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TALES OF THE GREAT AND BRAVE.



TALES
OF THE
GREAT AND BRAVE.

BY
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AUTHOR OF "TALES OF MANY LANDS," "THE LIVES OF CELEBRATED
ADMIRALS," ