill, and there above its flat-terraced mansions, rises the great palace of the powerful Dukes of Alva and Berwick, where Ferdinand Alvarez of Toledo, the terror of the Low Countries and the institutor of "the Court of Blood," first saw the light. In an angle of the Moorish rampart, then crumbling in ruins, stands a high round tower of considerable strength and antiquity. Herein was posted the quarter-guard of the 1st Brigade, and in an upper chamber Quentin had his billet, and there he sat alone, after the day's march, left to his own reflections, and these were mournful and gloomy enough. The aspect of this chamber was

little calculated to raise his drooping spirit. Almost destitute of furniture, it was built of massive stone, vaulted, and had three narrow windows, the sides of which were covered with elaborate zigzag Moorish ornaments, arabesques, and uncouth inscriptions, which, though he knew it not, were texts and quotations from the Koran in Arabic. One of these windows opened to the hill on the slope of which stands Alva, and afforded a view of its tiled and terraced roofs. Another faced the mountains of Leon, and the third showed the narrow gorge through which the red and swollen Tormes lay rolling under the bridge; beyond which, on an eminence, were posted a brigade of field guns and a cavalry picquet; the horses were linked together, and the troops cloaked. All looked wet and dreary, dull and mournful, and as the December sun went down beyond the dark and purple hills, the pipers of the 92nd played "Lochaber no more," their evening retreat, and this air, so slow and wailing, as they marched along the old Moorish wall, affected Quentin so deeply that he covered his face with his hands and wept.

What would that fine old soldier, courtier, and cavalier, the mirror of old-fashioned courage and honour, Lord Rohallion, say or think, when he heard of his disgrace? What would Lady Winifred—what the old quartermaster, John Girvan? and what would the emotions of Flora Warrender be? Whether the charges against him were false or true—proved or refuted—she at least would be lost to him for ever, for his career was closed ere it was well begun, and he felt that no other road in life lay open to him. He felt too, instinctively, that Baltasar de Saldos and his sister Donna Isidora were in some manner the secret source of the present evil turn in his fortune; but how or in what fashion he was yet to learn. The phrase, that the charges involved death or such *other* punishment as a court-martial might award, was ever before him. The vagueness of the latter recourse, rather than the terror of the first, cut him to the heart, as all the penalties inflicted by such a court are severe and disgraceful. Cosmo, he heard, had suggested that he should be handed over to the tender mercies of the Spanish civil authorities; but Sir John Hope insisted that the charges were such as only a military court could take cognizance of; so what on earth were they? Unconscious alike of a mistake or crime, oh, how he longed for the time of trial! As the darkness of the sombre eve crept on, its gloom was singularly in unison with his own sombre thoughts. Bright visions had faded away and airy bubbles burst. Chateaux en Espagne were no longer tenable now! How many gorgeous day-dreams of glory and honour, of rank and fame, of position in society attained by worth and merit,

against him; and the said Mr. Kennedy having represented that your testimony will be very material in the investigation of some of the articles of charge, and having requested that you may be officially summoned as a witness, I am to desire you, and you are hereby required, to give your attendance here to-morrow, at ten o'clock in the morning, at which time it is conceived your evidence will become necessary.

"I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

LLOYD CONYERS, Staff Captain,

"Deputy Judge Advocate.

"El Senor Padre Trevino."

"This is some trickery!" exclaimed Quentin; "Trevino is the ruffian of whom I have spoken more than once; the man's doubly my enemy. Well, well! save myself, it matters little to any one what becomes of me," he added bitterly. "I have no kindred—not a relation that I know of in the wide world, and save yourselves, no friends now to regret me or to remember me, save *one* of whom I cannot speak. It is thus better as it is."

"How?" asked Askerne, who grasped him firmly by the hand.

"For if this false accusation, whatever it is, be proved against me, then none shall blush for my dishonour or sorrow for my fall. Fools may laugh and the wicked may jeer, but the death volley will close up my ears for ever. It may do more," he added, in a broken voice; "it may be the means of revealing to me who was my mother, who my father, with the great secret of eternity after all; so, my dear Askerne, I am, you see, reckless of the future."

"Damme, Quentin, this will never do——" Monkton was beginning, when Askerne spoke.

"In this mingled mood of sullenless and resignation you will destroy all chance of defeating the machinations of your enemy, for such I—I—consider our colonel to be," said the captain of grenadiers, after a pause. "Buckle and I will prepare your declaration for to-morrow, and it shall be sent to you for revision and emendation soon after reveille; but you must take courage—I insist upon it, for your own sake!"

"I do not lack it," replied Quentin, firmly.

"By courage, I do not mean an indifference that is the result of misanthropy, or a boldness that is gathered from despair. At your years, Quentin, either were unnatural," said Askerne, kindly.

"My brave lad," said Monkton, putting an arm round him as an elder brother might have done, "have you really no fear of—of death?"

"To say that I have not," replied Quentin, with quivering lip,

"would be to state that which is false; but I know death to be an ordinance of God—the fate of all mankind. It is but the end of the course of time—welcome only to such as are weary of their lives. I am not weary of mine, therefore I would indeed find it hard to die. I have always known that I must die, but never considered where or how—how near or how distant the day of doom might be: but I do shrink with horror at the contemplation of dying with a disgrace upon me—a stigma which, though I am innocent, time may never remove."

"I fear that we are but poor comforters, and that you are taking the very blackest view of matters," said Askerne; "but be advised by me, and take courage—a resolute and modest bearing always wins respect. In the court to-morrow are friends who will not see you wronged, for every member there is alike a judge and a juryman. Put your trust in Heaven and in your own innocence; sleep well if you can——"

"And be sure to take something by way of breakfast—a broiled bone and a glass of Valdepenas—you have a long and anxious day before you."

"And so, till we meet again, good night—God bless you, my hearty."

They shook him warmly by the hand, and retired.

He heard their footsteps descending the stone steps of the old tower (erst trod by the feet of many a turbaned Moor and steel-clad Crusader), and then dying away in distance: but soothed and relieved in mind by a visit performed at such risk by his friends, and hoping much—he knew not what—from the notes made by Rowland Askerne, Quentin lay down on his pallet and strove to sleep, amid a silence broken only by the beating of his own heart, and the rush of the Tormes in its deep and rocky bed.

"*They* at least believe in me, and will not desert me!" he repeated to himself again and again.

But the brave boyish spirit and hope—the enthusiastic desire to achieve something great and good, no matter what, by land or sea, by flood or field—a glorious deed that present men should vaunt, and those of future times would speak of—where were that hope and spirit *now?*

CHAPTER LXV.

THE COURT-MARTIAL.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power, (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for,) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."—TENNYSON.

THE court-martial assembled in a large and magnificent apartment of the Alva palace or castle, which stands in the centre of the town. It is in a good state of preservation, and the chamber usually occupied by the terrible duke, with all its ancient furniture, still remains there in its original state. On the walls of the great apartment selected for the court hung the armour of the successive princes of the house of Toledo from a very remote period—indeed, from the mail shirts that had resisted the Moorish scimitars down to the steel caps and jacks of the war of the Spanish succession; and many of the breast-plates were emblazoned with the armorial bearings and trophies of those warlike dukes who boast of their descent from the Paleologi Emperors of the East, and who were first ennobled as peers of Leon by Alphonso VI., or the Brave, of Castile, in 1085.

As Quentin approached the great embattled door of this stately mansion, many soldiers of the regiment were crowding about it, and all these muttered their good wishes; many a honest hand was held out to him, and many a forage-cap waved in silence, evincing emotions of good-will that stirred his heart with gratitude, and gave him new courage as he entered the court, attended by the provost-marshal. He certainly looked wan and ill; traces yet remained of his recent illness at the Villa de Maciera; to these were added anxiety, lack of proper food and sleep, with the toil and exposure incident to the campaign, all of which served to give him interest in the eyes of many, for the court was crowded by officers of nearly every regiment in the division, and a few Spanish citizens and priests of Alva. His young face appeared sorrow-struck in feature, and many read there, in the thoughtful brow, the quivering lip, and the sad but restless eye, indications of a proud but suffering spirit. Save these, and an occasional unconscious twitching of the hands, Quentin, though awed by the presence, and the hapless and novel predicament in which he found himself, was calm and collected in appearance.

He was simply clad in his unlaced and plain red coat, without belt or accoutrement of any kind, to indicate that he was a prisoner; and he was accommodated with a chair and separate table, on which lay writing materials, but these he had not the slightest intention of using.

At the head of a long table of formidable aspect, whereon lay a Bible and the "Articles of War," and which was littered with pens, paper, letters, &c., sat the president of the court, Colonel Colquhoun Grant, in the gorgeous uniform of the 15th Hussars, blue faced with red, and the breast a mass of silver embroidery that might have turned a sword-cut. He wore the Order of Merit, given to every officer of his regiment by the Emperor of Germany fourteen years before, for their unexampled bravery in the affair of Villiers en Couche, a name still borne on the standard of the Hussars. The other members, fourteen in number, belonged to different regiments; but Quentin was truly glad to see among them the familiar faces of Askerne and two other captains of the Borderers. All were in full uniform, and were seated on the right and left of the president, according to their seniority in the army; Captain Conyers, acting as judge-advocate, being placed at the foot of the court, which, by the showy uniform, large epaulettes of silver or gold, the crimson sashes, and, in four instances, tartan plaids, of the members, had a very rich and striking appearance as the morning sunshine streamed along the stately room through six lofty and latticed windows. A considerable oustle and treading of feet announced the entrance of the various witnesses, among whom Quentin recognised the tall figure of the Master of Rohallion, the sturdy paunch of worthy Major Middleton, the sun-burned faces of Buckle and others of the Borderers-together with a Dominican monk, in whom, notwithstanding his freshly-shaven chin, long robe, and knotted girdle, he recognised with astonishment, Trevino! Other guerillas were present, but the most prominent was Don Baltasar. The handsome but sallow visage of the latter was pale nearly as that of a corpse; his bloodless lips and white glistening teeth appeared ghastly beneath the enormous moustaches that were twisted savagely up to each ear. His nostrils were contracting and dilating with wild, mad passion, and it was evident that nothing but the presence he stood in prevented him from rushing, sword in hand, on Quentin, and ending, there and then, the proceedings of the court and our story by immolating him on the spot.

Quite undeterred by his formidable aspect or excitement, some of the younger officers were seen to quiz Baltasar, whose costume, an embroidered black velvet jacket, with a pair of British flank-

company wings, and other accessories, was sufficiently mock-heroic, fanciful, and absurd.

"Who acts as the prisoner's counsel or friend?" asked Colonel Grant, the president.

"I—Captain Warriston, 94th—Scots Brigade," said the full mellow voice of that officer, as he entered, fully accoutred with sword, sash, and gorget, and took his seat at the little table beside Quentin Kennedy, who, at the moment, felt his heart very full indeed.

Captain Conyers now read the order for assembling the court, and then the members, each with his ungloved right hand placed upon the open Bible, were sworn the usual oath, "to administer justice according to the rules and articles for the better government of his Majesty's forces, &c., without partiality, favour, or affection, &c.; and further, not to divulge the sentence of the court until approved of, or the vote or opinion of any member thereof, unless required to do so by a court of law."

This formula over, the judge advocate desired Quentin to stand while the charges against him were read; and to his utter bewilderment they ran thus, briefly, as we omit many dates and repetitions:—

"Mr. Quentin Kennedy, volunteer, serving with his Majesty's 25th Foot, accused in the following instances of conduct unbecoming a gentleman and soldier:

"*First;* of rescuing by the strong hand a French officer and lawful prisoner of war from Don Baltasar de Saldos, in direct violation of the 51st clause of the 2nd section of the 'Articles of War.'

Second; of giving the rescued prisoner such intelligence as enabled the enemy, then cantoned in Valencia de Alcantara, to anticipate, by a combined attack, the junction about to be formed by the guerilla force of Don Baltasar with the division of the allied army under Lieutenant-General Sir John Hope, and thus causing the loss of five field-guns and many Spanish subjects.

"*Third;* of snaring away from the cantonment at Herreruela the sister of Don Baltasar de Saldos, who has not since been heard of, her fate being thus involved in mystery, or worse, and thereby the prisoner contravened the order issued by Sir John Moore, urging the conciliation of the Spanish people on the army entering Castile.

"*Fourth;* of assaulting in the town of Merida, to the effusion of blood, the Reverend Padre Trevino, lately a Dominican monk of Salamanca, and now chaplain to Don Baltasar de Saldos, in direct contravention of the 37th clause of the 2nd section of the 'Articles of War,' concerning any officer or soldier 'who shall

offer violence to a chaplain of the army or to *any other minister of God's word.*'

"*Fifth;* of plundering an inhabitant to the extent of at least eighty gold moidores, part of which were found in his baggage, and part given to the paymaster of his Majesty's 25th Foot for transmission home.

"*Sixth;* for refusing or declining to take another despatch to Don Baltasar, from Montijo, and thereby showing a complicity with the enemy and dread of detection by the loyal party in Spain."

So ended this farrago of words.

Aware that sooner or later the proceedings of the court-martial (which we can assure the reader made some noise at the time) would be read at Rohallion, Colonel Crawford had all the charges framed in the name of the general of division.

"Oh, Cosmo!" thought Quentin, "you aim not only at my life, but at my honour!"

"Well, 'pon my soul," thought the Master, after he heard the list of charges read, "if the fellow gets over *all* these, I'll say that, with a fair match, and equally weighted, he might run a race with the devil himself!"

Quentin pleaded *not guilty*.

The court was then cleared of the witnesses and the proceedings commenced.

With the regular detail of these we have no intention of afflicting the reader; suffice it, that the solemn and dreary writing down of every question and answer so lengthened them out that they became a source of irritation and agony to one whose temperament was so sharp and impetuous as that of Quentin Kennedy, burning as he was with indignation at accusations so false and so unmerited, and some of which he had a difficulty in refuting; and, we regret to add, that the form of procedure was then, as it is still, old-fashioned, cumbrous, loose, and tedious.

There was no regular legal counsel for the prisoner or for the prosecution either; no cross-examination, save such as might emanate from some unusually sharp fellow, who kept himself awake, and affected to take notes, when in reality he was caricaturing Middleton's pigtail, Smith's paunch, and Brown's nose.

The witnesses were sometimes examined pell-mell, just as their names stood on the list; their evidence, however, being carefully written down, to the end that it might be read over to them for after-thought or revision before the opinions of the court, as to guilt and sentence, were asked; a formula that always begins with the *junior* member, the president having the casting vote.

Such was then, as it is now, the somewhat rambling, free and

easy tenor of a general court-martial; yet, with all its idiosyncrasies, it is ever a just and honourable tribunal, and such as no true soldier would ever wish to change for a civil one. Every member sworn is bound to give an opinion. In the French service a military offence can be tried after the lapse of ten years; with us, the period is three.

Warriston objected to the competency of the court; but the president over-ruled his objection by stating that a Volunteer of the Line, like every other camp-follower, was amenable to the "Articles of War."

The transmission of the despatch to Don Baltasar was easily proved by Cosmo and others, and by the reply, which lay on the table.

Though handsome and soldierly in aspect and bearing, the Master of Rohallion could scarcely conceal a very decided *animus* in delivering his evidence. Brave and proud, he was yet weak enough and small enough in mind to *hate* Quentin Kennedy with that species of animosity which is always the most bitter, because it arises from a *sense* of unmerited wrong done to the weaker victim.

In answer to a question by the president:

"Of the prisoner's antecedents," said he, "I know very little—little at least that is good or honourable."

"Colonel Crawford, you will be so good as to explain."

"He was received as an orphan, an outcast, I believe, into the house of my father, General Lord Rohallion, when I was serving with the Brigade of Guards. That house he deserted ungratefully and disappeared for a time, no trace of him being discovered but a silver-mounted walking-stick, which I knew to be his, and which was found beside a murdered man, a vagrant or gipsy, in the vault of an old ruin called Kilhenzie. How it came there, I pretend not to say; but on searching the vault, whither my pointers led me, I picked up the stick, with marks of blood upon it, some days after the body had been taken away."

On hearing this cruel and artful speech, which contained so much of reality, Quentin almost started from his chair, his eyes flashing and his pale nether lip quivering with rage; but Warriston held him forcibly back.

"Prisoner," said the president, "do you know a place in Scotland called the castle of Kilhenzie?"

"I do not understand the meaning of this question," said Captain Warriston, rising impetuously, "and to it I object! It is not precise on the part of the prosecution, and discloses an intention of following up a line of examination of which neither

the prisoner nor his *amici curiæ* have received due notice, and which, moreover, is not stated in the six charges before the court."

After a consultation, Colonel Grant replied:

"The line of examination in this instance, Captain Warriston, is to prove previous character; thus we find it quite relevant to question the prisoner concerning the episode referred to. It may bear very materially on *other* matters before the court. Mr. Kennedy, do you know a place called Kilhenzie?"

"I do, sir," said Quentin, and for a moment there rushed upon his memory recollections of many a happy hour spent there with Flora Warrender.

"Are you aware of any remarkable circumstance occurring there in which you were an actor?"

Poor Quentin's pallor now gave way to a flush of shame and honest anger; but he replied—

"Driven into the ruin by a torrent of rain, I found a dead body lying there among the straw; it filled me with alarm and dismay, so I hastened from the place."

"Leaving behind you a walking-stick?"

"Yes, sir; it would appear so."

"Covered with blood."

"Most likely," said Quentin, remembering the wound he had received from Cosmo's hand.

"All this, Colonel Grant, has nothing to do with the case," urged Warriston, firmly.

"It seems to cast grave doubts on the previous character and antecedents of the prisoner."

"It seems also to show the peculiar vindictiveness of the prosecution."

"You are unwise, Captain Warriston," said the president, severely.

"I am here as the friend of the prisoner."

"For what reason did you leave the castle of Rohallion?" asked the court.

Quentin gazed full at the Master with his eyes flashing so dangerously that this personage, fearing he might be driven to say something which might bring ridicule on him—though Quentin would rather have died than uttered Flora's name there—begged that the first charge might be proceeded with.

Sworn across two drawn swords in the Spanish fashion, Baltasar, Trevino, and other guerillas, inspired by spite and hostility, related in succession how Quentin had rescued the French prisoner; how he had undertaken to conduct Donna Isidora in safety to Portalegre, a mere day's ride; but had made away

with her, on the road, in some manner unknown, as well as with a horse and mule, the property of her brother.

"A singular duenna to have charge of a young Spanish beauty—eh, Carysfort?" he heard a hussar say.

"By Jove, Villars, I wish it had been my luck—that's all," was the laughing reply.

Quentin wished the same with all his heart.

Then came details of the attack made on the guerillas by Ribeaupierre's cavalry brigade. The charge of giving intelligence to the enemy was based on bare assumption, and was unsupported by a tittle of evidence. Next followed the Padre Trevino, costumed for the occasion, a rare example of a wolf in sheep's clothing, who showed his wounded caput, and told the sorrowful story of his maltreatment at the aqueduct of Merida, whither he had gone to pray in solitude. The assault was proved beyond a doubt by the evidence of a certain Martin Sedillo, an ill-looking dog with one eye, formerly an alguazil of Salamanca and now a guerilla, who swore distinctly that he saw Quentin beat the padre down with the butt-end of his musket.

"You distinctly saw him strike the padre down?" repeated Colonel Grant.

"Si, senor presidente y senores officiales," said the guerilla, bowing low.

"Wantonly?"

"Most wantonly, senores."

"Retire. Call the next witness on the list—private Allan Grange, 25th Foot."

To the Borderer, on his entrance, the previous questions were repeated by the court.

"Yes, sir—I saw Mr. Kennedy strike down the guerilla (who was not then habited like a friar) with his clubbed musket, but only in time to save his life from *this dagger*, which I took from the hand of his reverence."

As he spoke, Allan Grange handed a knife of very ugly aspect to the president, who saw the name *Trevino* burned, by a hot iron, on the haft.

"Allan Grange, were you ever tried by a court-martial?" asked the judge advocate, looking among his memoranda for one furnished by Colonel Crawford.

"Yes, sir," faltered the soldier, growing red and pale by turns.

"And were reduced to the ranks, at Colchester?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, sadly.

"And you were sentenced to be flogged—three hundred lashes, I think, by the Defaulters' Book?"

"A sentence kindly remitted by Major Middleton," said Grange, proudly.

"There, this will do—you may go," said Colonel Grant and then some of the members smiled and looked at each other, as much as to say, "we see how much *your* evidence is worth."

Quentin knew that Donna Isidora was in the French camp; but when Warriston mentioned this to be the case, the only witness called to prove it, Lieutenant Monkton, was unable to repeat what Ribeaupierre said, as he had been beyond hearing at that particular moment.

On the fifth charge, concerning the gold moidores, Quentin thought himself bewitched when the one-eyed guerilla, Martin Sedillo, deliberately swore, with the drawn swords of two officers crossed under his bearded chin, "that he was plundered of them at Herreruela by the prisoner, whom he was ready to warrant as false as Galalon!"

"Who was he?" inquired Askerne, looking at his watch impatiently for the third time.

"Galalon betrayed the French army at Roncesvalles," said Colonel Grant; "as we say in Scotland, false as Menteith. It is a local phrase."

His refusal to bear another despatch to De Saldos was easily proved, and that circumstance seemed to corroborate much that had preceded it.

Matters were now looking gloomy indeed. Quentin became sick at heart; he drained his water-jug, yet his lips grew parched and dry; he felt the toils closing around him, and already, in fancy, he heard the president passing the terrible sentence of death!

The bitter conviction came home to his soul, that hate and wiles, against which it was in vain for innocence to contend, were triumphing over him; and that even if pardoned, the memory that he had been arraigned, and on *such* cruel charges, would live!

Shame for unmerited reproach and unavailing sorrow for a lost youth—a blighted, it might be, a long life taken away, and perhaps by a shameful death—were some of the deep, the bitter, and stinging emotions felt on this day by poor Quentin Kennedy.

While that court-martial lasted he lived a lifetime in every hour of it!

His declaration or defence, read by Warriston, was simply a recapitulation of some of the leading features of our narrative, which he had no means of substantiating; the mass of evidence against him was summed up, but was too strong in some points

to be easily disposed of. His youth and inexperience were dwelt upon, but it seemed without much avail. Neither did the warm manner in which Major Middleton, Buckle, Serjeant-major Calder and others, bore testimony to his spotless character, seem to find much weight. To satisfy the Spaniards, a victim was wanted, and here was one ready made to hand.

It was now nearly four o'clock, and the Court was about to be cleared for the consideration of the opinion and sentence, when the sharp and well-known twang of a French cavalry trumpet rang in the court before the palace, and the tramping of horses was heard.

"Thank God!" muttered Askerne, as he exchanged a rapid glance with Monkton; "that muleteer has served us well!"

At that moment of terrible expectation an officer of the 7th Hussars entered hastily, and presented a note to the judge advocate.

"What interruption is this, Captain Conyers?" asked Colonel Grant, sternly.

"An officer from the French lines, come in under a flag of truce, requests to be examined by the Court for the defence," replied Conyers.

Every face present expressed extreme astonishment.

"What is his name?" asked the president.

"Eugène de Ribeaupierre — sous-lieutenant of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval," said Conyers, consulting an embossed calling-card.

"Is it he whose name occurs so frequently in the declaration of the prisoner?"

"Most probably, sir."

"Admit him."

The clank of a sabre and the jingle of steel spurs were heard, and then Eugène de Ribeaupierre, looking handsome and gay, entered, helmet in hand, and bowed low to the Court, and all who were present.

"Ha, mon ami!" said he, shaking Quentin's hand with warmth, "I am come in time, I hope; the proceedings are not yet closed, monsieur?" he asked anxiously of the president.

"No—but how did *you* come to hear of them?" was the suspicious question.

"From Ramon Campillo, a muleteer of Miranda del Ebro; the same person who conveyed M. Kennedy from the Villa de Maciera to Portalegre, and who was passing through our camp this morning. He came expressly to my tent to tell me all about it, and that charges were to be made which I alone could refute. I reported the affair to my father, the General, who

generously gave me leave to come here, with an escort—so I have come, messieurs, to be sworn and examined."

"Askerne," whispered Monkton, "you are a rare fellow!"

"How, Willie?"

"Damme, by your foresight we shall yet baffle Crawford, De Saldos, Trevino and Co.!"

"Hush, hush! You are rash."

It is almost needless to describe how the young French officer, after being duly sworn by the judge advocate, corroborated in every particular the statement made in Quentin's declaration—statements of which he could have had no previous cognizance, save as an actor in the episodes referred to. He described how Quentin had saved his life from a deliberate attempt at assassination on the part of De Saldos, and became strongly excited on referring to the infamous massacre of the prisoners by Trevino. He asserted that the moidores were taken by himself from the holsters of Raoul, a dead corporal of his troop, who found them amid the plunder of Coimbra. He asserted, on his oath and honour as an officer and chevalier of the Legion of Honour, that the movement made by the troops of his father, collaterally with those of General Hope and the guerillas of Baltasar, was *not* consequent on any information given him by the prisoner, but had been resolved on long before, as a printed order of the emperor, which he had the honour to lay on the table, would amply testify!

As for Donna Isidora, he freely and laughingly acknowledged that he had carried her away from the villa, and that she was now Madame de Marbœuf, wife of his friend Jules de Marbœuf, colonel of the 24th, as the Padre Florez, who, ignorant of that auspicious event, had come to effect her release from the French camp, could now substantiate, as he was now without the court and ready to appear.

The long, thin figure of the padre, wearing his flowing soutan and shovel hat, next appeared to corroborate all this, and also to state the sickly condition in which he handed over Quentin to the muleteers at the Villo de Maciera.

"Every link is thus supplied beyond a doubt!" exclaimed Colonel Grant.

Quentin was acquitted amid a burst of applause that found an echo in the hearty hurrah given by the King's Own Borderers in the palace square *without*.

"And now, monsieur," said Ribeaupierre, presenting Quentin with a valuable diamond ring, "accept this as a present from madame my mother, who drew it from her finger as I left the camp, with the request that you will wear it for her sake, and in

memory of the day on which you saved my life from that barbarous Spaniard among the mountains of Herreruela."

Within an hour after rendering service so valuable, and indeed so priceless, the gallant and generous Ribeaupierre had mounted and ridden from Alva de Tormes, attended by a strong escort, in front of which rode a Polish lancer, with a white handkerchief in token of truce streaming from the head of his lance; and so ended—like a dream to Quentin—this episode, this chivalric intervention, which was dictated by a noble spirit worthy of the knightly days of the Chevalier Bayard, or of Bertrand du Guesclin.

CHAPTER LXVI.

LOVE ME.

"You do return me back on memory's path
To dear remembered scenes. Old Scotland's scenes!
It is a glorious land! I long to roam,
Doubly a lover, 'mong its wildest charms;
Its glens, its rocky coast, its towering cliffs
Come o'er me like a dream of infancy,
Startling the soul to momentary rapture;
It is the voice of home!"—DANIEL.

Two or three days passed before Quentin quite recovered his equanimity, or felt assured of his safety, and then as the whole affair of the court-martial seemed like a night-mare, he might have deemed it all a dream, but for the occasional comments and congratulations of his friends, and for the splendid gift of Madame de Ribeaupierre, which he prized greatly for its whole history, and which he longed greatly to place on one of Flora Warrender's tiny fingers.

Three days after the sitting of the court, tidings came to Alva that Baltasar de Saldos and his guerilla force had suffered a sharp repulse with great loss by the French, whose post at Fonteveras they had attacked with unexampled fury and blind rashness—both perhaps inspired by Donna Isidora's defection from her country's cause—and that in the confused retreat upon Hope's picquets, the luckless Baltasar had been shot dead by one of the Westphalian Light Horse.

We are not ashamed to say that Quentin on hearing this from Major Middleton, felt a species of relief, self-preservation being one of the first laws of nature, and he never could have felt himself perfectly safe in Spain while Baltasar de Saldos trod its soil.

Reflection on all the past served but to embitter the disgust and wrath with which he viewed the bearing of Cosmo Crawford at the recent trial, and the terrible and hopeless malevolence he exhibited in reference to the episode at Kilhenzie, an affair which there was some difficulty in explaining, without referring to other and irrelevant matters; so Quentin burned with impatient eagerness for a general engagement with the French, for anything that would serve to blot out the recollection of his late unmerited humiliation; but he never thought of the enemy now without the face, figure, and voice of his friend Ribeaupierre rising upbraidingly before him.

Cosmo could have dismissed Quentin from the regiment, with or without cause, a colonel being himself sole judge of the expediency of so getting rid of a volunteer; but he was ashamed that his own family should hear of an act so petty. The onus of the futile court-martial fell on the general of division, and there were many chances against Quentin ever relating its secret history at Rohallion, as ere long bullets would be flying thick as winter hail.

Amid that confidence which is inspired by a borrachio-skin of good Valdepenas, varied by stiff brandy-and-water, Quentin, so far as he deemed necessary or right, made "a clean breast of it" to his friends and comrades, and detailed anew his adventures on the road from Herreruela and at the Villa de Maciera. Though he was complimented by Warriston and Askerne, whose praise was of value, there were not a few, such as Monkton, Colville, Ensigns Colyear, Boyle and others, who laughed immoderately, and voted him "a downright spoon"—wishing "such jolly good-luck had been theirs as to have a dazzling Castilian chucking herself at their heads."

"Yes, damme," said Monkton, "I should have had another story to tell; though, certainly, Kennedy, your Dulcinea did not 'let concealment like a worm 'i the bud'—how does the quotation end? Now, Pimple, are you going to keep that blessed borrachio-skin all night? Why, man, you have squeezed it till it has become like a half-empty bagpipe."

Elsewhere we have mentioned that, after reading the famous newspaper paragraph which made such a commotion among the secluded household at Rohallion, the quartermaster offered to write to Quentin, and that Flora gave him a tiny note to enclose in his letter. So it was on this night, when returning from Monkton's billet to his own, with a head none of the clearest, after talking a vast deal, smoking cigars and drinking the country wine, that Quentin was startled—completely sobered, in fact—by his servant placing in his hand a letter, and saying

briefly that "the mail had come up that evening from the rear," which meant from Lisbon. This letter was covered by such a multitude of post-marks that some time elapsed before Quentin could bring himself to examine the contents; nor, in his mute astonishment, did he do so, until he had fully deciphered the address, which was in old John Girvan's hand, and the seal, an antiquated button of the 25th Foot, with the number, of course, reversed. Every word seemed like *a voice from home*, and all the past—faces, forms, scenes, and places, came like a living and moving panorama on his memory. Then, almost giddy with delight, a heart tremulous with anxiety, and eyes that grew moist—so moist, indeed, that for some seconds he could see no more than that the letter was dated more than a month back, Quentin was striving to read the square, old-fashioned writing of his early friend, when something dropped from between the pages—a tiny note, sealed by blue wax—the crest a hare *sejant*, the cognisance of the Warrenders. Excited anew, he opened this with extreme care but tremulous haste. It was a single sheet of note-paper, on which two words were written, in a hand he knew right well—*From Flora*—and in it was a valuable ring, studded with precious stones.

We are compelled to admit that Quentin kissed the words and the ring some dozen times or so before he put the paper containing the former next his heart, in the most approved manner of all lovers, and the circlet on his finger, where he continued to admire it from time to time, while deciphering the long and somewhat prosy, but kind letter of his worthy old friend, who evidently knew nothing about the unlucky court-martial being on the tapis when he wrote it, Lord Rohallion's startling reply from the Horse Guards not having then arrived.

"My dear Quentin,—And so by God's providence, through the humble medium of a stray newspaper, we have found you at last! Ye rash and ungrateful callant, to leave us all in such a fashion, and well-nigh unto demented lest you had come to skaith or evil. I'll never forget the night the news first came to Rohallion that you had been found. You mind o' my auld Flanders greybeard—the Roman amphora, as the dominie calls it—he and I, wi' Spillsby and auld Jack Andrews, emptied it to the last drop, drinking your health, pouring forth libations in your honour, as Symon Skail hath it, and singing 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot' as we have never sung it since Robbie Burns left Mossgiel.

"And so, Quentin, my lad, ye have gone forth even as I went, nigh half a century ago, and have joined the glorious old 25th too! The Lord's blessing be on the old number, wherever it be

—even on the head of a beer barrel! I joined the Borderers with little more than my father's benediction on my head, and, what served me better, one of my mother's pease-bannocks in my pouch. After Minden I came home a corporal, and proud I am to say, that I was the poor wayworn soldier-lad whom Burns saw passing the inn at Brownhill, and whom he invited to share his supper on the night he wrote his song—

'When wild war's deadly blast had blawn.'

But ere long, by putting my trust in Providence (and a gude deal in pipeclay), I became, as I am now, and hope you one day shall be, a commissioned officer!

"As for Cosmo the Master, I fear me you'll find him a harsh and severe colonel. He was aye a dour laddie, and a heartbreak to his mother.

"The Lord and the Lady Rohallion, and a' body here, down to the running footman, send you their best remembrances. Miss Flora, of Ardgour, writes for herself, and what her note contains is no business of *mine*. Yesterday I caught her looking at the map of Spain in the library, and then she turned to that of Europe.

"'Girvanmains, it seems only the length of a finger from here to Spain,' said she, placing a bonnie white hand on the map, 'and yet it is so far—so *very* far away!'

"She often comes into my snuggery and speaks of you, with her eyes and heart full. She has taken your terrier as her peculiar care, and sees that the gamekeeper has your guns always in order, for she looks forward, doubtless, to a time when you will need them again.

"She is as handsome and high-spirited as ever! Young Ferny of Fernwoodlee, dangles pretty closely about her now, and village gossips say they may make a good match, as his lands march with the haughs of Ardgour. If they do, I am sure *you* wont care much about it now, for active service rubs all soft nonsense out of a young fellow's head, just as his waistbelt rubs his coat bare. (How little the worthy quartermaster, as he blundered on, conceived that he was now sticking pins and needles into poor Quentin by this incidental communication about the young fox-hunting laird of Fernwoodlee!)

"A long war is before us, Quentin, lad, and you're certain to rise in the service and be spoken about in future times, as Wolfe and Abercrombie are now. Maybe I'll not live to see the day—but I know that it *will* happen for all that, when the grass is growing green above me in the auld kirkyard up the glen. The dominie—he is sitting opposite me brewing his toddy at this

moment—hopes that you have not fallen into the vile habit of uttering oaths—a habit peculiar to gentlemen of our army ever since it 'swore so terribly in Flanders.' He bids me say that 'from a common custom of swearing, according to Hierocles (some Roman loon, I warrant) men easily slide into falsity; therefore do not use to swear.' He also hopes that you are not becoming contaminated in those realms of the Pope, who, though he founded all the bishoprics and most of the universities of Christendom, enjoyeth the evil repute of being little better than a Pagan and idolater among us here in Carrick. Moreover, ye are in an especial manner to avoid the snares of the female sex, and remember the mischief that was wrought by a light limmer named Helen of Troy. From myself, dear Quentin, I say avoid all duellists, drunkards, gamblers, and fools; as a good old friend of mine saith in his book, 'Provide for your soul, and God will provide for your honour. If your name be forgot in the annals of time, it will make a noble figure in the muster-roll of eternity.' If you are short of the needful, I have still a few more shot in the locker, so fail not to draw on me through Greenwood and Cox, or your paymaster. I would give much, if I had it, to have one glimpse of the old corps again, though no one in it, I suppose, remembers old John Girvan now! Are the bringers-up still dressed from the right flank by a flam on the drum? Does the colonel still use a speaking-trumpet? Is the point of war beaten now in honour of every new commission? Are the sergeants' pikes still stretchers for the wounded? Are pigtails always dressed straight by the back seam of the coat, and—but Lord! Lord! what am I asking? I clean forget that the service is going to the devil, for the order that abolished the queues will be the ruin of it, from the Horse Guards to the Hottentot battalions! I can't fancy the 25th, like the Manx cats, with their tails cut off! In my time there would have been open mutiny if the atrocity had been attempted. Even the hair-powder is passing out of fashion now, unless a colonel happens to be powdered by time. Gentlemanly spirit will pass away too, and the cautious time will come when a man will think *twice* before accepting an invitation to *go out* with a brother officer and breathe the morning air, about reveillez, at ten paces, with a pair of saw-handled pops.

"In Rohallion's time, the 25th used to wear their hair and pigtails so floured and pomatumed that many a good meal the barrack rats have made off our caputs, when we lay asleep on the wood benches of the guard-house. And they (the Horse Guards, we presume) have substituted cloth pantaloons for the pipe-clayed breeches in which we fought at Minden and New York

This *may* be an improvement, for, in my time, our pipeclayed smalls were often a mass of mud on the march, and in wet weather one might as well have been in a bog of quick lime, for they regularly skinned us. And now, Quentin, my dear, dear laddie, to close an ower lang letter."

To Askerne, who came in at that moment, Quentin showed the letter of the worthy veteran, and it proved to the captain a source of some amusement, so quaint and old-fashioned were Girvan's ideas of the regiment and of the service.

"Well, Kennedy, what does Miss Flora's letter contain—eh?" asked Askerne, with a waggish smile.

"Don't jest, pray—I depend on your honour."

"You may, indeed, Quentin."

"It contained only this ring."

"Oho!" exclaimed Askerne, with a merry laugh, "these stones tell a story, my friend."

"A story!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Is it possible that you don't know? Read their names; collect the initial letters, and tell me what they make?"

"Lapis-lazuli, opal, verde-antique, emerald, malachite, emerald."

"Well—what are these?"

"LOVE ME!" said Quentin, colouring with pleasure and surprise.

"The language of the stones seems new to you, Kennedy; but you are in luck, my friend. Who is the donor."

"A dear, dear friend."

"Flora, you say—are you sure it is not Donna Isidora?"

"Impossible—thank Heaven!—a Miss Flora Warrinder."

"Warrender—Warrender—I know that name; is she of Ardgour?"

"The same."

"Her father fell at the head of the Corsican Rangers, in Egypt. I knew him well."

"You will not speak of this before our fellows?" urged Quentin, earnestly.

"Betray confidence! you have my word, Kennedy. And now let me to bed. I am for the baggage-guard; as we are falling back, its starts with the artillery, two hours before the division marches to-morrow."

The ring had now a new interest in Quentin's eyes, and he was never tired of reading the six mystical stones.

"Dearest Flora," he said to himself, "how happy I am now

that not even that lovely Spaniard could for a moment tempt me to forget you!"

For all that, the "lovely Spaniard" was very near doing a vast deal of mischief.

Finding that he was alone, and all was quiet in his billet, he sat far into the hours of the silent night, writing a long letter to his friend the quartermaster—the story of his past adventures; and to Flora he enclosed the only gift he possessed—the ring of Madame de Ribeaupierre—with its remarkable story, and he had barely sealed the envelope when he heard the warning bugle for the baggage-guard to turn out sounding in the dark and silent streets of Alva; and then, with a weary head, he sought his pallet, and without undressing, courted sleep for a couple of hours, before the drums of the division beat the générale.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE OLD BRIGADIER.

"I cannot deem why men so toil for fame,
A porter is a porter, though his load
Be the oceaned world, and although his road
Be down the ages. What is in a name?
Ah! 'tis our spirit's curse to strive and seek.
Although its heart is rich in pearls and ores,
The sea complains upon a thousand shores;
Sea-like we moan for ever."—ALEXANDER SMITH.

By this time the snows of a bleak and early winter lay deep in the grassy glens and on the heathery hills of Carrick; the mountain burns and rivulets that whilome flowed to the Doon and the Girvan were frozen hard and fast, and, suspended in mid-air, the cascade of the Lollards' Linn hung under its gothic arch like the beard of Father Christmas. Long icicles hung from the eaves of the houses and from the quaint stone gurgoyles of the old square keep. The sound of the woodman's axe echoed in the brown thickets of Ardgour, and everywhere the hedges and trees were being lopped and trimmed by the shears or bill-hook of the gardener and husbandman. In the clear frosty air, from many a mountain loch rang up the cheers of the jovial curlers, and many a hearty fellow anticipated the banquet of salt beef and greens, with steaming whisky toddy, that closed his day's sport, at the Rohallion Arms in Maybole.

The cattle were in their heather-roofed shielings on the sheltered sides of the hills, the dusky smoke of the ruddy winter fire, as-

cended into the clear blue air from many a happy hearth and thatched homestead; but, as the roads were buried deep in snow, news of the distant war in Spain come slowly and uncertainly to such remote dwellings as the castle of Rohallion—how much more uncertainly and slowly to those glens in Sutherland and Ross, where a few heaps of stones amid the desert waste *now* mark the birthplaces of those who manned the ranks of our noblest Scottish regiments in that old and glorious war.

As yet no further tidings had been heard either of Quentin Kennedy or of his court-martial. All that had been heard at home, through the columns of the London *Courier*, was that the slender army of Sir John Moore was falling back before the overwhelming masses of the enemy, and that ere long all might be confusion in its ranks—perhaps dismay!

After the receipt of the Adjutant-General Sir Harry Calvert's letter, the public papers were searched in vain for further tidings of Quentin Kennedy, but none were found. "Our own correspondent," with his camp-gossip, had no place in the newspaper columns of those days. The mails were then often late and always uncertain; many that came by sea were lost between storms and privateers, and the vague anxiety of Quentin's friends gradually became painful suspense, and amid it Lord Rohallion once more *wrote with energy* recommending his young protégé to the duke.

Dinner was over, and the wax-candles had been lighted in the antique yellow drawing-room; Lady Rohallion was engaged, according to her wont, upon some piece of knitting for the poor old folks on the estate; her grey hair, somewhat needlessly powdered, was dressed back as of old. Lord Rohallion had brought his decanter of claret with him into the drawing-room, and there he sat, in a cushioned easy-chair, gazing dreamily into the large fire that blazed in the old-fashioned brass-basket between the delf-lined jambs of the fireplace.

Flora was idling over the piano, practising the "Battle of Prague," the Duke of York's grand march, or some such piece of music then in vogue with young ladies, and near her hovered her present admirer, Jack Ferny of Fernwoodlee, a good-looking but brainless young fellow with sandy hair and a pea-green hunting-coat of the fast kind worn when the Pavilion was in its glory at Brighton. Ferny's estate was a small one, and he was evidently, as gossips said, "doing his best to make ducks and drakes of it." He was strongly addicted to betting, and was a keen fox-hunter and sportsman. Beyond the kennel or the stable he had very few ideas; and so little capability had he of adapting his conversation to time, place, or person, that he was now prosing away to the preoccupied Flora about sporting matters. First

it was of a famous match against time by the noted pedestrian, Captain Barclay of Urie; and next, how, when coursing among the Carrick hills, his two favourite stag-hounds so pressed a hare they had put up yesterday, that she leaped down a precipice more than fifty feet in height, and then the hounds followed without the slightest hesitation.

"Good heavens! they were killed, of course!" said Flora, looking up with wonder.

"Killed, Miss Warrender?—egad, no! To the astonishment of us all, we saw puss and the hounds scouring along the road towards Maybole; but the Ayr stage, coming up with four spanking greys, caused her to make for a field of grass, and though turned five several times by the hounds, she made her escape down a burn at last, for of course they lost the scent."

Finding that Flora had relapsed into listlessness, and that he failed to interest her by his scraps of information on the Newmarket Craven meeting, such as his horse Rolla, eight stone, running against Lord Sackville's Tag, also eight stone, across the flat for a thousand guineas, and that three to one was being taken on Rolla; that the betting was even at Epsom on the brown colt, by Eclipse, out of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and other gossip of similar character, he was compelled to resume his place near the old lord, who was just in the act of pressing him politely to join in another glass of claret, when Jack Andrews limped in with a letter, which the running-footman had at that moment brought from Maybole. The mail from Ayr had broken down near the bank of the Doon in the snow, and the guard had brought on the bags to Dalrymple, on one of the horses, at the risk of his life. Oblong and official, the cover of the letter showed that it was "On His Majesty's service."

"News of Quentin Kennedy, doubtless," said Lord Rohallion, peering about for his eye-glass.

"I pray God it be not unfortunate news about Cosmo!" thought Lady Winifred, for the tidings that came to many a poor mother in those days of war were sad enough sometimes.

Fernwoodlee, who had seen Quentin Kennedy, and knew the rumours concerning him and Flora, observed with annoyance that she was pale and colourless with ill-concealed interest, as she drew near Lord Rohallion, who on opening the missive found that it referred neither to Quentin nor Cosmo, but to *himself*, and was from Sir Harry Calvert, who wrote, that "by the direction of his Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, he had the pleasure to acquaint him that his lordship's repeated applications and wishes for command of a brigade could now be gratified, and that his name would appear in the next *Gazette*; and that as

troops were being assembled in great force at Shorncliffe camp, his Royal Highness hoped that his lordship would, within a week, be ready to set out for that place, where his services were greatly required, and where his proper staff would be selected."

This announcement fell with a startling effect upon Lord and Lady Rohallion.

"Appointed to a brigade—a brigade for foreign service! My dear Reynold, you cannot for a moment think of accepting this command?" said Lady Winifred, anxiously taking his right hand between her own.

"I applied for it, as you are aware, dearest, repeatedly."

"About the time of the first unhappy expedition to Egypt; but you have long since relinquished all idea of serving again, and now—now, Reynold——"

"I am bound to accept it, Winny," said he. "I am well up the list of major-generals," he added, with a faint smile, "and must do something for promotion. I may be a field-marshal yet, Winny, and a K.G. to boot."

Perhaps in his secret heart he would rather have wished that this command had *not* been offered him; he felt that he was rather old now, and that he had too long settled down into the easy tenor of a quiet country life to care for the hurly-burly and anxiety of leading a brigade—it might ultimately be a division—in the field; but he knew that honour and duty compelled him to accept it. Thus he wrote to the adjutant-general that very night accepting the command, and again urging that something should be done for his young protégé, Quentin Kennedy.

The letter left by the mail next morning, and Lord Rohallion prepared to bid farewell once more to the old mansion of his forefathers, and to buckle on the same sword that he had drawn on the plains of Minden, when a stripling ensign, forty-nine years before.

It was with sad forebodings that Lady Rohallion prepared to break up her quiet and happy household, and bid farewell to friends and neighbours, for she proposed, in the first instance, to accompany her dear old husband to Shorncliffe, and Flora, their ward, who could not be left behind, to the unmistakable dismay of young Fernwoodlee, was to go with them.

She was the only one who felt any pleasure in the anticipated change and long journey by post-horses, as it promised at least all that novelty so charming to a young girl.

Poor Lady Rohallion! She knew that by her husband's frequently expressed desire for military employment he was bound in honour to accept the first command offered him by the Duke of York, his old friend and comrade. She had long feared the

crisis, but, as time passed on and no appointment came, she ceased to think of it; but now it had come at last, and when least expected, and she was about to be subjected to a double separation, from her husband and her son.

Cut off as Britain was then from the continent, the majority of its people had few views or sympathies beyond their own fireside or immediate circle. The scene of the probable campaign in which Rohallion would serve, was wild and remote, the people desperate and lawless; our force in the field small, when compared with the masses of the dreaded and then abhorred French. She could perceive that her courtly old lord vacillated between sincere sorrow for leaving her and a love for his profession, with a hope of distinguishing himself and trying his strength and skill against some of the famous marshals of the new empire—the heroes of the Italian, German, and Egyptian campaigns—those corporals of *le petit caporal*, who had picked up their epaulettes on the barricades of Paris, or at the foot of the guillotine on which King Louis and the noblest in France died; for thus were the marshal dukes of the great emperor viewed by the high-flying aristocracy of the Pitt administration, in the old fighting days "when George the Third was king."

Lord Cockburn, in his "Memorials," describes, with happy fidelity, "a singular race of old Scottish ladies," that have completely passed away. "They were," says he, a "delightful set; strong-headed, warm-hearted, and high-spirited; the fire of their tempers not always latent; merry even in solitude; indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world, and adhering to their own ways, so as to stand out like primitive rocks above ordinary society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit, were embodied in curious outsides, for all dressed, and spoke, and did exactly as they chose; their language, like their habits, entirely Scottish, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes taken for."

One of that genuine race was the handsome and stately old Lady Winifred of Rohallion.

A Scottish lady of the kindly old school, one who in infancy had been nursed and fondled by warm-hearted and periwigged old gentlemen and hoopskirted gentlewomen, who boasted that they were the last of the true old Scots, born when a Stuart was on the throne, and before their country was sold by the Whigs; she who in girlhood had seen and known many of the gallant and loyal who had dined and drunk with Kilmarnock and Balmerino, and who had drawn their swords for James VIII. at Falkirk and Culloden; who treasured in secret the white rose, and yearly drank to "the king ower the water"—she felt now that she

would be sadly at a loss and strange among English modern society. Her local ideas and usefulness, her strong Jacobite sympathies and loyalty to a dead race of kings, her nervous terror of democracy and foreigners, might pass for eccentricity: but how could those among whom she would now be thrown know or understand her little weakness for the genealogy, connexions, and past glories of the Maxwells of Nithsdale and the Crawfords of Rohallion? for she knew them to be people who spoke of the late cardinal-duke as "the dead Pretender;" who voted all that was not English absurd or vulgar, and who basked in the rays of the star of Brunswick as it beamed on the breast of "the first gentleman in Europe," the future George IV.; with her powder and patches, her broad Scottish accent, and her high-heeled shoes, she felt that she would be, in such an atmosphere, an anachronism—a fish out of water! These minor considerations of self, however, were completely merged or lost eventually in distress at the prospect of being separated from her husband, and in dread of the perils and hardships he might have to encounter at the seat of war—at his advanced years, too!

To add to her anxiety, the death-watch had ticked for several nights in the four-poster of the great old state bedroom, and this devilish little *pediculus* wrought the good lady as much alarm as Sir Harry Calvert's missive from the Horse Guards had done.

Amid all this, Flora's chief thought was, that at Shorncliffe she would be nearer Quentin Kennedy, by the entire length nearly of Britain, and as Lord Rohallion was to pass through London, he would see the Duke of York personally about him and his prospects.

The last night they were to spend in the old castle was a wild cold, and bitter one. The waves of the Firth of Clyde boiled in mountains of white foam over the Partan Craig, and as Elsie Irvine said, "the yowls of the scalghs were heard on the wind, just as they were on the nicht that Quentin was shipwrecked, and a' body kent they were never heard for nocht." The tempest roared round the snow-clad promontory on which the old castle stood, and on this night one of the oldest sycamores in the avenue was uprooted with a mighty crash by the wind, an omen decidedly of coming woe. On that night, the *last* they were to spend in their old home, sleep scarcely visited the eyes of either Lady Rohallion or her husband. She was full of melancholy forebodings, tears, and prayers, the result of her education and temperament, and she was thinking of Flora's parents, of John Warrender of Ardgour, who fell in Egypt, and of his widow's broken heart; while in Lord Rohallion's mind, real regret for the coming separation was mingling with anxieties and little

vanities about how he would handle his brigade in the field, as he had so long grown "rusty."

As the morning dawned—the morning of a clear and bright December day, Lady Winifred's spirits rose a little, especially after the sun burst forth auspiciously from the parting clouds. The poor quartermaster was heart-broken with the idea of being left behind; but he had the household to look after, and all the live stock, including Quentin's terrier and Flora's birds, all of which she solemnly committed to his care. On this morning, when they were to set out, trunks, mails, imperials, and all the usual incumbrances of a long journey were borne forth to the haunted gate where the carriage stood, with its four horses pawing the hard frosty ground, and their breath ascending like steam in the clear cold air. Old Jack Andrews limped about, whistling the point of war, with uncommon vigour, and with a new lightness in his eye and step, at the prospect of seeing military life again. All the tenantry of the estate mustered at the old castle-gate, and the Rohallion volunteers, all in full uniform, with cocked-hats and pigtails, were there in honour of the brave old Brigadier and his gentle lady; and there, too, were all the household, from bluff Mr. Spillsby the butler, to John Legate, the long, lean running-footman, and all looked sad and downhearted. The dominie had overnight prepared a long Latin address to read on the occasion, but happily for all concerned, he had left it behind him; and now his great horn barnacles were obscured and dim, as he lifted his old three-cornered castor and kissed her ladyship's hand with profound reverence and affection, and then Miss Flora's, as they were assisted by Fernwoodlee and the quartermaster into the carriage.

"Farewell, dominie," said the old Lord, as he shook the good man's hand. "I'll expect you to write me sometimes, and tell us how all the folk here and the school bairns are coming on."

"Woe is me, Rohallion! and you are again going to follow the drum!" he replied, shaking his queue and queer old wig: "it was invented by Bacchus, who, as Polyænus declares, used it first in the Indian war, but from the sorrow created by its sound, I verily believe its inventor to be the devil—the great author of the bagpipe."

"Hush, dominie," said his lordship, laughing, "for here comes Pate of Maybole."

This was the piper of the barony town, in the burgh livery, who now appeared; and as the coachman whipped up his horses, the sobs of the servants were drowned in the *skirl* with which Pate blew out his bag to the air of the good Lord Moira's Farewell to Scotland:

"Loudon's bonnie woods and braes,
I maun leave them a', lassie,
For who can thole when Britain's faes,
Wad gie Britons law, lassie?"

And striding as only a Scottish piper strides and swaggers, he played before the carriage down the avenue and out upon the high road; while there was not an eye unmoistened at that time-worn castle gate, as its old lord and his lady went forth upon their way "to the wars in the far-awa land."

It was a silent house that night in Rohallion.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE RETREAT.

"Lords and dukes and noble princes,
On thy fatal banks were slain:
Fatal banks that gave to slaughter
All the pride and flower of Spain.

Furious press the hostile squadrons—
Furious he repels their rage;
Loss of blood at length enfeebles—
Who can war with thousands wage?"

Old Spanish Ballad.

On the 11th of December the division of Sir John Hope quitted Alva and marched towards Tordesillas. By this time Sir John Moore had discovered that Bonaparte, abandoning his project of entering the southern provinces, was on the march to intercept his retreat towards the sea-coast and Portugal, while another column was advancing against him from the direction of Burgos. To frustrate a design that might prove so fatal to his slender army, Moore was compelled to relinquish all hope of fighting the Duke of Dalmatia; so, countermanding the order for the advance of his various divisions, he requested Romana to defend the bridge of Mansilla-de-los-Mulos, and while he fell back towards the Douro, ordered all the heavy baggage to be conveyed to Astorga. On hearing of these movements, Bonaparte exclaimed energetically to Soult, who related it to Major Charles Napier of the 43rd—

"*Moore is the only general now fit to contend with me; I shall advance against him in person.*"

Marching to his left, Moore crossed the Douro at Toro, to form a junction with Sir David Baird on the 21st December at Valada. On the day before this, near the magnificent Abbey of Sahagun, nine hundred French cavalry pressing on, were met by

four hundred of ours under Lord Paget, who repulsed them by one brilliant charge, sabreing thirty, and taking two hundred and sixty prisoners. Bonaparte advanced with his main body, a hundred thousand strong, by four routes, towards Benevente, along roads buried deep in snow, through which, by force or bribery, he had thousands of Spanish labourers cutting pathways, for the winter had set in with unusual rigour; but the division of Sir John Hope, whose cavalry and artillery suffered much by the loss of their horses, which died fast of the glanders, entered the town before him on the 24th of the same month.

The sufferings of the army during this retreat towards the north-west angle of Spain were very great, and the regimental officers were compelled to carry their personal effects about with them in bags or knapsacks, for the baggage animals (carts there were none) died, or were lost by the way. All bandsmen, batsmen, servants, and grooms were very properly turned into the ranks, as Moore had resolved that there should be available *as many muskets as possible*. Seven officers had but one tent, and every mounted officer had to groom and rub down his own horse: arrangements whereat the grumbling, from the staff particularly, was deep if not loud. The rations were also diminished: but of all the corps none suffered *less* than the Highland regiments. After marching hundreds of miles through snow, rain, and storm, the 79th and 92nd particularly had never a man on the sick-list, a fact attributable either to their native hardihood or the serviceable nature of their *costume*. Snow was falling heavily as Hope's division entered the crumbling walls of the small and miserable town of Benevente in Leon, where the officers and men, irrespective of rank, crowded for shelter into the houses and the castle, while a line of cavalry picquets, with a few pieces of artillery, held the bridge of Orviegro.

Weary and footsore, Quentin, after cleaning his musket, flung himself on a heap of straw in one of the rooms of that wonderful old castle which is the residence of the Dukes of Ossuna, and which Southey describes as one of the finest monuments of the age of Spanish chivalry, adding, "we have nothing in England which approaches to its grandeur. Berkeley, Raby, even Warwick and Windsor, are poor fabrics in comparison."

Projecting from a wall, a gigantic arm and hand in armour sustain a magnificent lamp to light the grand staircase of the castle. Its open galleries and horse-shoe Saracenic arches, that spring from fluted and twisted columns of porphyry and granite; its long aerial-like cloisters, its recessed seats, deep niches, and canopied alcoves, covered with quaint arabesques in scarlet, blue, and gold, were now crowded by wet, weary, and almost shoeless

(certainly shirtless) infantry, who piled their muskets or heaped up their knapsacks and camp kettles, without heed, in those noble apartments, where they smoked and made fires of whatever they could lay hands on; many a gilded chair became fuel, and pictures by Velasquez, Murillo, and other eminent painters of the Spanish school, were torn from the walls, and, with a curse on the Spaniards, rolled up and thrust under a pot of rice soup. In fact, the troops were now fast becoming reckless, and everything that was combustible was destroyed on this occasion, the family archives of the Dukes of Ossuna alone escaping.

Maddened by cold and hunger, they cared not how they made themselves comfortable for the night; but with the first peep of dawn, the report of cannon was heard at the bridge, the bugles sounded the turn-out, and hundreds of hoarse voices were heard shouting,

"Stand to your arms! turn out! The enemy are coming on—the out-picquets are engaged!"

The division got under arms to continue its retreat, which the flank companies were ordered to cover by forming in front of the town; and so came in this dreary 25th of December.

"A merry Christmas and a happy new year!" cried Monkton to Quentin, as the grenadiers of Askerne left the battalion double-quick, and just in time to witness a very brilliant cavalry encounter.

It was about the hour of nine in the morning, and from the slope on which Benevente stands, they could see in a little plain below the bridge of the Orviegro, three squadrons of the Imperial Guard led by a dashing officer in a furred pelisse, skirmishing with the out-picquets of the light cavalry, and endeavouring to cross the river by a ford there. The red flashing of the carbines on both sides was incessant; in the clear frosty air the reports rang sharply, and the figures of the Imperial Light Cavalry were distinctly visible upon the spotless back-ground of snow. No one was hit on either side, however, as the dragoon is seldom much of a shot. But suddenly two squadrons of the splendid 10th Hussars, by order of Lord Paget, and led by Brigadier-General Stewart, defiled out of Benevente to support the picquets, their loose scarlet pelisses and plumes waving as they galloped along, and rapidly forming line, they advanced with a loud hurrah, and keeping their horses well in hand, lest they should be blown, against the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Guard, who drew up on the crest of an eminence to receive them. Many who looked on held their breath, and excitement repressed the rising cheer as the adverse lines of cavalry met! There was a mingled yell and hurrah; the long straight swords of the French on one side, and

the crooked sabres of the 10th on the other, all uplifted, flashed keenly in the morning sun; then there was a terrible shock; hussars and chasseurs were all mingled in a wild tumultuous mass, and on both sides horses and men went down among bloody and trodden snow; but the French fled at full speed, leaving the ground strewed with killed and wounded men, and encumbered by scared horses that rushed about with empty saddles. Eighty-five French Chasseurs and fifty of our smart Hussars were lying there dead or writhing in all the agony of sword wounds among the snow; but with loud cheers the survivors came trotting into Benevente, bringing with them seventy dismounted prisoners, among whom was the leader of the French, superbly dressed in a green uniform that had a profusion of gold and fur trimming upon it. He was led forward between two Hussars, who had each his carbine resting on his thigh.

"Paget," exclaimed Brigadier-General Sir Charles Stewart, hurrying up at a canter, "allow me to present you with a valuable prisoner. We have just had the honour to take Lieutenant-General Lefebre Desnouettes, commander of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard."

Lord Paget bowed very low to the captive.

Pale, exhausted, and covered with sword-cuts, he was the picture of a soldier; and his eyes had that keen, bright, almost wolfish expression, peculiar to those who have recently stared the grim King of Terrors face to face on the battle-field. He was led away, and was soon after presented to Sir John Moore, to whom he spoke with intense bitterness of his own defeat.

"Bonaparte," said he, "is the minion of fortune; he never forgives the unfortunate, but ever believes them culpable!"

Moore sought to console him, and presented him with a splendid oriental scimitar, which Lefebre ever after preserved with gratitude, and wore in England, whither he was despatched at once in charge of Captain Wyndham, one of the general's aides-de-camp.

The division continued its retreat by the ruined walls and mouldering citadel of Astorga, and Villa Franca del Bierzo, and, though many perished by the way, Quentin Kennedy, endowed by spirit and enthusiasm rather than bodily strength, bore up manfully amid the fatigue, the privations, and the horrors of that long and devious retreat of so many hundred miles, along roads covered with deep snow, over steep and rugged mountain sierras, through half-frozen rivers, and by narrow defiles, followed by an enthusiastic enemy, whose well-victualled force, outnumbering by three times that of Moore, came on fast and surely, with flying artillery, lightly-armed dragoons, and pestilent little Voltigeurs, skir-

mishing every foot of the way—the sharp ringing of carbines and the boom of field-pieces being the invariable close of each day's march, and the prelude to its resumption in the cold, dark early morning, when the cavalry rear-guard held the advance of the foe in check, till the jaded and half-slept infantry pushed on, and on—hopeless, heartless, and in rags, leaving, en route, in the form of dead and dying men, women, children, and horses, traces of the havoc that neglect and disaster were making in the ranks, for now the Spanish authorities omitted utterly to supply the troops with either billets or rations, or any necessary provisions.

A junction of Hope's division with the main body of the British army was effected, however; on the 31st of December, Moore quitted Astorga with his famine-stricken force, and so hot and fierce was the pursuit, that on the following day, the first of the new year, Napoleon entered the little town at the head of eighty thousand horse and foot, with two hundred pieces of cannon, while many thousand bayonets more were on the march to join him!

The Emperor, however, went no further than Astorga, for there he left to Soult—to use his own inflated words—"the glorious mission of destroying the British—of pursuing them to the point of embarkation, and driving them into the sea!"

And the state of matters we have described continued until the army reached Lugo, after a five days' march through a rugged and savage country.

CHAPTER LXIX.

FRESH DISASTERS.

"Oh, plenteous England! comfort's dwelling-place,
Blest be thy well-fed, glossy, John-Bull face!
Blest be the land of Aldermanic paunches,
Rich turtle-soup, and glorious ven'son haunches.
Inoculated by mad martial ardour,
Why did I ever quit thy well-stored larder?
Why, fired with scarlet-fever, in ill-time,
Come here to fight and starve in this accursed clime?"

On this march the army was in arrears of pay, so Quentin's remaining moidores soon melted away, as he shared them, to the last vintin, fraternally with his friends and comrades; but long ere the army reached Lugo, he saw many a strange and startling episode of horror and suffering.

Moore's troops continued to make forced marches to prevent the foe from closing on their flanks, and now every day provisions

grew scarcer. The skies were lowering, and heavy clouds rested on the tops of the gloomy mountains; the rough, narrow, and wretched roads were knee-deep in drifted snow; half-famished and half-frozen, the soldiers became desperate, and, in defiance of Moore's orders, plundered whatever they could get to satisfy the cravings of nature.

From Astorga to Villa Franca (in the mountain district called the Bierzo), is a route of fully sixty English miles, through wild and savage mountain tracts and passes, where the horses failed, as their shoes were worn away; but though there were plenty iron-works near Villa Franca, there was no time to re-shoe th so every hour saw whole sections of our noble English horses sh down, lest they should fall into the hands of the pursuing enemy; and then the dismounted troopers had to trudge on foot, laden with all their useless trappings. One of the 3rd Light Dragoons of the German Legion, whose horse had been sl ot according to the usage of war, was urged by Major Burgwesel to go on faster.

"Herr Mjaor," said he, "the game is pretty well played out with me, and if you expect me to march quicker with all this load, you may as well shoot me as you have done my poor horse."

"Himmel und Erde, get on, fellow!" shouted the major, with an angry malediction.

On this, the exasperated dragoon placed a pistol to his mouth and blew out his brains, to the horror of the stern major.

Now came rain in torrents, and even the baggage had to be dragged through the melting snow, as the mules and burros perished in scores by the way. Then the spare arms were abandoned and the extra ammunition destroyed; next, knapsacks were cast away occasionally, and everything that might serve to lighten the burden of the despairing soldiers, many of whom were found frozen and dead in the bodegas and cellars of Villa Franca by the French advanced guard. A mile beyond this place, poor Ensign Pimple (as Monkton used to call him) gave in, utterly incapable of proceeding further; weeping like a child, in utter prostration, he sank in exhaustion by the wayside, and no doubt perished during the night.

After passing Benvibre the French cavalry came up with the long line of stragglers in the rear, and slashed among them right and left, treading others under foot as they galloped through, and so stupefied were some by fatigue and others by intoxication, that they could neither resist nor seek safety in flight. Two thousand were taken prisoners between Astorga and Lugo; a thousand more fled away towards Portugal; many of these were concealed

by the Spaniards, and few were ever heard of again. So on and on the army toiled from Villa Franca to Castro up the Monte del Cebrero, a long and continued ascent, through one of the wildest districts in Spain, where, in summer, woods of umbrageous oak, alder, and hazel, with groves of wild pears, cherries, and mulberries, make the landscape lovely; but now it was wild and desolate; and there, to add to other misfortunes, the sick and wounded had to be abandoned among the melting snow.

On the sloping road towards Castro-Gonzalo, Askerne found a poor rifleman of the old 95th lying on his back, and blowing bells of blood from his mouth; he had been riddled by canister shot, and all his limbs were broken.

"Unfortunate fellow," said he, with commiseration; "what can I do for you?"

"Have me shot, sir—shot dead, for the mercy of God!" was the terrible reply.

"I looked round," says an officer in one of his letters, "when we had hardly gained the highest point of those slippery precipices, and saw the rear of the army winding along the narrow road—I saw the way marked by the wretched people, who lay on all sides expiring from fatigue and the severity of the cold; their bodies reddened in spots the white surface of the ground."

There a Portuguese bullock driver who had been with the British since the landing of the army, was seen dying amid the snow on his knees, with his hands clasped in an attitude of prayer before a little wooden crucifix, a consolation not left to the hundreds of our soldiers, who were flinging themselves down in utter despair to die, with curses and bitter imprecations on their lips—curses on the Spaniards, who, they fancied, had betrayed them.

And there, too, were women and little children!

About nightfall, just as the grenadiers of the Borderers struggled up the Monte del Cebrero through all the horrible débris that the columns in front had left behind, they passed several of the sick and artillery waggons, broken down or abandoned by the wayside. In these were many soldiers' wives and sick men dead and frozen! In one was a woman in labour dying, with her infant, amid the icy drift; in another a woman already dead, with a wailing infant tugging at her white cold breast. The little one was taken by good old Sergeant-major Calder, who wrapped it in his great-coat, but it died of cold ere the summit of the mountain was attained. From one of those covered sick-waggons that lay broken down and abandoned among the snow and sleet, there came the sound of a strange wailing song sung by a woman. This prompted Quentin to leave

the ranks, which were somewhat irregular now, and peep in There he found a soldier of the 25th lying dead, and his wife with their child, sitting by his side, in misery. They formed a touching group! She was evidently deranged by suffering terror, and sorrow. She heard not the wailing of the infant that nestled among the wet straw by her side, but sat with her husband's head in her lap, and her hollow eyes fixed on vacancy, as she toyed with his hair, and "crooned" a fragment of an old Scottish song to a plaintive air, somewhat like that of "My Love's in Germanie."

"They say my love is dead,
Gone to his gory bed,
They say my love is dead,
Ayont the sea.
In the stillness o' the night,
When the moon is shining bright,
My true-love's shroud sae white
Haunteth me,
Haunteth me!
My true love's shroud sae white
Haunteth me!"

"Good heavens, sir," said a soldier, "it is poor Allan Grange, the sergeant who was broken at Colchester, and his wife, too! She's clean demented, puir thing! Ailie, woman, come awa; the regiment is moving on."

Quentin, too, tried his powers of persuasion, but without avail, and the stern order of Cosmo, to "Close up—close up, and move on—no loitering!" together with the distant boom of a French field-piece, the flash of which came redly through the drift and darkness, compelled them to leave her. If she lived she must soon after have fallen into the hands of the enemy. At all events, Ailie Grange was heard of no more.

In one of the many skirmishes with the enemy's light dragoons, a singular instance of gross treachery occurred at the little village of Palacios de la Valduerna. There a sergeant of our 7th Hussars, belonging to Captain Duckinfield's detachment, vanquished, in single combat, a French dragoon, and took him prisoner. The Frenchman threw down his sword, drew off his leather gauntlet, and held out his hand in token of amity. Then the sergeant, with the characteristic generosity of a gallant Englishman, also put forth his right hand; but inserting his left into his holster, the Frenchman drew a pistol, blew his captor's wrist to pieces, and killed his horse under him. Before the poor hussar could rise from under his fallen charger, the would-be assassin was bayoneted by some of Romana's Spanish soldiers, who in their rage and hatred made up a fire and consumed his

body to ashes; after this, in blind vengeance, they somewhat needlessly slew his horse. At this part of the disastrous retreat nearly a hundred waggons that were coming on, laden with shoes and clothes for Romana's Spaniards, from England, but too late to be of any avail, fell into the hands of the enemy.

As the column defiled past them, Quentin saw the body of an officer lying dead under one of the wheels in a pool of blood, snow, and mire. A vague recollection, combined with a horrible anxiety, made him draw near to observe the corpse. It was that of Warriston! his kind and generous friend, Captain Richard Warriston, of the Scots Brigade; but "push on—push on," was the order, and there was no time given for thought, examination, or inquiry. . . . . .

On, and on yet! and at last it was found necessary, at Nogales, to abandon the military chest. Why its contents were not distributed among the troops it is difficult to say, unless that time would have been lost by the process of division. Two bullock-carts, laden with twenty-five thousand pounds in dollars, were backed over a lofty precipice, and fell crashing from the summit among the rocks and snow beneath; and then as the waggons broke and the casks burst, the broad silver dollars flew far and wide. It was hoped that this money would escape the observation of the French, and so fall into the hands of the Spaniards. Part was found by the former, part by the Gallician peasantry, and a Highland tradition tells us of a thrifty Scots paymaster who contrived to conceal a cask or two under a certain cork-tree, where he found the specie all safe when he went back to Spain for it, after Toulouse; and that he bought therewith a snug little estate on the shore of the Moray Firth.

At the very time that the bullock-carts with the treasure were cast over the precipice, by some absurd mistake, Quentin's battalion, with two pieces of cannon, were engaged with the enemy in order *to protect it!*

Evening was coming on, and shimmering through the slanting sleet, a cloud of French cavalry passed along the snowy and miry way, while the two field guns were ploughing lanes of death through their ranks; but still with brandished sabres and cries of "Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!" they came on thundering to the attack.

"Square against cavalry!" was now the cry; "square on the grenadiers!"

It was formed double-quick, and a smile of grim joy spread over every sallow and weather-beaten face as the toil-worn and tattered regiment made the movement, enclosing many of the wounded foes as well as friends. The light company formed the

rear face of the square. Cosmo was undoubtedly brave, for a lofty expression of pride and defiance spread over his features on beholding the rapidity with which the square was formed. Jolly old Middleton drew off his gloves and stuck them in his belt; he then flourished an enormous sabre, so rusty and notched in the edge that it was known as "Jock Middleton's hand-saw," saying, "I like to use my tools, lads, without mittens; the cat that wore gloves never caught mice."

The officers dressed the four faces as well as the shattered and unequal state of the companies could form them now. Sending a last discharge of grape plunging into the masses of the foe, the gunners rushed for shelter behind the wall of bayonets, and now through the gloom of evening, the wrack, mist, and smoke, on came the French dragoons like rolling thunder! As the ground was tolerably open the square was approached on three faces. Against one was a brigade of cuirassiers, their brass helmets with scarlet plumes and brass corslets with elaborate shoulder-belts all dimmed by rain; opposed to another was the Lancer Regiment of Napoleon-Louis, the hereditary Duc de Berg, with white plumes and kalpecks in their busbies; and on the third face came the Light Dragoons of Ribeaupierre, in pale green lapelled with white and laced with silver, their tricolors waving above a forest of flashing sabres.

Quentin felt his heart beating wildly as they came on. In the square, every eye lit up, every brow was knit, and every lip compressed; but not a shot was fired until the foe was within pistol-range, when, from the faces of the square, there opened a close and disastrous fire, first from the right to the left, and then it became a wild roar of musketry, the men loading and firing as fast as they could, while many a pistol and carbine-shot took effect in their ranks, and Quentin was covered by the blood of a man who was killed thus by his side.

Yells of death were mingled with shouts of rage and defiance, as horse and man went down on every hand, the front squadrons swerving or recoiling madly on the rear, thus making all advance impossible; steeds reared, plunged, and neighed, their riders groaned, shrieked, and swore; swords, helmets, shakos, and broken lances were seen flying into the air, while lancers and cuirassiers, wounded and dying, were crushed and trodden flat by hoofs and fallen horses. The whole cuirassier brigade became an undistinguishable mass of confusion and indiscriminate slaughter; but not a horseman came within sword's point of that steady and invincible square of infantry.

At that moment, when the firing slackened a little, the voice of the Master of Rohallion was heard.

"Well done, my brave Borderers! kneeling ranks, fire a volley—ready—present—*fire!*"

It rang like thunder in the winter air, and found a thousand echoes among the mountains, and ere these died away the ruin of the foe was complete. This was the first occasion on which Quentin had fired a shot in grim earnest, and a thrill passed through his heart as he pulled the trigger and sent a bullet on its errand, while ignorant of its effect amid the smoke in front.

Ere the butts were again on the earth in their original position, and the bristling bayonets were pointed upward, the cavalry were seen in full flight, leaving a terrible débris of death and bloodshed behind them on the snow-clad mountain slope.

"The battalion will form quarter-distance column," cried Cosmo, as coolly as if he was in Colchester again. Then he ordered the pouches of the dead and wounded to be emptied, as ammunition was running short. The field guns were then limbered up, and once more the weary retreat was resumed with all speed. Sergeant Ewen Donaldson, whose leg was shattered by a carbine-ball, was here left behind, after some of the soldiers had made an effort to drag him along with them.

"Push on, boys—push on, and never mind me," said the poor fellow; "before morning I shall be gone to where I'm fast wearin' awa'—the land o' the leal." And this, too probably, was the case.

The tender and compassionate heart of Sir John Moore bled at the misery he beheld hourly on this miserable retreat. He bitterly deplored the relaxation of discipline consequent on it, and he never ceased issuing orders, cheering addresses, and stirring appeals to honour and courage, to keep up the spirits of those under his command; but despair and sullen apathy reigned in many instances in officers and men alike, while the retreat lasted. But, with all this, grand and touching instances of humanity were not wanting to brighten the terrible picture.

An infantry officer, in despair of proceeding further, turned aside into a thicket of trees, to lie down and die unseen and uncared for; but there he found a soldier's wife stretched at the point of death, and, with the last effort of expiring nature, she implored him to receive and preserve her child. He did so, and endued with fresh strength and energy by the trust, he carried the infant on his back, and it never quitted his care till he reached one of the transports in the bay of Vigo, after the battle of Corunna.*

At a place where the green coats of the 95th dotted the snow,

* Edinburgh Annual Register.

showing where a skirmish had been, Quentin assisted a rifleman to place one of his comrades in a waggon that stood near.

"Tom—old fellow," said the sufferer, in a weak voice, for he was dying with a bullet in his chest, and rustled fatuously among the damp straw on which they placed him; "I say, Tom—we've long been comrades."

"Yes, Bill," said the other, in a husky voice, "ever since Copenhagen."

"Well, when I'm dead, I want you to do summut for me, and I'll give you all I have in the world. My kit's wore out, ever so long ago, but I've three biscuits in my havresack, and you're welcome to them; give one to poor Pat Riley's widow."

"But wot am I to do for you, Bill?"

"Close my right eye, Tom; dont'ee forget; the cursed French knocked t'other out at Vimiera."

"Yes, Bill—I was wounded that day, too."

Bill's eye was closed, and the snow and the sods were over him within an hour after this, and close by Tom sat, munching his legacy, for he was starving, with his fierce moist eyes fixed on the little mound where his old comrade lay.

CHAPTER LXX

A SMILE OF FORTUNE.

"But little; I am arm'd, and well prepared.—
Give me your hand, Bassanio; fare-you-well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom."—*The Merchant of Venice.*

No music was heard now on that dreary retreat. The bagpipes of the indomitable Highlanders sent up their bold, wild skirl at times upon the winter blast, showing where the Camerons, the Gordon Highlanders, or the Black Watch trod bare-knee'd through the snow; but no other quickstep met the ear; even Leslie's march cheered the Borderers no more; and many a man among them wished himself with the other battalions of the corps, broiling in India, or serving anywhere but in Spain.

To reach their transports and abandon the country by sea, without risking the slaughter of a useless battle with those whose numbers were so overwhelming, was, for a time, the sole object of the British generals.

Disorders usually prevail in a retreating army, and many circumstances served to augment them on this occasion. Our soldiers were enraged by the apparent apathy or treachery of the

Spanish officials, who withheld all supplies; these latter, at the same time, did not conceal that they believed themselves to be abandoned by the British to the enemy, in whose overwhelming numbers, with true Spanish obstinacy, they refused to believe. Perceiving, however, that unless by some vigorous resistance he crippled his pursuers, a flight by sea would be impossible, Sir John Moore recalled General Fraser's division from the Vigo road, and on the 6th of January, after a sharp cavalry encounter at Cacabelos, where Colbert, a distinguished French general, was killed, he took up a position near the city of Lugo, on the Minho, in Gallicia, a place situated on high ground. So pressed were the cavalry, and so dreadfully had the horses suffered during the retreat, that on entering Lugo many fell dead beneath their riders, and others were mercifully shot. Four hundred of their carcasses, with bridles, sadles, and holsters on, lay in the market-place and thoroughfares. There were none of our soldiers who had strength to dig trenches deep enough to bury them; the Spaniards were too lazy for the work, or cared not to attempt it while the enemy's voltigeurs or sharpshooters were within sight of their old ruined walls. Swelling in the rain, bursting, and putrefying, the bodies lay there, a prey to herds of devouring dogs and flocks of carrion birds.

At Lugo the army might have rested for some days, had the bridges of the now swollen rivers been blown up; but the mines had failed, and on the 5th of January the pursuing French came in sight in force, and at last a battle was looked for. The evening of the 5th proved a very eventful one for the humble fortunes of our hero, and the *last* of his service in the ranks of the King's Own Borderers.

About four in the afternoon, during a partial cessation of the sleet and rain which had been incessant for so many days, Quentin found himself posted as an advanced sentinel in front of the line of out-picquets, near the road leading from Lugo to Nogales. Dark clouds enveloped the mighty range of mountains in the distance, but from their summits it was known, by the intelligence of scouts, that the enemy was descending in force. A blue patch was visible here and there overhead, through the flying vapour, and there, already bright and twinkling, a few "sentinel stars set their watch in the sky."

After the slaughter of the worn or half-dead cavalry horses, all was still, and now not a sound stirred the air save the tolling of the cathedral bell in Lugo, or the roar of the Minho, swollen by a hundred tributaries, and rushing in wild career through an uncultivated waste of stunted laurel bushes to mingle with the Atlantic.

That day Quentin had tasted no food save a handful of *corn* which he received from Major Middleton, whom he had found fraternally sharing a feed of it with his now lean and gaunt Rosinante-looking charger, which he had stabled under a cork-tree and covered with his blanket, complimenting himself by the old adage that "a merciful man is merciful to his beast." Oppressed by the sombre scenery, the drenched and uncultivated waste, and the gloom of the December evening, Quentin leaned on his musket, a prey to a fit of intense despondency, and tears almost came to his eyes as he thought of all the horrors he had witnessed since the day on which he landed at the bay of Maciera, the campaign he had served so fruitlessly, and of *what* was before him on landing, friendlessly, in England. Better it was to die in Spain, like poor Warriston, whose dead face, as he lay with others, mangled and doubtless yet unburied, in that savage mountain waste, amid the melting snows, came keenly back to memory now!

From this unpleasant reverie he was suddenly roused by seeing a mounted officer, muffled in a blue coat, with a plain unplumed cocked-hat, riding along the chain of advanced sentinels, questioning or addressing a few words to each, as if to ascertain that all were on the alert. Gradually he came on, his horse, a lean but clean-limbed and active bay, picking its way among the rough stones and stunted laurel bushes. As he drew nearer, Quentin could perceive him to be a general officer, accompanied by an orderly sergeant in the blue, white-faced, and silver-braided uniform of the 18th Hussars. On his approaching, Quentin "presented arms."

"Walk about," said he, while touching his hat. This is the usual response of an officer when ceremony is to be waived; but, immediately after, perceiving by Quentin's uniform that he was *not* a private soldier, he came close up to him, and said, "You are, I presume, aware that the enemy is in front?"

"Yes, sir—and more immediately, Ribeaupierre's dragoon brigade and Lallemand's corps."

"Exactly," replied the other, with a pleasant smile; "I like to find a young soldier well-informed of the work in hand—that he knows what he is about, and takes an interest in his profession. Your regiment is——"

"The 25th Foot, sir—2nd battalion."

"You are, I see, a volunteer?"

"Yes, sir.

"How long have you served?"

"Nearly since the campaign opened."

"Without promotion, too!"

"And likely to be without it now, I fear."

"It is somewhat unusual for a volunteer to be posted as a sentinel," said the other, with a keen glance.

"I go where Colonel Crawford orders me," replied Quentin; "and if there was much risk, I spared him the trouble by volunteering readily."

"A young fellow of spirit! Are you born to a fortune?"

"Fortune!" repeated Quentin, with a start, and in a voice that was very touching; "alas, sir, I fear that I am born only to *failure*!"

"Failure?" said the other, as his colour deepened.

"Yes, sir—like our expedition to Spain."

The officer seemed much struck by a remark that appeared to coincide with certain ideas and fears of destiny that were peculiarly his own. He knitted his brows, and said—"Young man, you speak very confidently of the fate of 'this expedition to Spain.' Do you know what you are talking about?"

"I trust, sir, that I do," replied Quentin, modestly.

"Then, perhaps," said the other, with a smile as he propounded what he deemed a puzzling question, "you will be good enough to explain the *maxims* which guide an expedition by land or sea?"

"I shall try," said Quentin, colouring deeply and seeking to remember some of the old quartermaster's enthusiastic tutelage.

"Do so."

"There are, I think, four great maxims."

"Yes—at least, and I shall be glad to hear them."

"First, sir, in an armed expedition of any kind, there should always be secrecy of design, and also, of all preparation. Second: the force and the means employed should always be proportionate to the *end* to be achieved; (which is not *our* case here, else we had been in Madrid to-night and not fugitives in Lugo). Third: there is requisite a complete knowledge of the country for which the expedition is destined; in that at least our brave Sir John Moore is unequalled. Fourth: there is required a commander who, like him, has all the turn of mind which is most adapted for that particular branch of the war."

"Upon my honour you are a very singular young man," replied the other, with something between a smile and a frown, hovering on his fair and open countenance. "You might teach Cæsar himself a lesson; but before you go any further in your remarks, I think it right to inform you that *I* am Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore."

Quentin was silenced and petrified. He felt sinking with shame at his own confidence and sudden effrontery, both the offspring of gloomy disappointment; then he strove to remember all he had said, and continued to gaze almost stupidly at the

worthy general, who seemed to enjoy the situation and laughed heartily, and said, in a manner that was winning and reassuring —"I wish Davie Baird or Lord Paget had been with me to hear all this!"

Mild in face and disposition, though somewhat fierce in temper when a boy, Sir John Moore possessed a figure that was tall and graceful. His features were perfectly regular; his eyes were hazel, and his hair of a rich brown colour. There was a very perceptible scar on one of the cheeks, where his face had been traversed by a bullet when leading on the 92nd at Egmont-op-Zee. In his holsters he always carried the pistols given to him by the attainted Earl Marischal, when he was present, as a young subaltern of the 51st Foot, at the famous reviews of the Prussian army near Potsdam, together with a pocket edition of Horace bearing the Earl's autograph; and these he valued highly as relics of that sturdy old Jacobite, once Scotland's premier peer.

Moore was now in his forty-eighth year, having been born at Glasgow, in 1761, in a house long known as "Donald's Land," in the Trongate—an edifice demolished in 1854. But to resume:—

After enjoying Quentin's confusion for a moment, he asked—"Are there any other gentlemen volunteers serving with the Borderers?"

"No, sir, myself only."

"Indeed!—what—are you named Kennedy—Quentin Kennedy?"

"Yes, sir," replied Quentin, faintly, and his heart sunk. ("Oh," thought he, "he has heard of that accursed court-martial—who has not? It is all over with me now!")

"Have you not seen the last War Office Gazette, which came this morning from England?"

"No, sir, I am sorry to say that—that—" stammered Quentin, ignorant of what dereliction of duty might be here inferred; "I only—that is——"

"Then get a look of it, and there you will find yourself gazetted to a lieutenancy in the 7th, or Royal Fusiliers. I congratulate you, sir—your regiment is at present in England, where I wish we all were, with honour and safety."

Quentin was overwhelmed by this intimation.

"Oh, sir, are you sure of this?" exclaimed the poor lad, trembling with many mingled emotions.

"Sure as that I now address you; and if your name be Quentin Kennedy, serving with the King's Own Borderers—full lieutenant in the corps, which has *no other* subalterns. Now you cannot continue to serve thus—carrying a musket with the

25th; other work must be found for you. When will you be relieved from this post?"

"In a few minutes, sir—my hour is nearly up."

"Then you will take a note from me to Crawford, your colonel," said Moore; and drawing forth a note book, he rapidly pencilled a note, tore it out, folded it and addressed it.

"The bearer hereof," it ran, "Mr. Q. Kennedy, having been appointed by his Majesty to a lieutenancy in the 7th Fusiliers, will serve on my personal staff, as an extra aide-de-camp, until he can join his regiment, now in Britain.

"JOHN MOORE, Lieut.-Gen."

"You will show this to Colonel Crawford and to the adjutant-general, with my compliments. It will be in orders to-morrow. Wyndham has gone to London with poor General Lefebre and the despatches of our cavalry affairs at Sahagun and Benevente, so I must have your assistance in his place during this *expedition*," he added, smilingly, with an emphasis. "Captain Hardinge will lend you a horse—meet me at my quarters opposite the cathedral to-morrow morning early; till then good-bye, Lieutenant Kennedy, and I wish you success!"

Moore drew off his glove, shook Quentin's hand with friendly cordiality, and rode away at a canter, leaving our sentinel in a very bewildered state of mind indeed.

CHAPTER LXXI.

PIQUE.

"These hands are brown with toil; that brow is scarred;
Still must you sweat and swelter in the sun,
And trudge with feet benumbed the winter snow,
Nor intermission have until the end.
Thou canst not draw down fame upon thy head,
And yet wouldst cling to life!"—ALEXANDER SMITH.

"A LIEUTENANT in the 7th, or Royal Fusiliers!—am I actually so?" was the question Quentin asked of himself repeatedly. There could be no doubt about it; the general had said so, and the Gazette confirmed it, that he, Quentin Kennedy, volunteer with the 25th Foot, had been appointed to that regiment, one of the oldest corps of the line—a "crack one," too—commanded by General Sir Alured Clark, G.C.B. Long known as the *South British Fusiliers*, to distinguish them from the Scottish corps and the famous Welsh Fusiliers, armed with the same weapon, the 7th were without officers of the rank of ensign until a year or

two ago; thus, at the time we refer to, their two battalions had no less than sixty-four lieutenants. This sudden promotion, which put him so completely beyond the power of his rival and enemy, the Master of Rohallion, and which gave him indepen dence and a position in society too, puzzled Quentin for a time; but briefly so, as reflection showed him that he must owe it to the great interest possessed by Lord Rohallion, who, he was aware, had now traced him to the Borderers; and this, indeed, was the secret of the whole affair. And Flora Warrender—she must have seen his appointment in the Gazette long before it had thus casually met the sharp eye of Sir John Moore, and could he doubt that she rejoiced at the event? To be raised at once from a position so subordinate and anomalous, from the ranks as it were of that army whose dreadful sufferings he shared and whose many dangers he risked—to be raised to the rank of an officer in a regiment so distinguished as the Royal Fusiliers, and to be at once, temporarily though it were, placed on the general's staff, and beyond the reach of Cosmo's coldness, pique, and hauteur, was indeed to be independent, and to taste of happiness supreme! His heart was full of joy, of enthusiasm, and gratified ambition; but sincere gratitude and increased regard for the kind and fatherly old Lord to whom he owed it were not wanting now: and Quentin resolved to write a letter pouring out his thanks, and expressive of all he felt, on the first opportunity. He was right to make the last reserve mentally, for opportunities for committing one's lucubrations to paper were sadly wanting now when within musket shot of the French advanced guard. He was full of genuine regard for the good and great Sir John Moore, full of enthusiastic devotion, gratitude, and admiration, too! How was it possible that he could feel otherwise? Apart from the news of his promotion in life, which must soon have reached him, he blessed the chance which made his informant the resolute and gallant leader of the British army!

After obtaining the warm congratulations of those who were his friends, and who hailed him now as a brother officer, most grateful indeed to his heart were the humble but earnest felicitations of the soldiers, who crowded round him, poor fellows, all haggard, ragged, and starving though they were, begging leave to shake his hand, and to wish him all success and prosperity to the end of his days. And Quentin felt that such genuine and heartfelt wishes as theirs were well worth remembering as an incentive for the future. But little time was there for joy or loitering now, as the French were coming on and were again close at hand.

Relieved from the out-picquet on the Nogales road just as the winter dusk was deepening, he passed through the gloomy streets of Lugo, where ammunition waggons, unclaimed or abandoned baggage, and dead horses weltering in pools of dark blood, added greatly to the confusion of those crowded, and decidedly dirty thoroughfares; which were destitute alike of lamps, pavement, and police, and were full of holes, puddles, mud, and mire. There were sentinels at the doors of all the wine-shops and bodegas; yet crowds of famished soldiers loitered about them, while the dreaded provost-marshal guard, with cord and triangles, and patrols of horse and foot passed slowly to and fro in every direction, to enforce that order which the alcalde and his alguazils considered hopeless.

Quentin soon found, however, where the colonel and colours of the Borderers were lodged It was an old mansion which had once belonged to the Knights of Santiago, the highest order of chivalry in Spain; and above its arched doors, where two of the colonel's were chatting and smoking—he saw carved on a large marble block the badge of the order: a sword *gules*, the hilt powdered with fleurs-de-lis, and the stern motto, *Sanguine Arabum*. It happened, though seated over his wine, after such a dinner as the exigencies of the time enabled him to procure, and though in company with his old friend the gallant and fashionable Lord Paget, rehearsing together their gay but somewhat coarse memories and experiences of Carlton House and the Pavilion, the Honourable Cosmo was far from being in the best of humours. A full conviction of the sudden and disastrous turn in the prospects of the expedition—the army was now only fighting to escape home—together with the knowledge that on landing in England a horde of harpies—Jews, lawyers, and tipstaves, were all ready to pounce upon him, with protested bills, accounts, I. O. U.'s, post-obits, bonds, and Heaven only knows what more, the result of his Guards' life and reckless expenditure in London—all this, we say, well nigh drove him frantic; and Paget's memories of their brilliant past, and their wild, disreputable orgies with the Prince of Wales and his set, added stings to the terror with which he viewed the future.

Flora's fair acres might have stood in the gap between him and ruin, but fate and Quentin Kennedy ordained it should be otherwise.

"Egad, Paget, you see how it is; I've drained the paternal pump dry—there are bounds to patience, and his lordship will not advance me another guinea beyond my allowance. Indeed, I could scarcely expect it; and thus, I *dare not* land in England!"

"Let us be afloat before we talk of landing," replied Paget; "it will be a deuced bad affair for us all if we don't find our transports in Vigo Bay; and, *entre nous*, I think Moore has some doubts about them."

"I don't care a straw if undistinguishable ruin should fall upon us all!"

"Which is certain to be the case, if the said transports are not there," replied the other, with a yawn. "But come, Crawford, fill your glass again; is this champagne some of the stuff we found in Colbert's baggage?"

"My fate will soon be decided," said the other, pursuing his own thoughts; "to-morrow, perhaps, for I can see some indication of taking up a position here, in front of Lugo."

"Yes; but the infernal miners failed at the bridges of the Minho, and the Sil—the river of gold."

"Thus, I say," continued Cosmo, doggedly, "Paget, old fellow, my fate will soon be decided!"

"And it is——"

"Death on a Spanish battle-field, or to rot in an English prison!"

"Don't talk so bitterly; once in London again, we shall see what can be done. Another glass of this sparkling liquid!—wine, wine, I say drown the blue devils in a red sea of it!" exclaimed the gay Paget.

"Something stronger than wine for me now," said Cosmo, as he filled a large glass nearly full with undiluted brandy, and drained it; "life is short, and not very merry here."

"Egad! I know no place, however, where it is so difficult to live and so easy to die."

"Right—so easy to die!" added Cosmo, with a strange and sickly smile.

It was at this inauspicious moment that a servant in uniform brought in Quentin's name.

"What the devil can this fellow possibly want with *me*?" said Cosmo, full of surprise at a circumstance so unusual as a visit from Quentin; "is he below?"

"Yes, sir."

"What does he wish?"

"To see you, sir," replied the soldier, with a second salute.

"Who is it?" drawled Paget, watching his cigar-smoke curling upward, and depositing the leg he was destined to leave at Waterloo on a spare chair.

"That fellow who was tried by a court-martial at Alva de Tormes."

"Tried—ah, I remember, for everything but high treason and housebreaking, eh?—ha! ha!"

"Yes; but who gave the charges the go-by at racing speed. Send him up!"

Quentin entered with a flush on his cheek and a painful beating in his heart. He bowed low to General Paget, whom he knew by sight, and to Cosmo, who responded by a quiet stare, and who, before he was addressed, said sharply, "I generally have my eye on *you*, sir, and I thought that you were with the outlying picquets in front of the town?"

"I was, Colonel Crawford; but——"

"*Was*—and how does it come to pass that you are relieved, or here at this time?" asked Cosmo, loftily.

"Because, sir, I am now Lieutenant Kennedy, of the 7th Fusiliers, serving on the personal staff of Sir John Moore."

On hearing this Paget raised his eyebrows and smiled; but Cosmo hastily thrust his gold glass into his right eye, and glared at Quentin through it as he wheeled his chair half round, and surveyed him with cool insolence from head to foot.

"Are you mad, fellow?" he asked, quietly but earnestly.

"Less so than you, Colonel Crawford," replied Quentin, with suppressed passion; "I have here to show you a note from the general."

"To show *me*?"

"Yes, sir; because it goes from you direct to the adjutant-general for insertion in orders."

Cosmo coughed, and very leisurely opened the little note which Quentin handed to him.

"So, sir," said he, "so far as this scrap of paper imports—and I know Moore's writing well—he has appointed you an extra aide-de-camp?"

"He has done me the honour, Colonel Crawford."

"Your health, sir," said Lord Paget, frankly; "I congratulate you—wont you drink?"

"You might more usefully fill up the time necessary to qualify you for a staff appointment by serving with some corps of the army."

"The 25th, perhaps?" said Quentin, whose temper Cosmo's cutting coldness was rapidly bringing to a white heat.

"No, sir," he replied, with one of his insolent smiles, "I did not mean our friends the Borderers."

"What corps, then?"

"The Belem Rangers; what do you think of them?"

"Crawford!" exclaimed Lord Paget, starting with astonishment, for this imaginary corps was our general Peninsular term for all skulkers, malingerers, and others who showed the white feather, by loitering in the great hospital of Belem, near Lisbon.

Quentin felt all that the studied insult implied; the blood rushed back upon his aching heart, and he grew very pale. The conviction now that his position was *different*, that Cosmo wished by deliberate insolence to provoke and destroy him, rushed upon his mind, and gave him coolness and reflection, so he said, quietly—

"I shall not report your kind suggestion to Sir John Moore; but I presume I may now withdraw?"

"Sir," resumed Cosmo, starting from his chair pale with passion, as he seemed now to have a legitimate and helpless object on which to wreak his bitterness of soul, "sir, I refer to General Lord Paget if your bearing has not something of a mutinous sneer in it?"

"My smile might, Colonel Crawford; but not bearing, be assured of that."

"Sir, what the devil do you mean? Is it to bandy words with me? You hear him, Paget?" said Cosmo, incoherently, and purple alike with fury and a sense of shame at the exhibition he was making; "you hear him?"

"I have no intention of insulting you," urged Quentin, anxious only to begone.

"Insults are never suspected by me, but when I know they are intended, as I feel they are *now*. Even your presence here is an insult! Now, sir, do you understand me, and your resource—your resource—do you understand *that*—eh?"

"For God's sake, Crawford! are you mad?" interposed Lord Paget; "what the devil is up between you?"

"More than I can tell you, Paget."

"With this mere lad, and you a man of the world!"

"'Sblood! Yes, with him."

The Master's mad pride had involved him in many quarrels, and he had paraded more than one man at the back of Montague House, in London, in the Duke's Walk at Holyrood, and elsewhere—luckless fellows who had resented his overbearing disposition—so a duel to him was nothing, and in his baffled pique and ungovernable fury he was now wicked enough to aim at one.

"Cosmo Crawford," exclaimed Quentin, his dark eyes flashing through the moisture that filled them, "Master of Rohallion," he added in a choking voice, "I have too often, as a child, slept on your good old mother's breast to level a pistol at yours, else, sir—else——"

"Bah!" shouted Cosmo, turning on his heel; "I thought so. Belem for ever!"

"To-morrow we may be engaged with the enemy," said Quentin, in the same broken voice; "I shall be in the field, and

mounted too; then let us see whether you or I ride closest to the bayonets of the French!"

"Agreed—agreed!" said Cosmo, with stern energy, as his pale eyes, that shrunk and dilated, filled with more than usual of their old baleful gleam, and he wrung with savage energy the proffered hand of Quentin, who hastened away.

"By Jove," said Paget, laughing, as he filled his glass with champagne, "this same beats cock-fighting! But what the devil is it all about?"

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE COMBAT OF LUGO.

"New clamours and new clangours now arise,
The sound of trumpets mixed with fighting cries,
With frenzy seized, I run to meet th' alarms,
Resolved on death, resolved to die in arms.
But first to gather friends, with them t' oppose,
If fortune favoured, and repel the foes—
Spurred by my courage—by my country fired,
With sense of honour and revenge inspired!"—*Æneis* ii.

"WHATEVER may be their misery," says General Napier, "soldiers will always be found clean at a review and ready at a fight." The order to take up a position and form line of battle in front of Lugo had scarcely been issued, when a change came over the bearing, aspect, and emotions of the men. Pale, weary, and exhausted though they were, vigour and discipline were restored to the ranks, with confidence and valour! The stragglers came hurrying in to rejoin the regiments, that they might share in the battle which was to give them vengeance for the past, or, it might be, a last relief for the future. Three fresh battalions, left by Sir David Baird in his advance to Astorga, had joined Sir John Moore in rear of Villa Franca, and thus, at Lugo, he found himself at the head of nineteen thousand hardy and well-tried men.

Moore's generous kindness to Quentin on this occasion served completely to obliterate the affair of the preceding evening. He soon procured him a horse, and pleased with the modest bearing, the grateful and earnest desire to serve and deserve, with the enthusiasm of the young subaltern, he presented him with the sword of General Colbert, a French officer (said to be of Scottish descent), who had been shot by a rifleman of the 95th at Cazabelos, on the 3rd of January.

"Take this sabre," said he, "and preserve it alike as the present of a friend and the weapon of one of France's bravest soldiers.

The hilt is plain enough; and as for the blade, let the enemy be the best judges of *that*. Follow me now to the lines."

That sabre Quentin resolved to treasure, even as he treasured the ring of Flora Warrender.

Grey day was breaking now, and at that dread time when the troops were forming, and the morning gun pealed from the old walls of Lugo, he knew that she who loved him so well, all unconscious of his danger, the beloved of his heart, was lying calmly in her bed at home, asleep, perhaps with a smile upon her lips, while he was here, far away, face to face and front to front with Death! He rode forth with Stanhope, Burrard, Hardinge, Grahame of Lynedoch, and others of Moore's brilliant staff, with his young heart beating high with pride and joy, as well it might with such companions and on such an auspicious day.

"On this ground, gentlemen, unless the enemy advance in great strength," said Moore, "I shall only be too happy to meet them."

As Quentin passed the 25th moving into position in close column of subdivisions, many a hand grasped his in hearty greeting, and many a cap was waved, for the eyes of the whole corps were on him.

"'Tis well," said Moore; "I like that spirit much! They seem proud of you, Kennedy, as one of their corps. Pass the orders, gentlemen, to the generals of division and brigade to prepare for action."

The staff separated at a gallop.

"Off with the hammer-stalls," was now the command; "uncase colours—examine flints, priming, and ammunition."

About mid-day, after standing for some hours under arms with their colours flying and exposed to a keen and biting wind, the British saw the dark masses of the French appear. There was no sun shining; thus no burnished steel flashed from amid their sombre ranks, which numbered seventeen thousand infantry and four thousand horse, with fifty guns; and now they were deploying into line, while many other columns were pouring forward in their rear. Moore's right, chiefly composed of the Guards, was posted on flat and open ground, flanked by a bend of the Minho. His centre was among vineyards and low stone walls. His left was somewhat thrown back, resting on the mountains and supported by cavalry. It was his intention to engage deeply with his right and centre and bear the enemy on, before he closed up with the left wing, in which he placed the flower of his troops, including the Highland Regiments, hoping thus to bring on a decisive battle, and have the French so handled by the bayonet that he might continue the remainder of the retreat unmolested. Further hope than this, alas! he had none.

As the French deployed along the mountain ridge in front of Lugo, they could not see distinctly either the strength or position of the British; so Soult advanced with four field guns and some squadrons of horse under Colonel Lallemand, to feel the way and throw a few shot at the vineyard walls on speculation.

"Bah! M. le Maréchal," said Colonel Lallemand, confidently; "they are all fled, those pestilent English, or 'tis only a rear-guard we have here."

"I suspect, M. le Colonel, you will find something more than a rear-guard," replied Soult, as fifteen white puffs of smoke rose up from the low walls in front, and a dozen or so round cannon-shot came crashing among their gun-carriages, dismounting two twelve-pounders and smashing the wheel of a third.

On this Soult drew back his squadrons and made a feint on the right, while sending a strong column and five guns against the left, where these fresh regiments were posted. Coming on with wild halloos, and not a few of them chanting the "Carmagnole," the French drove in the line of skirmishers, when Moore, followed now only by Quentin Kennedy, all the rest of his staff being elsewhere, came galloping along and called upon the left to "advance."

They were now fairly under fire and fast closing up. How different from such work in the present day! *Now* we may open a destructive fusillade at a thousand yards rifle range, and so fire on for hours; then, after coming within range with Brown Bess, scarcely three rounds would be fired, before British and foreign pluck were tested by the bayonet.

"Mr. Kennedy," said Moore, "ride to the Honourable Colonel Crawford—tell him to advance at once in line; I will lead on the regiments here."

Quentin, who was tolerably well mounted, dashed up to where Cosmo, cold and stern as ever, sat on his horse at the head of the regiment.

"Colonel Crawford," said he, with a profound salute, "it is Sir John Moore's order that you advance with the bayonet—the whole left wing is to be thrown forward."

Cosmo's eyes flashed and dilated with anger at having to take an order from Quentin; he frowned and lingered.

"Did you hear me, Colonel Crawford—that your battalion is to charge?"

"Orders, and from *you*?" said Cosmo, grinding his teeth.

"From Sir John Moore," urged Quentin, breathlessly.

Now there is at times a wild impulse which seizes the heart of man and will make him set, it may be, the fate of all his future—it may be life itself, upon the issue of a single chance; and such a daring impulse now fired the soul of Quentin.

"Twenty-fifth," he exclained, brandishing his sabre, "you are to advance—prepare to charge."

"Dare you give orders here?" cried Cosmo, hoarse with passion, and scarcely knowing what he said; "I follow none—let all who dare follow me. Rohallion leads, but follows none."

"Come on then *together*."

"Forward—double quick—charge!" they cried together, with their horses neck and neck rushing onward, while the battalion, with a loud hurrah, fell upon the enemy, bayoneting the skirmishers and closing on the main body.

"Bravo, Kennedy!" cried old Middleton, waving his rusty sabre; "I wish Dick Warriston was here to see you to-day. It's a proud man he'd be, for dearly he loved you, lad. Whoop! here we are right on the top of the vagabonds," he added, as the front rank of a sallow-visaged, grimly-bearded, grey-coated French column broke in disorder and gave way before the furious advance of the Borderers, whose two field officers were at that moment unhorsed.

Middleton's charger received a ball in its counter and he had a narrow escape from another, which buried itself in a great old silver hunting-watch which he wore in his fob, and was known as the "regimental clock." Quentin perceived him scrambling up, however, unhurt, just as he had hurried to the assistance of Cosmo, who, some twenty yards in front of the corps, had been knocked from his saddle in the mêlée by two Frenchmen, who had their muskets withdrawn, bayonets fixed, and butts upwards, to pin him to the earth on which he lay helpless.

Dashing spurs into his horse, Quentin rushed upon one, and rode him right down, at the same moment burying his sabre in the body of the other. The first voltigeur was only stunned; but the second fell, wallowing in blood.

Quentin dragged Cosmo up, and assisted him to remount.

"I thank Heaven, sir," said he; "I was just in time to save your life."

"From any other hands than yours it had been welcome," said he, haughtily; "however, I thank you. Sound, bugler, to halt, and re-form on the colours!"

As Quentin rode away, the proud consciousness in his heart, that he had returned great good for great evil, gave place to another. He saw the second Frenchman rolling in blood on the ground, and clutching the grass in his agony. Then a sensation of deadly sickness came over his destroyer's heart—a sensation that he could neither analyse nor describe. So he spurred madly toward the extreme left, where Sir John Moore by accident found himself in front of his old regiment, the 51st, in which he had served as ensign.

With a voice and face alike expressive of animation, he waved his cocked-hat and called upon them as his old comrades to advance to the charge. At that moment the light company of the 76th set the example, and the whole left wing rushed furiously on the French with the bayonet. There was a dreadful yell and shock; scores of men tumbled over each other, many never to rise again; the butt-end was freely used, and in a minute or less, the French attack was routed, leaving four hundred dead, dotting all the slope. In the front rank of the 51st, Brigade-Major David Roberts engaged a French officer hand to hand and slew him; but the major's sword-arm was shattered by two bullets fired by two French soldiers, who were instantly bayoneted by an Irishman of the 51st, named Connor. He killed a few more, while his hand was in, for which he was promoted on the spot. After this Soult made no further attack, and thus it became apparent to Moore, that the wary and skilful old veteran was only waiting until Laborde's division, which was in the rear, should come up, together with a portion of the sixth corps, which was marching by the way of Val des Orres.

All the next day the two armies remained embattled in sight of each other, almost without firing a shot—Soult waiting and Moore watching—the foe coming on hourly in fresh force, till "the darkness fell, and with it the English general's hope to engage his enemy on equal terms."

Quentin spent the evening of that anxious day in the bivouac of his old friends the Borderers, who were sharing as usual the contents of their havresacks and canteens, and congratulating each other on escapes, and none were absent save Monkton, who was stationed with a picquet of twenty men at the bend of the Minho. Before and after an action, there is an effect that remains for a time on the minds and manner of both officers and men. The former show more kindness and suavity to the latter. There is more kindness, more quietness and seriousness, and the oath is seldom heard, even on the tongue of a fool. It may be, that all have felt eternity nearer them than usual, and yet in time of war, the soldier is face to face with it daily.

Large fires were lighted all along the British line, and in their glare the piles of arms were seen to flash and glitter, while for warmth, the weary soldiers lay beside them in close ranks on the damp earth.

"A plucky thing that was of yours to-day, Kennedy," said Middleton, "sabreing the voltigeur and remounting the colonel. You left *me*, your old friend, to shift for myself, however."

"I saw you were in no danger, major," said Quentin, with some confusion; "and being independent now of Crawford, I wished—I wished——"

"To heap ashes on his head; I fear I am not generous enough to have acted as you did, and marred a step in the regiment."

"A shot grazed my cap *here*," said a captain named Drummond; "another inch, and there had been a company vacant."

"I wonder what the devil Moore is loitering here for?" asked some one.

"Kennedy's on the staff now; he ought to know the secrets of the bureau," said Colville.

"Has anything oozed out, Quentin?" asked Askerne.

"He can tell us that we'll attack the French position about daybreak, before Loison, Laborde, or Ney can join," said Colyear, laughing.

"Ney is at Villa Franca," added Captain Winton, a grave and thoughtful officer. "I suspect Moore remains here, in expectation of being attacked *before* these reinforcements come up."

"Now would be the time to fall back in the night towards Vigo, and take up a position to cover the embarkation," said Askerne.

"Right, Rowland," responded Quentin; "we are only able to fight one battle, and desperation will make us do so well. And it is not meant that after winning a battle we should enter Castile again with a handful of jaded men, and not an ally to aid us between Corunna and the ridges of the Sierra Morena. I heard Moore himself say this."

"Who comes here?" they heard a sentinel challenge at a distance.

"What comes here would be more grammatical, my friend," replied a dolorous voice which they knew, as four soldiers appeared, half supporting and half carrying an officer.

"What is all that?" said Middleton.

"The mangled remains of William Monkton, esquire, lieutenant, 25th Foot," replied that personage, as the soldiers laid him on the turf near the watchfire.

"What is the matter, Willie? are you wounded?" asked Askerne, putting a canteen of grog to the sufferer's mouth.

"I should think so! a devil of a runaway horse from the enemy's lines came smash over me. I say, Doctor Salts-and-senna," he added to the assistant surgeon, who had joined the group; "I am not past your skill, I hope?"

"Why, Monkton, you haven't even a bone broken," said the doctor, half angrily, as he rapidly felt him all over; "you are sadly bruised, though, and will have to ride, if we continue the retreat."

At that moment Hardinge galloped up to Cosmo, who was sitting on a fallen tree, cloaked and alone, near his horse, for his officers seldom cared to join him, or he to join them.

"Colonel Crawford," said he, hurriedly, "the whole line is to

fall instantly back towards Corunna by a forced night march. All the fires are to be kept brightly burning to deceive the enemy, and all movements will be made left about, to prevent the clashing of the pouches being heard. Move in silence, as we must completely mask our retreat. Mr. Kennedy, you will be so good as take these orders without delay along the line, and desire the 51st, the 76th, and the cavalry of the left flank, to fall back and be off, without sound of bugle. Thirty-five miles in our rear, the bridge of Betanzos is being undermined; that point once passed, and the bridge blown up, we shall be safe!"

It was indeed time to fall back. Soult's first reinforcements had come up in overwhelming force, and in the stores of Lugo there was not bread for *one* more day's subsistence. The troops were exhorted by Moore to keep order and "to make a great exertion, which he trusted would be the *last* required of them."

At ten o'clock the march began. In rear of the position the country was encumbered by intricate lanes and stone walls; but officers who had examined all the avenues were selected to guide the columns, and just as a dreadful storm of wind and rain burst forth upon that devoted army, the rearward march began, and when the dull January morning stole slowly in, save a few wretched, barefooted, and worn out stragglers, nothing remained of the British position in front of Lugo but the drenched and soddened dead bodies of those who had fallen in the conflict, and the smouldering ashes of the long line of watch-fires, that extended from the mountains towards the bend of the Minho.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A WARNING.

"Soft; I did but dream.
O, coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight,
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? Myself? there's none else by."—*Richard III.*

Sir John Moore and General Paget, with the cavalry, covered the retreat; the former ordered several small bridges to be destroyed to check the enemy's advance; but such was the inefficiency of the engineer force, that in every instance the mines *failed*. The rain, the wind, and the sleet continued; more soldiers perished by the way, and more stragglers were taken or sabred by the enemy's light horse; then, again demoralization and despair pervaded the ranks. So numerous did the stragglers of all corps become, that more than once they found themselves

strong enough to face about and check the cavalry of Lallemand and Ribeaupierre. The Guards, Artillery, and Highlanders alone preserved their discipline.

So great was the fatigue endured by the troops, that, on the evening of the 10th, when the 3rd battalion of the Royal Scots entered Betanzos, it mustered, under the colours, nine officers, three sergeants, and *three* privates; "all the rest had dropped on the roads, and many did not rejoin for three days." At this place, which is a village at the foot of a hill, where the Mandeo was crossed by a wooden bridge, they were attacked by Ribeaupierre's dragoons, who, however, were repulsed by the 28th Regiment; the bridge was destroyed, and its beams and planks hurled into the swollen stream, which swept them away to the Gulf of Ferrol. And here a party of straggling invalids, exhausted by fatigue, were closely pressed by the French cavalry; a Sergeant Newman, of the 2nd battalion of the 43rd, who was himself nearly worn out, rallied them with his pike, and gradually collected four hundred men of all regiments. With great presence of mind, he formed those poor fellows into subdivisions, and made them fire and retire by sections, each re-forming in rear of the others, so that he most effectually covered the retreat of the disabled men who covered all that fearful road—conduct so spirited that he was publicly thanked by Generals Fraser and Fane.

The destruction of the bridge more decidedly secured the retreat; but more men perished between Betanzos and Lugo than anywhere else, since that rearward march began. Moore, by his energy, massed the army, now reduced to fourteen thousand infantry, which, on the morning of the 11th January, fell back on Corunna, under his immediate and personal superintendence.

"Stanhope," said he to his favourite aide-de-camp, "we are now within a few miles of Corunna; ride forward with me, as I am all anxiety to see if our fleet is in the bay—Kennedy will accompany us."

Quentin bowed, put spurs to his horse, and quitting Paget's cavalry rearguard together, they rode rapidly along the line of march to the front. They soon reached the heights of Corunna, and saw the town beneath them about four miles distant; then a sad expression stole over Moore's handsome face, but no exclamation escaped him. Not a ship was visible in the Bays of Orsan or Betanzos, nor in the harbour of the town; the Roads of Ferrol and all the expanse of water were open and empty! Fortune was against him and his army, for contrary winds detained the fleet of men-of-war and transports at Vigo, a hundred and twenty miles distant by sea.

The morning was sunny, and Corunna, on its fortified peninsula, was seen distinctly, with all its strong bastions and gothic spires; its almost land-locked harbour, guarded by the castles of San Martino and Santa Cruz, with the flag of King Ferdinand VII. flying on the fort of San Antonio, and on the Pharos of Hercules. For Sir John Moore there was nothing left now but to prepare to defend the position in front of the town till the fleet should come round. He quartered his army in Corunna and its suburbs: the reserve he posted at El Burgo, on the river Mero, the bridge of which he destroyed. He also sent an engineer officer with a party of sappers to blow up the bridge of Cambria. Some delay took place in the ignition of the mine, and he despatched Quentin Kennedy to the officer with an angry expostulation. Mortified by repeated failures elsewhere during the retreat, the officer was anxious to perform this duty effectually. He approached the mine to examine it, and at that moment it exploded!

Quentin felt the earth shake beneath his feet; the arch of the bridge sprung upward like a huge lid; a column of dark earth, stones, and dust, spouted into the air to descend in ruins, bringing with them the mutilated fragments of the poor engineer officer, who was literally blown to pieces; but this was a mere squib when compared with the explosion of two magazines containing four thousand casks of powder, which were blown up on the 13th, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. On this occasion, says an eye-witness, "there ensued a crash like the bursting forth of a volcano; the earth trembled for miles, and the agitated waters rolled the vessels as in a storm; a vast column of smoke and dust, shooting out fiery sparks from its sides, arose perpendicularly and slowly to a great height, and then a shower of stones and fragments of all kinds bursting out of it with a roaring sound, killed several persons who remained too near the spot. A stillness, only interrupted by the lashing of the waves on the shore, succeeded, and the business of the war went on."

All this powder had been sent from England and left there, by the red-tapists of the time, to be destroyed thus, while more than once the armies of Britain and Spain had been before the enemy with their pouches empty!

In Corunna, the jaded British had now breathing time, but the exulting French were still pouring on. Some of Moore's staff suggested that he should send a flag of truce to Soult and negotiate for permission to embark unmolested—a suggestion which his undaunted heart rejected with scorn and anger.

'I rely on my own powers," said he, "for defying the enemy,

and extricating with honour my troops from their perilous position."

Food, shelter, and rest restored vigour, and force of habit brought discipline back to the ranks; fresh ammunition was served out, and in many instances the men were supplied with new firelocks in lieu of those rusted and worn out by the weather during the retreat; but hearty were the cheers that rung in Corunna when, on the evening of the 14th, the fleet of transports from Vigo were seen bearing slowly into the harbour, under full sail, and coming each in succession to anchor. At the same time, however, an orderly, sent by Sir David Baird, came spurring in hot haste to announce that the French had repaired the bridge of El Burgo, and that their cavalry and artillery were crossing the Mero, a few miles from Corunna.

With the rest of the staff, Quentin passed all that night in his saddle, riding between the town and beach with orders and instructions, for, under cover of the friendly darkness, the whole of the women and children, sick and wounded, dismounted dragoons, all the best horses, and fifty-two pieces of cannon were embarked; eleven six-pounders and one field howitzer only being retained for immediate service.

"Hardinge," said Moore, as his staff rode into the upper town, "you will ride over to Sir David Baird; you, Major Colborne, to Lord Paget; and you, Kennedy, to General Leith, to say, that at daybreak, *if the French do not move*, they are to fall back with their corps for instant embarkation."

And with these welcome orders, the three aides-de-camp separated at full speed.

On this night of anxiety and bustle, the Master of Rohallion remained idly in his billet, a pretty villa, the windows of which faced the little bay of Orsan, with the suburb of the Pescadera extending from its garden on the west towards the mainland. Paget and some other friends of his, after seeing their sound horses embarked and the useless shot, had supped with him. No one expected any engagement to take place now; they made light of past sorrows, spoke laughingly of the amusements that awaited them at home, and drank deeply. Any momentary emotion of gratitude felt by Cosmo for the noble manner in which young Kennedy saved his life at Lugo was completely forgotten now, all the recollection of that event being completely merged in a whirlwind of rage at the aide-de-camp for having taunted him to the charge, and for actually daring to lead on the battalion in the face of so many superior officers!

Cosmo had never wearied of descanting on this military enormity, and all night long, as he became inflamed by what he

imbibed, he consulted with Paget, Burrard, and others, as to whether he should call Kennedy out or bring him before a court-martial again.

The former mode of proceeding at Alva having failed "to smash him," they were averse to another, and all were of opinion that for the latter course Cosmo had allowed too many days to elapse.

"Trouble your head no more about it," said Paget, while playing with the tassels of his gold sash; "we'll laugh the affair over at Brighton in a few days or so. Soothe your mind, meantime, by the study of these classic frescoes. I wonder who the devil decorated this villa!"

"Cupid and Psyche," said Burrard, who had been adding a few decorations, such as beards and tails, with a burnt cork; "Pyramus and Thisbe; and, by Jove, the story of Leda!"

"Egad! such lively imaginations and odd propensities those pagan fellows had! *Au revoir*, Crawford; we'll have the générale beaten for the last time on Spanish ground to-morrow, and then hey for the high road to Old England!" added the gay hussar, who, before six months were past, figured in an elopement, a duel, and damages to the tune of twenty thousand pounds.

Cosmo was at last alone, and though he mixed a glass of brandy with a goblet of champagne, he felt strange and sad thoughts stealing over him. He was hot and flushed, and his heart beat tumultuously and anxiously, he knew not why. He threw open the sash of one of the lofty windows, which were divided in lattice-fashion from the ceiling to the floor, and looked out upon the night. It was silent, clear, and starry, and not a sound broke the calm stillness, save the chafing of the waves on the rocks that bordered the bay.

Cosmo's brain, at least his whole nervous system, seemed to have received a shock by that fall from his horse at Lugo. He was restless, feverish, and anxious, without knowing why; for being brave as man could be, he had no fear for the morrow, and really cared very little whether a battle was fought or not.

"What is this that is stealing over me—can it be illness?" he asked of himself.

Thoughts and memories of home, his family, and many an old and once tender association that he had long forgotten were stealing over him now, together with an uncontrollable sadness and depression of mind; his father's cheerful voice, his mother's loving face, came vividly to recollection, with emotions of tenderness for which he could not account—emotions which he strove

to repress as unnatural to him, and which actually provoked him, by the strange pertinacity with which they thrust themselves upon his fancy.

"Pshaw!" said he, "that deuced tumble in front of the enemy has unmanned me—and that fellow, too! Confound him," he muttered through his clenched teeth, "I hate him!"

At that moment the great bell of the citadel tolled the hour of three. The last note of that deep and full but distant bell, yet vibrated in the stilly air; the stars were reflected in the dark waters of the bay, and the light that shone in the great Pharos of Hercules, as it revolved slowly on its ancient tower, cast tremulous rays at regular intervals far across the sea on one side and the inlet of Orsan on the other. The ocean breeze came gratefully to the flushed brow of Cosmo, who suddenly perceived near him a man in a strange uniform. He stood in the centre of the garden walk at a short distance from the open window, his figure being clearly defined against the starry sky beyond, and by a ray of light which shone from the room Cosmo could perceive that his dress was scarlet. Supposing he was some straggler or other man who should be in quarters, Crawford walked boldly up to the tall stranger, who remained silent and immovable. He wore an old-fashioned flowing red coat without a collar, but having deep cuffs, all profusely laced; a large brigadier wig and three-cornered hat, and a long slender sword, and he stood with his right hand firmly planted on a walking cane. His bearing was noble and lofty; his long, pale, and handsome features, in which Cosmo recognised a startling likeness of *his own*, wore a deathlike hue, and his eyes were sad and stony in expression.

Cosmo Crawford attempted to speak, but the words failed on his lips; he felt the hair bristle on his scalp, and a thrill of terror pass all over him as the figure, phantom, fancy, or whatever it was, pointed with its thin white hand to *the plain before Corunna*, and then the whole outline began to fade, the stars shone through it, and it seemed to melt away into space!

An icy horror came over Cosmo, and his soul trembled as he remembered the bugbear of his boyhood, the story of the haunted gate at Rohallion, and the wraith of his uncle John the Master, who had been slain by the side of Cornwallis in America. He rushed back to the room and flung himself panting on a sofa. Then with a furious oath at his own timidity, folly, or fancy, he issued boldly into the garden again, but nothing was there save the laurel bushes that bordered the lonely walk where he had seen that wondrous and fantastic dream. All seemed still—

horribly so—all save the beating of his heart and the rustling of the regimental colours, which, in virtue of his rank, were always lodged in his apartment.

"*Was that a warning?*—bah! And the cup of wine!" he exclaimed. "By this time to-morrow night," he reflected, "I may have been again in battle. I may be safe and scatheless, or dreadfully mutilated and beggared for life, or by this hour—dreadful thought, I may be in eternity! I may have learned the secret of life and death, of existence and extinction, and this body may be lying stark, stripped, and bloody, with its glazed eyes fixed on the stars of heaven! Bah! another glass of wine, then!"

Cosmo slept but little that night, and it was with a stern and gloomy foreboding of evil that he saw the day-dawn stealing over the dark grey sea and the lofty citadel of Corunna.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE BATTLE OF CORUNNA.

"Marked you yon moving mass, the dark array
Of yon deep column wind its sullen way?
Low o'er its barded brow, the plumed boast,
Glittering and gay, of France's wayward host,
With gallant bearing wings its venturous flight,
Cowers o'er its kindred bands, and waves them to the fight."

LORD GRENVILLE.

THE army was now rid of every incumbrance, and all was prepared for the withdrawal of the fighting men as soon as darkness should again set in, and four o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th was the time fixed by Moore for doing so; but lo! at two o'clock on that anxious day a messenger came from Sir John Hope to state that the whole French army, then in position on the heights above Corunna, was getting under arms—that a general movement was taking place along the entire line, twenty thousand strong!

"Stand to your arms—unpile, unpile!" was the cry from right to left.

Long ere this, the whole British army had been in position.

Sir David Baird held the right with his division, while Sir John Hope's was formed across the main road, with its left towards the Mero river; but the whole of this combined line was exposed to, and almost enfiladed by, a brigade of French guns posted on the rocks about the little village of Elvina. Fraser's division remained before the gates of Corunna to watch the coast

road, and be prepared to advance on any point. But all the advantage, in strength of position, of horse, foot, and artillery, was in favour of the enemy. The only cavalry in the field with Moore were *forty* troopers of the 15th Hussars, under the command of a lieutenant named Knight. Opposed to Hope and Baird's slender line were the heavy divisions of Delaborde, Merle, and Mermet, while the cavalry of the French left, under De Lahausaye, Lorge, Franceschi, Ribeaupierre, and others, were thrown forward along the whole British right, hemming them in between the Mero and the harbour of Corunna, and menacing even the rear so far as San Cristoval, a mile beyond Sir David Baird, whom, however, Fraser and Lord Paget covered.

Joy sparkled in Moore's eyes as he rode along the line at the head of his staff, and to Colonel Graham of Balgowan he expressed his regret that "the lateness of the hour and the shortness of the evening would prevent them from profiting by the victory which he confidently anticipated."

The afternoon was dull and sunless; grey clouds covered all the louring sky; the sea towards the offing looked black and stormy, and the ramparts of Corunna, washed by the white waves from the west, seemed hard, sombre, and gloomy; but the British were in high spirits and full of hope at the prospect of giving a graceful and a glorious close to this inauspicious campaign.

Through Moore's telescope, which he lent him, Quentin swept the French lines. He could see the masses of the old Guard in their tall grenadier caps, grey great-coats and enormous scarlet epaulettes; then the ordinary infantry of the line, in their short-waisted blue coatees and wide scarlet trousers, advancing in three dense columns along the heights towards the British position. He could see the guns being unlimbered and prepared for service on the ridge of rock that covered the flank of the infantry; and he could also see the cavalry of the left; the cuirassiers of Lahausaye in helmets and corslets of brass, with flowing scarlet plumes and straight swords of great length; the chasseurs of Lorge and Ribeaupierre, in light green, with their horse-hair plumes all floating like a sea of red and white; then the picturesque column of Franceschi, in which were a corps of Polish lancers, with all their tricolored bannerols fluttering; and some of the Mamelukes of the Imperial Guard, with white turbans and crosses of gold, all brandishing their crooked sabres and loading the heavy air with uncouth and tumultuous cries. On the other hand were the cool and silent British infantry; steady and still they stood in their solid ranks, their arms loaded, primed, and "ordered," the bayonets fixed and colours flying;

and no sound was heard along all their line, save when the pipers of the Black Watch, the 92nd, or some other Scottish regiment, played loud, in defiance of the advancing foe, some historical or traditionary air of the clan or tribe from whence its name was taken or its ranks were filled. To the 42nd, with the 4th and 50th, was entrusted the defence of the extreme right, the weakest point of the line, and on *their maintenance of which* the safety and honour of the army rested.

As Quentin passed his old battalion in Hope's division on the road that led from Aris to Corunna, he saluted Cosmo, but received no response. Grim as Ajax, the Master was advancing with his eyes fixed on the enemy and his left hand clutching his gathered reins At that moment perhaps, he thought less of the horrid dream of yesternight, than of the ruinous bonds, the crushing mortgages, the post-obits, and secret loans at fifty and sixty per cent., that a French bullet might that day close, together with his own existence, and he actually felt a species of grim satisfaction that hereby the crew of money-lenders would be outwitted.

"This is a day that will live in history, major," said Quentin, as he passed jolly old Middleton, in rear of the corps, trotting his barrel-bellied cob, an animal of grave and solemn deportment.

"Likely enough, lad," replied the other; "but I've seen too many of these historical days now, and I would sell cheaply alike my share in them, with the chance of being honourably mentioned by some future Hume or Smollett."

"So, Monkton, you've recovered your Lugo mishap."

"Quite, Kennedy," replied that individual, whom he overtook marching on the left flank of his company; "never felt jollier in my life—breakfasted about twelve to-day with Middleton and Colville on mulled claret dashed with old brandy. So we are going to engage at last! Well, I hope we shall polish off old Johnny Soult, and get on board betimes—then ho, for Old England!"

"There, gentlemen, is the first gun!" exclaimed Rowland Askerne, as he pointed with his sword to a field-piece that flashed on the rocks about Elvina. Then a 12-pound shot hummed harmlessly through the air along the whole line of Baird's division.

"Tyrol, tra la, la lira!" sang the reckless Monkton; "this begins the game in earnest!"

"At such a time how *can* you be so thoughtless, Willie?" said Askerne, with some asperity; and now, from the great French battery on the rocks, the shot and shell fell thick and fast upon

the British line, while led by the Duke of Dalmatia in person, the three solid columns of Delaborde, Neale, and Merniet, descended with yells to the assault, tricolors waving, swords flashing, and eagles brandished.

A cloud of skirmishers preceded them, and the white puffs of smoke that spirted from among the underwood, the low dykes, and laurel bushes, marked where they nestled and took quiet "pot shots" at the old 95th, and other British sharp-shooters, who fell back in disorder, as the light six-pounders failed to protect them against the French heavy guns, which swept Moore's line to the centre, with round shot, grape, and canister.

From his master in the art of war, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, Moore had learned that the presence of a commander is always most useful near that point at which the greatest struggle is likely to occur; thus he remained near Lord Bentinck's brigade, and close to the 42nd, on the extreme right, and there Quentin and his staff accompanied him.

The French left carried the village of Elvina, and dividing into two great masses, one poured on against Baird's front, and the other assailed his right under cover of their gun battery, while their right assailed Hope at the pretty hamlet of Palavia Abaxo. And now the roar and carnage of the battle became general all over the field; men were falling fast on every side, "and human lives were lavished everywhere;" Baird's left arm was shattered by a grape-shot, and he was taken from the front to have it amputated; Middleton was struck about the same time, in the left side. Lifting his cocked hat, and bowing almost to his holsters, while a cloud of hair-powder flew about his head, this fine old soldier said, faintly, to the Master of Rohallion—

"I am wounded, colonel, and have the honour to request you will order another officer to take command of the left." He then ambled away on his old nag towards Corunna.

"Close in, men—fill up the gaps," was the incessant cry of the officers and sergeants; "close up the rear ranks—close up!" and cheerily they did so, those brave hearts and true.

As it was, the sparks of the flints, the burning of priming, caused many of the front rank men to have their cheeks bleeding by splinters or scorched by powder; but these were constant occurrences before the days of percussion locks and caps.

The fire of the enemy was terrible, and all who were not wounded had narrow escapes. Quentin had no less than three during the first hour; a ball struck one of his holster pipes, another tore through his havresack, and a third perforated his shako, and had he been an inch taller, he had been a dead man. The first tightening of the heart relaxed—the first wild thrill of

anxiety over, and Quentin felt as cool as the oldest veteran there. The light field guns as they retired from Elvina came tearing past with blood and human hair upon their wheels and on the hoofs of their galloping horses, showing the carnage through which they had passed; but they were again unlimbered and brought into action to check the dragoons of Lorge, who menaced the right with pistol and sabre. Sir John, who had been watching the movements of the enemy through the openings in the white smoke which rolled along the slopes and filled all the hollows, observed that no more infantry were coming on than those which outflanked the right of Baird's division, now commanded by his successor.

"Kennedy," said he to Quentin, whose coolness delighted and even amused him, "ride to my friend Paget, and order him to wheel to the right of the French advance, to menace and attack their gun battery. Stanhope, spur on to Fraser and order him to support Paget."

While his aides rode off with these orders, he threw back the 4th Regiment in person, and opened a heavy fire on the French, now pouring along the valley on his right, while the old "Half Hundred" and the Black Watch confronted those who were breaking through Elvina.

"Well done, 50th—well done, my majors!" he exclaimed to two favourite officers who led the corps; but in the deadly struggle that ensued, one, Major Charles Napier, was taken prisoner, and the other, the Honourable Major Stanhope, was mortally wounded.

Strewed with killed and wounded, the field was now a veritable hell upon earth, all along the lines in the valley and on the hills. The boom of the heavy guns from the rock pealed solemnly on the ear. Then there was the shrill scream of the shells as they soared aloft, describing fiery arcs through the cold grey sky, seeming to streak it with light; and there was the *whirr* or deep *hum* of the cannon shot as they tore along the corpse-strewn ground, or through the empty air.

After delivering his orders to Lord Paget, Quentin turned his horse to the right and pursued the Aris road in rear of Hope's division, rushing at full speed over a great cork tree which the cannon shot had cut down; but he reined up for a moment near the flank of the Borderers.

Issuing from Palavia Abaxo, a corps of Delaborde's came furiously on with a savage yell, their bayonets fixed and tricolors flying defiantly, though torn by grape and musketry. They were grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, and their long grey coats seemed black and sombre amid the smoke. Twicet hoss

men, the heroes of Austerlitz and Marengo, wavered, though never ceasing to pour in their fire; for the resolute aspect of the Borderers seemed to arrest them, as the human surge paused in its onward roll. Then it was that the Master of Rohallion, though cold-blooded, or animated chiefly by that selfish cosmopolitanism which is so peculiar to the Scottish aristocracy, felt something of his father's gallant spirit swell up in his heart.

"The 50th and the Highlanders are carrying all before them on the right," cried he, raising himself in his stirrups and brandishing his sword, "come on, 25th, let them see that we on the left are brother Scotsmen, as well as British soldiers—follow me—*charge!*"

And now, with a loud hurrah and like a living wall, the regiment rushed headlong on the foe, and plunging into the mass with the bayonet, hurled it back in ruin and bloody disorder beyond the village. In this charge poor Rowland Askerne fell dead with a ball in his heart; Colville perished under five bayonet wounds; Colyear had the staff of the king's colour broken in his hand, and many others fell killed and wounded; but Cosmo, as if his life was a charmed one, yet escaped unhurt, and re-formed the corps in splendid order close to the village of Palavia Abaxo. Quentin, who had only checked his horse to witness his old comrades make this most glorious charge, galloped on towards the right, where he found the foe still pressing forward, and Moore, sword in hand, at the head of the 42nd, most of whose pouches were now empty.

"My brave Highlanders!" the general exclaimed, "you have still your bayonets—*remember Egypt!*"

With a wild cheer, their plumes and tartans waving amid the smoke, the Celts rushed on and drove the French back in disorder upon Elvina.

A few minutes after this, just as Quentin dismounted to breathe his horse, and just as Captain (afterwards General and Viscount) Hardinge came forward to report that the Guards were advancing to support Bentinck's brigade, a round shot from the enemy's battery on those fatal rocks passed through them. By the velocity of the ball, the mere force of the air, Quentin was knocked down, breathless and panting. When he staggered up, he found the general lying near him, and a startled group gathering round them. *The same ball* had mortally wounded Sir John Moore, by shattering his left breast and shoulder. Hurled from his saddle, he now lay on his back, bleeding and dying!

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE BURIAL.

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the ramparts we hurried,
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot,
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

"We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeams' misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning."—CHARLES WOLFE.

MOORE'S first impulse was to struggle into a sitting posture, and, while resting on his right hand, to watch the wild conflict between the French and Highlanders at Elvina. Not a sigh of pain escaped him, as he bent his keen blue eyes on the corps engaged in front; but on seeing the black and crimson plumes of the 42nd triumphantly waving in the village, a smile of gratification stole over his handsome face, and he allowed himself to be borne to the rear by six Highlanders and guardsmen, Quentin Kennedy and Captain Hardinge assisting to keep him in an easy position with the sash of the latter.

"Report to General Hope that I am wounded," said he, calmly, "and desire him to assume the command."

Quentin observed that Sir John's sword had got entangled in the wound, and that the hilt was actually entering it. On this, Captain Hardinge kindly and gently attempted to unbuckle it.

"Never mind it, dear Hardinge," said the dying hero; "I had rather it should go out of the field with me."

Fast flowed the blood, and the torture of the complicated wound was terrible! His hands were become cold and clammy, and his face grew deadly pale in the dusky twilight.

"Colonel Graham of Balgowan, and Captain Woodford of the Guards, are both gone for surgeons," said Quentin, in his ear, while Captain Hardinge now strove in vain to stop the crimson current with his sash; "they will soon be here."

"You will recover from your injuries," said Hardinge; "I can perceive it, Sir John, by the expression of your eyes."

"No, Hardinge," said he, gravely; "I feel *that* to be impossible!"

Several times he made the bearers turn him round that he might behold the field of battle, and then a sublime expression stole over his fine face on seeing that everywhere the French

were falling back, and that his slender army, after all its sufferings, was triumphant!

At this moment a spring waggon passed, in which lay Colonel Wynch, of the 4th Regiment, who was wounded.

"Who's in that blanket?" asked the colonel, faintly.

"Sir John Moore, most severely wounded," replied Quentin.

On hearing this, the good colonel, though bleeding fast, insisted on letting his general have the waggon; but the Highlanders urged that they would carry him easier in the blanket, "so they proceeded with him to his quarters in Corunna, weeping as they went."

Still the echoing musketry pealed through the murky air, and still the death-dealing blaze reddened the dusk of the coming evening. Heavily it volleyed at times in the intervals between the cannon on the rocks, and through the mingled haze up came the blood-red disc of the winter moon. Great clouds of white powder smoke crept sluggishly along the earth, and through it the flashes of the French guns above Elvina came redly and luridly out.

On being brought to his billet in Corunna, Sir John Moore was laid on a pallet and examined, and then all could see the terrible nature of his wound. The entire left shoulder was shattered; the arm hung by a piece of skin; the ribs over the heart were stripped of flesh and bruised to pieces, and the muscles of the breast were torn in long strips that had become interlaced by the recoil of the fatal cannon-ball. In the dusk of the gloomy apartment, where he lay rapidly dying on a poor mattress, he recognised the face of Colonel Anderson, an old friend and comrade of twenty years and more. It was the third time Anderson had seen him borne from a field thus steeped in blood, but never before so awfully mangled. Moore pressed the hand of his old friend, who was deeply moved.

"Anderson," said he, with a sad smile, "you know I have always wished to die in this way."

Anderson answered only with his tears, yet he was a weather-beaten soldier, who had looked death in the face on many a hard-fought field.

"Are the French beaten?" Moore asked of all who came in, successively, and the assurances that they were retiring fast soothed his dying moments.

"I hope the people of England will be satisfied—I hope my dear country will do me justice!" said he, with touching earnestness; "oh, Anderson, you will see my friends at home as soon as you can—tell them everything—my poor mother——" Here his voice completely failed him: he became deeply agitated; but

after a pause said, "Hope—Hope—I have much to say to him, but am too weak now! Are all my aides-de-camp well?"

"Yes," replied Anderson, who did not wish to distress him by the information that young Captain Burrard was mortally wounded.

"I have made my will, and—and—have remembered all my service. Colbourne has it—tell Willoughby that Colbourne is to get his lieutenant-colonelcy.—Oh, it is a great satisfaction to me that we have beaten the French. Is Paget in the room?"

"No," replied Anderson, in a low voice.

"It is General Paget, I mean; remember me to him—he is a fine fellow! I feel myself so strong—ah, I fear that I shall be a long time in dying!"

In the intervals of his faint and disjointed remarks the boom of the distant artillery was occasionally heard, and their fitful flashes reddened the walls and windows of the room where he lay.

"Is that young lieutenant of the Fusiliers—Kennedy—is, is he here!"

"I am here, sir," said Quentin, in a choking voice.

"I cannot see you—the light of my eyes fails me now. I meant—I meant——for you."

What he "meant" to have done, Quentin was fated never to know.

In broken accents the general thanked the surgeons politely for the care they had taken; and apologized for the trouble he gave then. He then said to the son of Earl Stanhope, who served on his staff,

"Remember me—Stanhope—to—your sister."

He referred to the famous and brilliant Lady Hester Stanhope, whom he was said to have loved, and who died in Syria in 1839. Here his voice again completely failed him, and while pressing to his breast the hand of Colonel Anderson, who had saved his life at St. Lucia, he expired without a struggle in his forty-eighth year. . . . . .

All stood in silence around the pallet whereon that brave gentleman and Christian soldier lay dead, and some time elapsed before they could realize the full extent of the calamity which had befallen them, and with moistened eyes they watched the pale still face, the fallen jaw, the shattered and blood-soaked form. Just as Colonel Anderson knelt down to close the eyes of his dead friend and commander, Quentin Kennedy, with a heavy sigh in his throat, a sob in his breast, issued from the house, and grasping the sabre of Colbert, Moore's doubly-prized gift, he leaped on his horse, and, as if to relieve himself from thoughts of

grief and sorrow, galloped towards the battle-field. The night was now quite dark, and Sir John Hope had succeeded in following out Moore's dispositions so well, that he had driven the whole French line so far back that the British had now advanced far *beyond* their original position. All Soult's ammunition was expended, though his troops were still the most numerous. He could not advance, and neither could he retreat, as the rain-swollen Mero was foaming along in full flood in his rear, and the rudely re-constructed bridge of El Burgo was his only avenue for escape. It was now that Hope ordered a great line of watch-fires to be lighted by the picquets, and to have them kept burning to deceive the enemy, while the wounded were carried off, and the whole army embarked, covered by Rowland Hill's brigade, which was posted in and near the ramparts of the citadel. The field presented a scene of unexampled horror as Quentin rode back towards Corunna. Worn out by the long day passed under arms, the troops fell back, in somewhat shattered order, by companies and regiments towards the beach, the shadows of night concealing innumerable episodes of suffering, of solitary and unpitied dissolution.

The British loss was estimated at eight hundred, the French at three thousand men, so superior were our arms and firing.

In a place where the dead lay thick there sat a piper of the 92nd; he was wounded and bleeding to death, yet he played to his retreating comrades so long as strength remained, and then lay back dead, with the mouth-piece of the chanter between his relaxed jaws. Everywhere in the dark Quentin heard voices calling for water.

"Un verre de l'eau, pour l'amour de Dieu!" cried many a poor Frenchman unheeded, as the columns fell back in fierce exultation upon Corunna, in many instances double quick.

Quentin rode back to the town, a three-miles' distance, and having neither post nor duty to repair to, went straight through the dark and crowded streets to the house where he had seen his beloved leader expire. The door stood open; the mansion was dark, empty, chilly, and silent, and the body had been removed, he knew not where. Just as he was turning away irresolute whether to inquire for the Borderers and get into one of the hundred boats now plying in the dark with war-worn troops, between the mole and fleet of transports, or whether he should join the staff of General Hill, whose brigade still occupied the citadel, a mounted staff-officer passed near him, and, by the light of a torch held by a Spaniard, who ran through the street, they recognised each other.

"'Tis well I have met you, Kennedy—come this way—we are about to pay the last earthly rites to poor Sir John Moore."

He who spoke was Captain Hardinge, and Kennedy, without a word, for his heart was very full, accompanied him into the strong old citadel of Corunna. The church bells were tolling midnight, and all was pitchy blackness around, for the moon was hidden; but in the dim distance, along the abandoned position on the hills, a line of watch-fires burned like dim and wavering stars to deceive the beaten but yet too powerful enemy.

The dim light of a lantern shone faintly on a group of officers who stood near, silent and thoughtful, and leaning on their swords. All were bareheaded. Beside them lay a body muffled in a blue cloak and a blanket soaked with blood—the mutilated remains of Moore, for whom no coffin could be procured. Close by, a party of the 9th or East Norfolk Regiment were digging a grave, and there stood the chaplain-general, book in hand, but without a surplice, for the sound of distant cannon announced that the French, already discovering that they were foiled, were pushing on to St. Lucia, and hastened the interment. The "lantern dimly burning" was held by Sergeant Rollo, of the Artillery, who died lately at Tynemouth, in his eighty-second year, and by its fitful light the body was deposited in its last home.

"Aid me, good gentlemen," said Colonel Anderson, with a broken voice, as the aides-de-camp lowered the remains into the rudely-dug hole, Quentin as the youngest carrying his feet. "It is a strange fatality, this! He always said that if he fell in battle, he wished to be buried where he died, and you see, gentlemen, his wish has been fulfilled."

Near him lay his countryman, General Anstruther, who had died of suffering and privations on the march. Hastily the burial service was read, and the soldiers of the brave old 9th covered him up, literally, "the sod with their bayonets turning." All lingered for a few minutes near the spot, and when they withdrew, there was not an eye unmoistened among them. Thus passed away Sir John Moore, like Wolfe, in the moment of victory!

"A soldier from his earliest youth," says General Napier, "he thirsted for the honours of his profession, and feeling that he was worthy to lead a British army, hailed the fortune that placed him at the head of the troops destined for Spain. The stream of time passed rapidly, and the inspiring hopes of triumph disappeared, but the austerer glory of suffering remained; with a firm heart he accepted that gift of a severe fate, and confiding in the strength of his genius, disregarded the clamours of presumptuous ignorance; opposing sound military views to the foolish projects so insolently thrust upon him by the ambassador, he conducted a long and arduous retreat with sagacity, intelligence, and fortitude. No insult could disturb him, no remonstrances shake his deter-

mination; fortune frowned without subduing his constancy; death struck, and the spirit of the man remained unbroken, when his shattered body scarcely afforded it habitation. Having done all that was just towards others, he remembered what was due to himself. Neither the shock of the mortal blow, nor the lingering hours of acute pain which preceded his dissolution, could quell the pride of his gallant heart, or lower the feeling with which (conscious of merit) he asserted his right to the gratitude of the country he had served so truly.

"If glory be a distinction, *for such a man death is not a leveller!*"

CHAPTER LXXVI.

TOO LATE.

"The storm of fight is hushed; the mingled roar
Of charging squadrons swells the blast no more:
Gone are the bands of France; the crested pride
Of war, which lately clothed the mountain side,
Gone—as the winter cloud which tempests bear,
In broken shadows through the waste of air."

GREY dawn came slowly in, stealing over land and sea, as Quentin rode from the citadel of Corunna. It was difficult to believe that one night—one short night only—filled the interval of time since the fierce excitement of yesterday. Within those few hours how much had happened! Many an eye that met his with a kind smile was sightless now, and many a cheerful and hearty voice with which he was familiar was silenced for ever. When passing through one of the streets, he came suddenly upon Sir John Hope, who now commanded the army, and who said, while reining in his horse, which looked jaded and weary as himself—

"Oh—glad I've seen you, Mr. Kennedy; is your horse fresh?"

"Tolerably so, sir," replied Quentin.

"Then you will oblige me by riding round by the Santiago road over the ground where Fraser's division was posted yesterday, before he advanced to support Paget, and bring off any stragglers you may see there. We have not a moment to lose, as the French are getting several guns into position above the San Diego Point, to open on our transports."

Without waiting for an answer, and as if his expressed wish was quite sufficient, the general cantered off towards the mole.

No way delighted with his duty, in the grey twilight of the morning, Quentin galloped through the Pescadera, quitted the outer fortifications, issued upon the road that led to Santiago de

Compostella, and ere long found himself on that which he had now no heart to look upon—the field of battle—that ripe harvest of death and suffering! The dead were there mutilated in every conceivable mode, and lying in every conceivable position; some lay in little piles where the grape had mowed them down. Red-coat and blue-coat, Frank and Briton, the red-trowsered Celt of Gaul and the kilted Celt of Scotland, lay over each other in heaps, many of them yet in the death clutch of each other, but all sleeping peacefully the long, long slumber that knows no waking.

Muskets smashed at the stock, swords broken, bayonets bent, caps crushed; belts, plumes, and epaulettes torn; drums broken and bugles trod flat; half-buried shot and exploded shells, strewed all the ground, which was furrowed, torn up, and soaked in blood; trees were barked and lopped by the passing bullets, and hedges were scorched by fire. Already the plunderers had been at work; an officer, covered with wounds, lay stripped, nearly nude, so his uniform had doubtless been a rich one. He was quite dead, and wore on his left arm a bracelet of female hair—a love relic; his head rested in the lap of a beautiful Spanish girl, so dark that she was half like a mulatto or gitana of Granada, and such she appeared to be by her picturesque costume. She was weeping bitterly, and over her dark cheeks and quivering lips the hot tears fell upon the cold face of the dead man. Her sobs were quite inaudible, for her grief was too deep for utterance. Close by, with the medals of many an honourable battle on his breast, lay a grenadier of the Garde Impériale, who had died about twenty minutes before, and the calm of dissolution was smoothing out the wrinkles that care had traced upon his now ghastly face—so smoothly then that he became in aspect almost young again, as when, perhaps, a conscript he left his father's cottage and his mother's arms

As Quentin rode on many called to him for succour that he was unable to yield, and to their piteous cries he was compelled to turn a deaf ear. Many lay wounded, faint and unseen, among the long rich grass, where they were lulled alike by weakness and the hum of insect life awaking with the rising sun; and these scarcely noticed him as he trotted slowly past, carefully guiding his horse among them. Tormented by thirst, many crawled, like bruised worms, to where a little runnel ran down the green slope from San Cristoval, and drank thirstily of its water in the hollow of their hands, and without a shudder, though the purity of the stream was tainted by blood, for further up lay a soldier of the Cameron Highlanders, dead, with his head buried in the stream. He, too, had crawled there; but the weight of his knapsack had pressed his head and shoulders below the water, and thus, unable

to rise from weakness, the poor fellow had actually been choked in a hole about twelve inches deep. No stragglers were visible, and an awful stillness had succeeded to the roar of sounds that rung there yesternight; and now from his reverie Quentin was roused by the boom of a cannon at a distance. Others followed rapidly, and at irregular intervals. It was the French guns above St. Lucia firing over the flat point of San Diego on the last of the transports and the last of our troops who were embarking. Hill's brigade had now left the citadel, and Beresford, with the rear-guard, had already put off from the shore. Such were the startling tidings Quentin received from a mounted Spaniard, a fellow not unlike a contrabandista, who passed, spurring with his box-stirrups recklessly over the field towards Santiago. On hearing this, Quentin instantly galloped towards the harbour. It was too late now to think of getting his horse off, so he resolved to abandon it and take the first boat he could obtain. The last of the troops were gone now in the English launches, and not a single Spanish barquero could he prevail upon to put off; and so furious was the cannonade which the French had opened from the headland to the southward of Corunna, that many of the masters of our crowded transports cut their cables; four ran foul of each other and went aground in shoal water. Then, amid the cries, cheers, uproar, and a thousand other sounds on land and sea, the troops were removed from them to others, and they were set on fire, while the first ships of the fleet were standing out to sea, and had already made an offing.

This delay nearly proved favourable to Quentin. A Spanish boatman at last offered for ten duros to take him off to the nearest ship, which lay about a mile distant; but just as he dismounted to embark, a yell of rage and terror was uttered by the crowd upon the mole, and a party of French light dragoons rode through them recklessly, treading some under foot and sabreing others. At the risk of being pistolled, Quentin was about to spring into the sea, when an officer made an attempt to cut him down, but his cap saved his head from the first stroke. In wild desperation, with one hand he clung to the chasseur's bridle, and with the other strove to grasp his uplifted sword-arm.

"Rendez-vous!" cried the Frenchman, furiously.

"Eugene—sauvez moi!" was all that Quentin could utter, ere his assailant, whom at that moment he recognised, cut him over the head, and he fell, blinded in his own blood. It was the *last* blow struck in our first campaign in Spain.

When Quentin partially recovered he found himself supported in the arms of the young Lieutenant de Ribeaupierre, who was profuse in his exclamations of sorrow and regret as he bound the

wound up with his own hands, and led him away from the mole, expressing genuine anxiety and commiseration.

"Take care of your prisoner, M. le Lieutenant," said an officer, authoritatively. "*Sangdieu!* we have not picked up so many!"

"I shall be answerable for him. Ah, mon Dieu! why did I not know you sooner? Why did you not speak first, my dear friend?" Ribeaupierre continued to repeat.

The captain of his troop gave them a stern and scrutinizing glance. He was a forbidding looking man, with that swaggering spur-and-sabre-clattering bearing peculiar to some of those who had found their epaulettes on the barricades or among the ruins of the Bastile—a species of military ruffian, whose bearing was tempered only by the politeness which all military discipline—French especially—infuses in the manners of men.

"Take his sword away," said this personage, gruffly.

"Eugene, ask him if I may retain it—it was the last gift of Sir John Moore?" said Quentin, with intense anxiety.

"That is well—you shall keep it, monsieur," said the gruff captain; "Sir John Moore was indeed a soldier!"

"Am I, then, a prisoner?" said Quentin, with a sigh of intense bitterness, as he looked after the distant ships, now beyond even the range of the guns at San Diego, and bearing away with all their sails set—away for England!

"My captain has seen you—it must be so," replied Ribeaupierre, leading him into the city; "but prisoner or not, remember, mon ami, that you are with *me*."

The measured tramp of infantry was now heard, and guarded by fixed bayonets, some thirty or forty British prisoners passed with an air of sullen defiance in their faces and bearing. They were men of all regiments, gleaned up on the field or in the suburbs, and they were marched towards the citadel. Quentin gave a convulsive start as he recognised the face of Cosmo among them! He saw Quentin covered with blood—wounded to all appearance severely, and a prisoner too; so he gave him a parting smile full of malignity and hate.

Quentin cared not for this; he sprang forward to speak with him: but at that moment the blood burst forth afresh, his senses reeled, and he fainted. On that evening the tricolour was seen hoisted half-mast high on the citadel of Corunna, and the British fleet, though "far away on the billow," could hear the French artillery as they fired a funeral salute over the grave of Sir John Moore, in a spirit that was worthy of France and the best days of France's chivalry!

True it is, indeed, that "he whose talents exacted the praises

of Soult, of Wellington, and of NAPOLEON, could be no ordinary soldier."

But there was *one* in whose heart a blank remained that no posthumous honours could ever fill up—the heart of his mother, to whom Sir John Moore was ever a tender and affectionate son, and whom he loved with great filial devotion.

It was not for some weeks after all this that Quentin learned that the Master of Roballion had been sent a prisoner of war to Verdun, in the department of the Meuse, where his fierce pride having procured him the enmity of the commandant, he could never effect an exchange; thus he remained on parole five long and miserable years, even until the battle of Toulouse was fought; and, in the meantime, worthy old Jack Middleton recovered from his wound, and was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the 2nd Battalion of the King's Own Borderers.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

MADAME DE RIBEAUPIERRE.

"Who should it be? Where shouldst thou look for kindness?
When we are sick, where can we look for succour?
When we are wretched, where can we complain?
And when the world looks cold and surly on us,
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye
With such sure confidence as to a mother?"—JOANNA BAILLIE.

A MONTH after the occurrence of the stirring events we have just narrated, Quentin Kennedy found himself an inmate of the same house with his young French friend at Corunna—the pretty villa that faced the bay of Orsan, the same mansion in which the Master of Roballion spent that remarkable night before the battle.

General de Ribeaupierre had been appointed by Marshal Soult military governor of the town and citadel of Corunna, in which there was a strong French garrison; but instead of occupying the gloomy quarters assigned to the governor, Madame de Ribeaupierre, who had joined him, preferred the little Villa de Orsan near the coast, and had prevailed upon him to place Eugene on his staff as an aide-de-camp, and thus the whole of her household now seemed, for the time, to be peacefully located in that remote corner of Gallicia. Both madame and her husband the general were considerably past the prime of life. He was a fine courtly gentleman of the old French school, and in his secret heart was a sincere monarchist, but not so rashly as to oppose

fact or spirit the tide of events which had replaced the line of St. Louis by Napoleon, with whom he had served early in life, in the Regiment of La Fère. Madame might still be called handsome, though long past forty. Perfectly regular, finely cut, and having all the impress of good birth and high culture, her features were remarkably beautiful. Her manner was singularly sweet, gentle, and pleasing; yet she had an eye and a lip indicative of a proud and lofty spirit, that had enabled her to confront the blackest horrors of the Revolution in France. Powdered white as snow, she wore her hair dressed back over a little cushion, with a few stray ringlets falling behind in the coquettish manner of the old Bourbon days, while her full bust, plump white arms, her short sleeves with long elbow-gloves, her peaked stomacher and her amplitude of brocade skirt, with many a deep flounce and frill of old Maltese lace, all made her a pleasing picture at a time when, in imitation of the prevailing French taste, the English woman of fashion wore a huge muslin cap, her waist under her armpits, and her skirts so tight that she resembled nothing in this world but a long bolster set on end.

Knowing how much the young prisoner of war and Eugene owed to each other, and how much the former had suffered recently under the sabre of the latter, she rivalled her husband in kindness, and was unremitting in her hospitality, her nursing, and her motherly attention.

Quentin had the care of the best surgeons on the French staff—a class of medical men who far excelled the rabble of apothecary boys then commissioned for the British army; the cool season of the year was favourable for his recovering from such an ugly slash on the caput as Eugene's steel had bestowed so, our hero, having youth and health on his side, grew rapidly well, and by the 16th of February—one month after the battle—he had become quite convalescent; but politeness even could scarcely make him repress his impatience to begone; yet he knew that, though the guest of General Ribeaupierre, he was still a prisoner of war, and could not leave any French territory until duly exchanged. During his illness he had many a strange and fantastic dream of Flora and of home. But now there came to him dim memories of an infancy *beyond* that spent in Rohallion; there was the quaint foreign town, with its winding river, its antique bridge, its boats and windmills. Like a dream, or some vision of mystic memory, he remembered this place in all its details and features, and with them came the old and confused recollection of a lady, it might be, nay, it *must* have been, his own mother, in rich velvet with powdered hair. Then came his father's face, pale and despairing, and the night of the wreck at

the Partan Craig, all jumbled oddly together. Was it a sense of pre-existence—that sense felt by so many at different times—that haunted him? Was it a sense of the *unreality* of the present conflicting with the certainty of the past? We cannot say; but there came upon his mind a strange consciousness that this scene, this river, with its town and woods and hills, this lady in velvet and powder, were not creations of the fancy, and were not new to him. Was it a phase of that which is termed by Dr. Wigan the "duality of the human mind," which comes upon us at times—

> "As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
> And *ebb into a former life?*"

We pretend not to say; but poor Quentin was sorely puzzled, and that sabre cut in no way made his reasoning faculties clearer.

His room, a large one facing the bay of Orsan, was decorated for him daily by a quantity of beautiful flowers, which madame procured from the conservatory of the captain-general, scarlet and white camellias, rare geraniums, and glorious roses of every hue; while in the trellis-work verandah without were magnolias and creeping plants whose tendrils were covered with odoriferous flowers, blending and mingling pleasantly with the fragrant and earthy odour of the tiled floor, which was daily sprinkled with spring water. And there in a softly-cushioned easy-chair he sat for hours gazing dreamily out upon the sunlit bay, where the brown Spanish fisher-boats, manned by dark and picturesque-looking fellows in shirts and caps of scarlet and blue, were always preparing for sea, or tacking out of the bay with the white foam curling under the bows—a life of movement and bustle that contrasted sadly with his own inertia, and made him feverish with impatience. Even Eugene's aspect, as he came clattering and rattling to and fro, between the citadel and the villa, in uniform and accoutred with spurs and sabre, showed that the game of life was still played briskly by others, and fretted Quentin's soul.

"A prisoner," he repeated to himself, "and for heaven knows how long! Is this the fruit of my ambition? Is this the prize I have striven, struggled, and starved—fought and bled for during all the horrors of that campaign? Unlucky indeed was the hour when Hope sent me beyond the city on a bootless errand, and when Eugene cut me down on that accursed beach! Captivity even thus, though surrounded by every kindness and luxury, is more than I can either bear or endure! Besides," he added, bitterly, aloud, "I may be reported dead or missing, and Flora—may—might—and my commission too—may be cancelled."

"No, no, my good young friend," said Madame du Ribeau-

pierre, who had entered unheard; "my husband, the general, saw all that properly arranged, and despatched Eugene in person, with a memorandum of your name and regiment, to the commissaire for British prisoners, to inform him that we had you here, where we mean to keep you as long as we can."

"It was most kind, dear madame," said Quentin, bowing low to hide confusion for his petulance, and leading the lady to a chair close by his own.

"Kind, monsieur, say you? It was but just and proper that your friends should know of your safety," said she, with a bending of the neck, a species of bow that reminded Quentin of old Lady Rohallion; for this Frenchwoman had all that old-fashioned grace which, in Scotland, died with the Jacobites, and in France expired with the monarchy. "Judging by my own fears and emotions, I was most anxious that—that your mother, I presume, should know that you, at least, had not perished on that unhappy 16th of January."

"My mother," repeated Quentin, and with the memory of his recent dreams a thrill of sadness came over his heart, as he looked into the fine dark eyes of this noble French matron, who seemed so inspired by feminine tenderness and commiseration that she placed her white hand caressingly on the half-healed scar which Quentin's short crisp hair but partially concealed.

"A naughty boy was my Eugene to do this, but he has never ceased to deplore it. Yes, your mother; ah, mon Dieu! it was well that she did not see you as I saw you, after the mischief Eugene wrought, when the Chasseurs of the 24th carried you into the citadel covered with blood! Yet, if she knew all, she might safely trust you with *me;* for I have known what it is to lose a child ere this, and others whom I loved dearly—to be left alone, reft of that being whom I hoped was to love and remember me long after I had passed away. Eugene is a good boy, and I love him dearly; but you—your mother, mon ami?"

"Madame, I have *no* mother."

"Mon Dieu! and you so young!"

"No, nor any relation in the world," said Quentin, in a voice half angry and half broken; "save some brave friends who died at Corunna, and one in Scotland, far away, I never had any who loved me."

"L'Ecosse—l'Ecosse!" repeated Madame de Ribeaupierre, with sudden interest. "We old-fashioned French love the memory of the old alliances when our royal houses so often intermarried, and still respect the land where the line of St. Louis finds a home; and so," she added with kindling eyes, "monsieur is an Ecossais!"

"Yes, madame, I have every reason to believe so."

"To believe—only to believe, monsieur?"

"Yes, madame"

"How?"

"It is my secret," said Quentin, smiling.

"Pardonnez-moi!" said madame, colouring slightly.

"My name is one of the oldest in Scotland."

"True—true; mon Dieu! I know there are earls of that name who have the tressure floré and counterfloré in their coat-of-arms," said she, while a sad and beautiful smile lit up her fine face. "I had a dear friend who once bore the name—but it was in the old days of the monarchy, and for the sake of that friend I shall love you more than ever;" and patting Quentin on the head, she kissed him on the brow just as her son entered with a servant in livery, who came to announce that the carriage was at the door.

"Très-bien, Louis," said she; "monsieur will accompany us, Eugene, the day is so fine; he shall take his first drive with me, and you may follow on horseback if you choose. I don't like spurs in a carriage."

"I shall be very happy, my dear madame, though our mutual friend, the General de Ribeaupierre, has seen fit to send me no less than four times this morning with absurd messages to the sappers who are repairing the bridge of El Burgo," replied Eugene, whose boots and light-green uniform bore evident traces of mud.

"Come, Eugene, and never mind; as I am only your mamma, and not your intended, you have no need to be so particular with your toilet; and if your horse is weary, order a fresh one."

Quentin enjoyed the drive greatly, as it was his first active step towards final recovery and strength. It was the evening of a clear and sunny day, and Quentin surveyed, with equal delight and interest, the long lines of massive bastions, towers, and battlemented walls that enclosed the town and citadel of Corunna—that vast stone frontage, with all its rows of grim cannon that peered through dark port-holes or frowned *en barbette*, steeped in the warm radiance of a red setting sun that tinged the sea and surf with the hue of blood, sinking every alternate angle of the fortifications in deep and solemn shadow. The music of a French regimental band came floating pleasantly from time to time on the thin air, as they played the grand march of the Emperor along the ramparts; and now the carriage, by Eugene's desire, was stopped near a part of the citadel where Sir John Moore's grave lay, and where the French sappers were already building the great granite monument which the noble

Soult erected to his memory, and which the Marquis of Romana completed. Quentin descended from the carriage and approached the spot. He was the last, the only British soldier in Corunna now. He sat down on one of the blocks, and looked wistfully at the place where he knew the poor shattered corse lay uncoffined. Then the manly figure, the gentle face, the soldierly presence, and the winning manner of Moore came vividly to memory, and Quentin covered his eyes with his hand, as he could not control his emotion. He was the last solitary mourner by the grave of him whose memory Charles Wolfe embalmed in verse.

The French sappers, who had been singing and laughing gaily at their work, respected his grief; they became quite silent, and saluted him with great politeness. Then Madame de Ribeaupierre took him by the hand and they drove away.

In the general's well hung, cosy, and handsome Parisian carriage, he passed more than once over the field of battle. Its sad débris had vanished now; the people of the adjacent villages had gleaned up every bullet and button. The dead were buried in trenches. Here and there might lie a solitary grave, but already the young spring grass was growing over them all. Quentin knew the ground where the Borderers had been posted, and thus he knew which of those fatal mounds was likely to hold the noble and true-hearted Rowland Askerne, Colville, and others whom he knew and mourned for. Even the *étourdi* Eugene was silent, when, for the last time, they surveyed the field.

"Here the 24th charged a square of one of your Scots regiments," said he; "and here fell poor Jules de Marbœuf. It was his last battle."

"Killed?"

"Yes—dead as Hector, by some of your bare-legged Scotsmen, who took the eagle of the 24th. *Sacré Dieu!*—think of that!"*

"And Donna Isidora?" said Quentin, not caring much about the eagle.

"The sorrowful widow—*peste!* she is at Lugo with the Light Division."

"She is not coming here, I trust?"

"Can't say, mon camarade; but pardieu, I should hope not."

Though Quentin knew that his commission and promotion in

* In February after the battle, *two* French eagles, each weighing fifteen ounces of silver, were sold to a silversmith in Chichester by a soldier of the 92nd Highlanders, who said that he had bayoneted the Frenchmen, and brought the trophies home in his knapsack.—*Annual Register* for 1809.

the 7th Fusiliers were now both secured, he writhed under the idea of being a prisoner of war; but there was no help for it. He had given his parole of honour, and by that he was bound to abide. Not even the keen longing to see Flora, to tell his story and lay his laurels, while they were yet fresh, at her feet, could lure him to break his bonds; but being intensely wearied of Corunna, he hailed with extreme satisfaction a change in the plans of the really delightful family with whom he resided.

Tidings of a new and more powerful expedition, destined to drive the French from Spain, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, had now come to all the Emperor's marshals and garrisons officially; and thus General de Ribeaupierre resolved on sending his lady, in charge of Eugene, to Paris, whither they begged Quentin to accompany them. Anything was better than lingering in Corunna or setting out for Verdun; and so, bidding adieu to the kind old general, within a few weeks after his convalescence, Quentin found himself kindly adjusting the wraps and mufflings of madame on the deck of the *Bien Aimé*, a privateer brig, mounting six 12-pounders, M. Marin, captain, bound for the mouth of the Loire; and long did he and Eugene pace the deck together that night, building castles, exchanging confidences, and smoking cigars, while the wild waves of the Bay of Biscay tore past in dark ridges to leeward, and the last of the Galician hills sank into the dark world of waters astern.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

THE "BIEN AIMÉ."

"He had fought the red English, he said,
In many a battle in Spain;
He cursed the red English, and prayed
To meet and fight them again!"—THACKERAY.

LE BIEN AIMÉ encountered very rough weather, and beat hard against the westerly winds which always prevail in the Bay of Biscay, where the broad waves of the Atlantic roll in all their full and unbroken weight. The third night was so dark and gusty, that neither Quentin Kennedy nor Eugene de Ribeaupierre turned in, but remained at the table much later than usual, listening to the somewhat piratical yarns and experiences of M. Jehan Marin, a short, savage-looking fellow, who wore a tri-coloured nightcap, a pea-jacket, and a broad black belt, with a square brass buckle of most melodramatic size. He viewed

Quentin evidently with intense dislike, as one of those sacré Anglais, whom he hated as so many snakes or other reptiles, and to this sentiment was added a profound contempt for him as a soldier. Quentin was soon sensible of all this, but deemed it neither safe nor worth his while to notice it; besides, the life of a prisoner of war was deemed of very little value by land or sea in those days. On this night, just as they went on deck to have a last glance at the pitchy blackness amid which *Le Bien Aimé* was careering, a flash broke through it, and a cannon-shot boomed across her forefoot; another flash followed, and the shot went through her foresail, which was bellying out upon the wind.

"Tonnerre de Dieu! what is that?" cried M. Marin, choking and sputtering with passion and alarm, as he jumped upon a carronade and peered to windward, from whence the assault came, but could see nothing, so intense was the darkness.

Boom! another heavy gun came, and now he could make out a strange ship, looming large and black on the larboard bow, and carrying an enormous spread of canvas, considering the nature of the night, and it was the guns of her starboard-quarter that were tickling *Le Bien Aimé* in this rough fashion.

"Nombril de Beelzebub!" bellowed Captain Marin, "here we are in action without seeing or knowing who the devil it is with! Beat to quarters—pipe up the hammocks and open the magazine!"

Just as he was speaking and gesticulating furiously, another shot knocked the fiddle-head of the *Bien Aimé* all to splinters; so matters were looking decidedly serious. By this time, and long ere the drum beat, his crew, half-dressed, were all at their quarters, and the hammocks were bundled anyhow into the side nettings.

"Clear away those weather-guns—cast loose the lashings, and load!" shouted Marin; "stand by the watch to shorten sail; 'way aloft and hand the topgallant sails; small-arm men, aft, and blaze away!"

Le Bien Aimé was now hove full in the wind's eye, so that the next shot from this strange ship went no one knew where.

There were terrible confusion, growling, swearing, with lack of discipline, on board, but no lack of pluck among the crew, and fifty of the most finished ragamuffins that ever sailed from the Loire or Brest stood to their guns. The next cannon that flashed from the strange ship made Quentin, who clung to a belaying pin on the port side, spring backwards involuntarily, the red light of the explosion seemed so close; but it enabled him to see for an instant the large ship with her lee side full of men.

"She is a frigate, at least!" exclaimed Marin, with a frightful

oath, as he drew his cutlass; "we cannot fight her; she may be French, and the whole affair a mistake, though: hush, silence fore and aft—they are hailing!"

"Ho—brig ahoy!" sang out a voice in most unmistakable English.

Jehan Marin ground his yellow teeth—those cursed English! Could he doubt that any but they would first fire and then question?

"Hallo!" he replied.

"What brig is that?" hailed the officer, through a trumpet, and Quentin felt his heart beating wildly with anxiety and anticipation. Next moment he heard Eugene and the French skipper engaged in a brief but very angry expostulation.

"What is the matter?" he asked, as Eugene joined him.

"Don't inquire," said he, "lest I blush that I am a Frenchman."

"Then your conference concerned *me?*"

"It certainly did, mon ami."

"How?"

"Marin wished to force you to deceive your countrymen, by replying to them in English—replying with his pistol at your head. *Sangdieu!* you comprehend?"

Before Quentin could reply, the question,

"What brig is that? d—n it, you had better look sharp!" came over the black surging water from the foe.

"Stand by the braces, and be ready to fill the sails to the yard-heads, and bear away right before the wind," said Marin; then, raising his voice, he shouted a deep and bitter curse through his trumpet.

"Hail again," cried the officer; "this is His Britannic Majesty's ship *Medusa*—send a boat off instantly with your skipper and his papers."

Instead of complying, Marin daringly gave orders to fire his three 12 pounders on the port-side, to fill his yards, and bear right away before the western breeze; but on the appearance of the first portfire glittering on his deck, bang came another shot from this pugnacious stranger, which took his foreyard right in the sling; it came crashing down on deck, breaking the arm of one man and the leg of another; and before M. Marin had made up his mind what to do next, the *Medusa*, a fifty gun ship, forged a little way ahead of him, as if she meant to sweep his deck or sink him; but neither was her object, for a boat's crew of those "pestilent Englishmen," with pistols in their belts and cutlasses in their teeth, were alongside in a moment, holding on with boat-hooks to the forechains, as the now partly unmanageable brig

fose and fell heavily on the black waves of that stormy midnight sea. Another boat-load clung like leeches to the starboard quarter, and in less than five minutes the *Bien Aimé* was the lawful prize of the British frigate *Medusa*.

Her crew were all disarmed and placed under a guard of marines; a strong hawser was run on board and made fast to the capstan or windlass, the yard heads were trimmed, a jury fore yard rigged in a trice, and the privateer in tow of the *Medusa* stood off towards the coast of "perfidious Albion." The weather was so rough, however, that they were compelled to slack off or let go the tow-line; but lanterns were hoisted at the foreyard, and thus they kept company till daylight.

"Fortune changes," said Eugène, laughing with all the nonchalance of a Frenchman; "you are now free, and I am a prisoner."

The prize-master, a rough and somewhat elderly man for a middy—one of those hardworking fellows whose boast it used to be that they came into the service through the hawse-holes, questioned the cabin passengers sharply and categorically.

"You, sir," said he, looking at Eugène, cutlass in hand; "what are you?"

"Eugène de Ribeaupierre, sous-lieutenant in the French service, and ready to give my parole."

"Keep it till we are at Spithead; and *you*, sir," he added, turning furiously to Quentin, "are an Englishman, I see, and in the French service too—eh?"

"No, sir; I happen to be a Scotsman, and in the British service."

"Where are your papers?"

"I have none."

"Oho; d—n me, you have none?" said he, suspiciously.

"No; but my name is recorded in the ship's books as a prisoner of war, a lieutenant in the 7th Fusiliers, proceeding to Paris on parole."

The mid shook Quentin's hand on hearing this, and ordered a jorum of grog, in which Eugène good-naturedly joined him, remarking—"Ma foi, monsieur, don't be too sure of having us at the Spithead."

"Why not, if the wind holds good?"

"Some of our ships may retake us—aha!"

"No fear of that, mounseer; the sea at present is only open to *us*," was the composed reply.

Marin, who sat in a corner, imprecated his fate bitterly; he cursed what he considered Eugène's squeamishness, which prevented him from availing himself compulsorily of Quentin's aid

to deceive the *Medusa;* but consoled himself by the hope that "he would yet take it out of the hides of those 'sacré Anglais,' in some fashion or other."

"Take up the slack of your jawing-tackle, Johnny," said the mid; "drink your grog, shut up, and turn in; your ill luck to-night may be mine to-morrow."

Madame de Ribeaupierre was greatly concerned by the turn her affairs had taken; but at a time when the whole sea was covered by the cruisers of the largest fleet in the world, it was strange that she did not anticipate some such catastrophe.

When it was reported to the captain of the *Medusa* that the wife of General de Ribeaupierre was in the *Bien Aimé*, he politely offered her the use of a cabin on board his ship; but having no wish to be separated from Eugène, she continued in the privateer, with which the frigate kept company for several days, until she saw her close in shore under the white cliffs of Old England, when she brought her starboard tacks on board, and, like a great eagle in search of fresh prey, stood over towards the coast of France. Thus, on the evening of the 16th of March, exactly two months after the battle of Corunna, Quentin found the *Bien Aimé* safely anchored at Spithead, close by the guns of a line-of-battle ship. There Eugène gave his parole, and Quentin found himself a free man!

The news spread rapidly in Portsmouth and in the Isle of Wight that the wife and son of Bonaparte's favourite cavalry officer, the Governor of Corunna, had been brought in as prisoners; and thus, on the very day they were preparing to go on shore, escorted by Quentin, a staff-officer, in full uniform, came fussily on board in a boat pulled by marines. Quentin recognised in him Lloyd Conyers, the aide-de-camp, whom he had frequently seen in Spain.

He had come, he stated, "by direction of the General commanding in the Isle of Wight, to invite Madame de Ribeaupierre, with her friends and attendants, to share the hospitality of his house—to consider it as her home, in fact, until she could make such arrangements as she wished."

"Is the general married, monsieur?" asked madame, smiling; "for I am not so *very* old."

"Madame, the general *is* married, and is nearer seventy than sixty," replied Conyers, laughing behind his great staff plume. "A boat is in readiness, and a carriage awaits you on the beach. The general lives at Minden Lodge, St. Helen's—we dine at half-past six."

Madame de Ribeaupierre, who was considerably crushed and crestfallen, accepted the general's offer; and accompanied by her

maid, who had many misgivings and vague terrors of the natives, by her son and her aide-de-camp, as she laughingly styled Quentin, landed in the Isle of Wight; and for the first time in her life found herself treading English ground.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

MINDEN LODGE.

"What thing is Love, which nought can countervail,
Nought save itself? even such a thing is Love.
And worldly wealth in worth as far doth fail,
As lowest earth doth yield to heaven above.
Divine is Love, and scorneth worldly pelf,
And can be bought with nothing but with self."—RALEIGH.

THE month was only March; but in that southern portion of England, the white daisy and the golden buttercup already spotted the green sward; the hedge-rows, nearly in full-leaf, were quite like bird-meadows, so full were they of song; while the coo of the ring-dove and the wild pigeon were already heard in the copse. The gardens teemed with beautiful flowers, and the air was delicious, the heat of the great white chalky cliffs being tempered by the breeze from the deep blue sea.

When the three guests reached his residence at St. Helen's, the general and all his suite were absent, at the inspection of the parochial artillery; for even then, so lately as the days of Corunna, the ancient custom of each parish in the Isle of Wight providing itself with one small piece of cannon, usually a six-pounder, to be kept in the church, or some small house built for the purpose, was still in force; and the recent threats of invasion had made the islanders somewhat expert as gunners, in handling their brigade of some thirty field-pieces. Built on an eminence at the pretty village of St. Helen's, near the mouth of the Bradinghaven, Minden Lodge was a spacious and handsome mansion; and though the three visitors knew not the names of the localities, from the lofty windows of the spacious and elegant drawing-room they had a fine view of Calshot Castle, of Portsmouth steeped in sunny haze, about seven miles distant, its harbour crowded with shipping; Spithead, with all the men-of-war at anchor, and the little *Bien Aimé*, with the union-jack waving above her tricolour; while far off in distance rose the taper spire of Chichester Cathedral.

The rolling of carriage wheels upon gravel walks announced the return of the general's party from the inspection; but for a

time no one appeared, and already the hands of the ormulu clock indicated a quarter past six.

Madame had made rather an elaborate toilet; her maid had dressed and powered her fine hair to perfection, and she was in all the amplitude of her flowered brocade and rich black lace, her antique steel and diamond ornaments, a gift from the Grand Monarque to her grandmother the Marquise de Louvre; Eugene had on the full uniform of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval, minus only his sword; Quentin felt himself obliged to appear in some kind of uniform, too, and so had carefully brushed up his old and worn-out volunteer coat of the 25th, to which he added a pair of silver epaulettes and a crimson sash, bought from a Jew of Corunna, who had no doubt found them on the field. They were sorely discoloured and torn; but he had the handsome gold belt and the sabre of General Colbert—the gift of Moore. Embrowned, taller, fuller, manlier, and looking even more handsome than ever, he was not astonished at being totally unrecognised; though *he* was startled, and beyond description bewildered, when the familiar voice of old Jack Andrews (who was clad in the Crawford livery), as he threw open the drawing-room door, announced "Lord and Lady Rohallion, Miss Warrender, *and* Captain Conyers."

Looking not a day older, but rather younger and better than when he had seen them last, Lord Rohallion entered in the full uniform of a general officer, as orthodoxly powdered and pig-tailed as ever; Lady Winifred in all the plenitude of her old-fashioned costume, with her high-dressed hair puffed and white as snow, and looking, though senior in years, somewhat the counterpart of Madame de Ribeaupierre, her necklace and ornaments being equally antique, with opals and diamonds that were *reversible* in the course of an entertainment; and there, too, was Flora, looking so charming, so dove-eyed, and blooming, in full dress for dinner, but leaning on the arm of a lisping and most-decidedly-too-attentive puppy of an aide de-camp.

So confounded was Quentin by the sudden appearance of these four persons, that he stood as if rooted to the carpet, unable to speak or advance, while apologies were profusely made by Lord and Lady Rohallion for their absence at the inspection on Bemerston Downs.

"You will make this house your home, my dear Madame de Ribeaupierre," said Lady Winifred, "until you choose to leave it for Paris——"

"We shall be in no hurry arranging the cartel for that," said Lord Rohallion; "though I have no doubt," he added to Eugène, "you will be impatient to rejoin your regiment—light cavalry, I think?" Eugène bowed very low; "and this gentleman——"

"Monsieur Kennedy—a name once very dear to me," said Madame de Ribeaupierre, presenting Quentin; "and dearer now again for the services he and my Eugène have performed for each other."

Lord Rohallion bowed, and shook the hand of Quentin cordially, but did not remark his features particularly, till the expression of astonishment and joy, half mingled by doubt and fear, which he saw, while surveying alternately the faces of Flora and Lady Winifred, attracted all his attention.

"Quentin—Quentin Kennedy!" they exclaimed together. Flora seemed tottering and deadly pale; but Lady Rohallion threw herself into his arms, and sobbed hysterically.

Conyers played with the tassels of his sash, and thought himself decidedly in the way. . . .

Brief and rapid were the questions asked, and explanations given now; other guests came crowding in till the dinner-party was complete, and Jack Andrews made the gong send its thunder from the vestibule: thus they were compelled to compose themselves, nor indulge in that which well-bred English society so eminently abhors—a scene.

"I was thought too old to command a brigade in the field, Quentin," said Lord Rohallion, shaking the hand of his young friend, at least for the sixth time; "so the Duke of York kindly sent me to this quiet place. If the flat-bottomed boats ever leave Boulogne, they will find me, however, at my post; and, egad! I hope to show them there is life in the old dog yet!"

Conyers, the aide, who no doubt usually acted as esquire to la belle Flora, was considerably put out—disgusted, in fact—when he found her completely appropriated by another; while he was compelled to offer his arm to the buxom wife of an adjutant of a Veteran battalion.

"Flora!"

"Quentin!"

They had no other words for each other, even in whispers, as they went mechanically to the dining-room, where all the cold formality of a grand state dinner was to be enacted and endured.

A strange throbbing thrill ran through Quentin's heart, as memory went back to that last meeting in the sycamore avenue, and *the last kiss* given there, as he seemed with the touch of her hand to take up the long-dropped link of a life that had passed away—his boyish life of joy and love at Rohallion. They were young, but, strange to say, in their instance, separation for a time, instead of cooling, strengthened their mutual regard; and when Flora spoke, the old familiar sound of her soft and beloved voice made the tender link complete. She drew off her glove

and smilingly held up a little white hand. There was but one ring on it—the diamond gift of Madame de Ribeaupierre, sent at a time when Quentin had no other gift to send; and the curious history of it afforded them ample conversation during dinner. As for Eugène, who sat opposite, he seemed immensely consoled, under his unhappy circumstances, by a blue-eyed and fair ringleted daughter of the Commissary General from Newport, that young lady's patriotic animosity to France seeming in no way to extend to a handsome young fellow in the green coat lapelled with white of the 24th Chasseurs à Cheval; so thus the daughter of "la perfide Albion" had it all her own way.

Then the old General and Madame de Ribeaupierre were, as Eugène phrased it in the French camp style, "like a couple of *fourbisseurs*," they sat with their powered heads so close together; but they were deep in recollections of the old court of the Bourbons, of the Scoto-French alliance, of the days of the monarchy, all of which Eugène was wont to stigmatize as "the rubbish of the world before the flood," for he was one of those young men who wisely, perhaps, don't see much use in looking back at any time.

Lady Rohallion had, of course, innumerable questions to ask concerning Cosmo; but, kept so distantly aloof as he had been by that uncompromising personage, Quentin found great difficulty in satisfying the anxious mother. Then Lord Rohallion asked many a question concerning the old Borderers; but as Quentin's battalion had been the *second*, and was consequently a new one, he had some difficulty in satisfying all his inquiries.

Fresh from foreign service and the seat of war, whence some rather exaggerated stories of scrapes and perils had preceded him, Quentin experienced all the intense boredom of finding himself "an object of interest." This annoyance was all the greater, that he was absorbing and absorbed by Flora, the heiress, the general's beautiful and wealthy ward, who had already turned the heads of all the hard-up fellows in the adjacent garrison towns.

All things have an end; even the longest and most stately of dinners, so in due time the ladies retired to the drawing-room. As Madame de Ribeaupierre passed Quentin, her cheek was flushed with pleasure and gratified pride by the attention she had received from the courtly old lord—that noble pair d'Ecosse; her eyes were bright, and she still looked indeed beautiful.

"Ah, my child, Quentin, I can see what I can see," she whispered; "it is *she* whom you love, then?"

"Yes, madame, most dearly," said Quentin, smiling.

"C'est un ange! and I shall always love her, too!" ex-

claimed the impulsive Frenchwoman, as she kissed Flora's blushing cheek.

"Quentin, follow us soon," said the latter, tapping him with her fan; "I want to hear more about that Spanish lady at the Villa de Maciera."

The gentlemen lingered over their wine; much "shop and pipeclay" were talked, with reserve, however, as Eugène was present; but the merits of the new shako, and the probability of the expected brevet, were as usual fully discussed. The first to join the ladies in the drawing-room was Quentin, who felt very much as if in a dream, from which he might waken to find himself in the cabin of the *Bien Aimé*, in the Villa de Orsan, or, worse still, in some comfortless bivouac in Estremadura; and glad were these united friends when the guests had taken their leave, and they were all left to themselves in the drawing-room. Much conversation and many explanations ensued; and a very simple remark, by stirring a certain chord of memory, was the happy means of bringing about a very unexpected revelation or *dénouement*—one, indeed, so remarkable as to deserve a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE REVELATIONS OF A NIGHT.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may!
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying
Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while you may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry."—HERRICK.

"It has come strangely about, Madame Rohallion, how my son Eugène, and your—your friend, Mr. Kennedy, have met during the contingencies of service in Spain," said Madame de Ribeaupierre; "and it is all the more strange that *my* name was once Kennedy."

We are sorry to say that the good lady pronounced it Kinnidée.

"Yours, madame?"

"My first husband was so named."

"Madame has been twice married?"

"Yes; and Eugène is the only son of the general's first wife, for he has been twice married, too," said Madame Ribeaupierre, with one of her merry little laughs.

"But I have always loved you, madame, as my mother," said the young officer.

"Indeed, child, you never knew any other," replied madame, as Eugene kissed her forhead very affectionately.

"Then was your first husband a Scotsman?" asked Lord Rohallion.

"He was, monsieur le général, a captain in the King's service during the monarchy."

"Was he killed in action, madame?"

"No, poor man—he was drowned at sea."

"In what year was this?"

"Alas! it was in 1798."

A keen, bright glance was exchanged by Lord and Lady Rohallion on hearing this: a light seemed to break upon their minds simultaneously.

"Madame, pardon me," said the lady, very hurriedly, "but may I enquire what is your christian name?"

"Josephine."

"Josephine!"

"Yes, madame. I was named at the font, Josephine St. Marie Duré de Lusat."

"Good heavens, my lord, if it should be so!" exclaimed Lady Rohallion, hurrying to her escritoire and bringing forth an old faded and yellow packet, from which she took a ring—the same that had been found on Quentin's father. It bore the name of Josephine graven on the gold, and a crest, a demi-griffin cut on an amethyst.

"This ring, madame—this ring—where did it come from? It was my mother's gift to my first husband, Captain Kennedy, of the Scottish regiment de Berwick, in the service of France; and this letter," continued Madame de Ribeaupierre, with increasing agitation, "this letter was mine—mine, written to him after he had left me with our child to return to his own country, whither I was to follow him——"

"And this commission, madame?"

"Was his—was his," she exclaimed, becoming deeply excited, as she pressed to her lips the signature of Louis XVI. "How came it here? And this letter, too, of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, written to him after the campaigns on the Meuse and Rhine?"

"They were found in the pocket-book of Quentin's father, when he was cast drowned on the beach, with him, then a little child, senseless and benumbed by cold," said Lady Rohallion, with one arm placed caressingly round the Frenchwoman's neck, and with her eyes full of tears, as the wild and stormy night on which our story opened came back to memory.

Madame Ribeaupierre became quite hysterical.

"My son—you? oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu! and this was your secret at the Villa de Orsan," she exclaimed, in a very touching voice, as she pressed to her breast the somewhat bewildered Quentin, who, having been deeply engaged with Flora, had heard not a word of the foregoing conversation.

After a time, however, she related that her husband, who had left Scotland in consequence of some quarrel, she believed, with his own family, had taken his mother's name of Kennedy, and entered the regiment de Berwick, in which he faithfully served the French monarchy, even after it was completely shattered by the Revolution. That, on a rumour rising that Monsieur then residing at Holyrood, was about to reconstitute the Hundred Scottish Guards, with consent of the British Government, he departed hurriedly from France, leaving her at Arques, with her mother, Madame Duré de Lusart, who was then on her death-bed. Accompanied by the Abbé Lebrun, an old friend, he set out for Scotland, taking with him their little son. She added, that the vessel in which they sailed was a Scottish brig, under cartel, and bound found for the Clyde; but it was, nevertheless, attacked by a French privateer, off the coast of Britain somewhere—where she knew not—but far to the north. The vessel was driven on a rock, and all perished save the Abbé Lebrun, who saw both her husband and child sink into the waves and die together. More fortunate, M. l'Abbé floated out to sea upon a spar, and was picked up next morning, in a most exhausted condition, by the same privateer which had done all the mischief. Notwithstanding all the skill of the great Doctor Thiebault, who came from Paris, her mother died, and now she found herself childless and alone in France, and where she was hourly in peril of the guillotine as an aristocrat The Bastile had been razed to the ground; that was good; but the change that had come over France was not for the better; "the gilded coach, the red-heeled slipper, and the supper of the Regency; the powdered marquise, for a smile of whose dimpled mouth the deadly rapier flashed in the moonlight—the perfumed beauty, for one of whose glances a poet would have ransacked his brain to render it smoothly in verse;" the high-bred old courtier, the gilded saloon—had all given place to regiments of sans-culottes, to assassins, and the sovereign people—to the République démocratique et sociale; to planting trees of liberty, and grape-shotting the mob; to women debating the existence of a God, and dancing nude in the fêtes of Venus; to a France of heroes and madmen—a Paris of "monkeys and tigers!" Her country had become intolerable to her; she was long in despair, she said, and but for the kindness and love of her

friend, Marie de Ribeaupierre, a chanoinesse of the Chapter of Salles, in Beaujolais, she must have sunk under the loss of all her friends; but after a time Marie's brother came; he was then a captain in the regiment of La Fère, a handsome man, and in the prime of life, and, happily for himself, stood high in the favour of Citizen Bonaparte. In the end, she added, with a little smile and a very faint blush, she learned to love him. They were married, and then she strove to console herself for the loss of her own child by making a pet of his, the little Eugène.

"Ah, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" she exclaimed, "what subtle instinct was this? what mysterious voice was that which whispered in my heart to love you, Quentin? I have only learned your name to-night; but how often did I ask of myself, at the Villa de Orsan, what is this stranger—this young Scottish officer—to me, that I should feel so deeply interested in him? Oh, Ribeaupierre, my dear husband, what a strange story I shall have to tell you! That he, for whom I prayed nightly, and thanked God for saving the life of *your* son Eugène, proves to be mine—the child of my own bosom—my long lost little Quentin! Truly the hand of a kind and blessed Providence has been in all this!"

After she became a little more composed, she desired her maid to bring from her dressing-table a casket, which she unlocked, saying that she would show Quentin a miniature of his father—a relic on which she had not looked for many a day; and he gazed on it with eager, earnest, and mournful tenderness.

It was the face of a dark-complexioned and thoughtful-looking young man, with his hair simply tied by a blue ribbon; there was a singular combination of mildness, sadness, and softness in the features and their expression; but when it was handed to Lady Rohallion, a sharp little cry, as if of pain, escaped her.

"Reynold—my lord—look here—you know this!" she exclaimed.

"My brother Ranulph, for a thousand guineas! Why, madame, this is a miniature of my brother Ranulph Crawford, who was killed, we were told, in the defence of the Tuileries."

"No—no—impossible! impossible! Captain Crawford who fell there was our dear friend—he commanded the grenadiers of the regiment de Berwick. My husband took, I know not why, his mother's name in France; and that miniature he hung round my neck on the day we were married in Arques by the good Abbé Lebrun."

"I can swear that it was painted for me, about three years after Minden, by honest David Allan of Alloa, whose name should be within it."

"True, monsieur, behold!" she added, opening the locket by a

spring; "there is the name of Monsieur Allan, and this is Quentin's hair, when it was the colour of gold, woven up with —with his poor father's."

"This is wonder upon wonder!" exclaimed Flora Warrender, as she hung on the neck of Madame de Ribeaupierre, who kept the right hand of Quentin pressed upon her heart, while Eugène, who stood by, was stroking his moustache, and thinking if he had anything to do in the way of kissing he would certainly prefer Flora.

Lady Rohallion was silent.

So the boy, by whose cradle in infancy she had watched with such motherly solicitude, was the nephew of her husband, the cousin-german of Cosmo; the son of that younger brother who had been the first love of her girlish days—the worshipper of her girlish beauty, in the pleasant times long past in sunny Nithsdale, the courtly gentleman and gallant soldier of fortune, over whose life she had cast a shadow. It was a strange mystery!

Some such idea was passing in the mind of her husband.

"Good heavens, Winny! so that poor father, whose fate is yet a legend among our tenantry—the poor man who struggled so bravely to save his child, when the ship was shattered on the Partan Craig—who died in sight of Rohallion, and whom honest John Girvan buried as became a soldier in the old kirkyard—was my dear brother Ranulph!" exclaimed Lord Rohallion, with a sudden gush of affection and emotion; "and 'tis his boy we have so loved and protected, Winny! Poor Ranulph—poor Ranulph! I should like to have looked on your handsome and honest face once again ere it was laid in the grave; but it could not be, for I was absent. Madame, do you know that his drowned corpse was carried forth by his father's people from the gate of the house in which he was born, and every room of which has echoed to his voice in boyhood, and past the very haunts in which we played together, under the old sycamores of the avenue, by the Lollard's Linn and the Kelpie's Pool, on the Girvan Water. Thank God, poor Ranulph, you found a grave at last among your own people, and where your forefather's lie; but we have much to make amends for," added the old Lord, as he placed Flora's hand in that of Quentin; "may you both live long to enjoy all the happiness you deserve; and be assured that my last prayer will be for both of you!"

* * * * *

What follows?

Orange wreaths and snow-white satin dresses, kid gloves and wedding favours, compliments and kisses, a marriage settlement, and so forth, were all the subjects for mature consideration ere

long at Minden Lodge; and within a month Quentin *Crawford*—he had to change his name, as well as Flora—departed with his bride to spend the honeymoon among the green summer woods and purple heather braes of Rohallion; and joyful indeed was the salute that pealed from the guns on the battery—whilome those of La Bonne Citoyenne—under the direction of the old quartermaster, who concluded by a general salvo that scared the rooks from the keep, sent the sea birds screaming in flocks to the Partan Craig, and made the dominie jump a yard high in his square-toed shoes; and red and rousing were the bonfires that blazed on the old castle rock and on the heights of Ardgour in honour of the day.

Cosmo, we have said, was enjoying the seclusion and safety from duns afforded by the fortress of Verdun, where we have no wish to disturb him.

Monkton, long since retired upon full pay as colonel, is still one of the most popular members of the Caledonian U.S. Club; but poor old Middleton died a lieutenant-general some years ago, near his native place, the secluded village of the Stennis, in Lothian. The old watch, which was the providential means of saving his life in action, he never had repaired; but it always hung above his mantelpiece with the bullet in it, for he said that no clock in the land could ever remind him so well of time and eternity.

Donna Isadora accompanied the French troops to Paris, and made a tremendous sensation as a Spanish opera-dancer. In London she became the rage, and, as *La Fille de l'Air*, her benefits were ably puffed and conducted by her secretary, whose name always figured in the bills as El Senor Trevino.

Old John Garvan "sleeps the sleep that knows no waking" in the green kirkyard of Rohallion, but he lived to dandle a young Quentin on his knee, and to hear the dominie teach a little Flora to lisp her first letters under the old oak-trees of Ardgour.

Eugène de Ribeaupierre, now one of the generals of the *second* Empire, has lived to lead his division of cavalry at Inkerman and the Tchernaya, at Solferino and Magenta, as bravely as ever his father did at Corunna, at Austerlitz, or Smolensko, in the wars of Napoleon the First.

THE END.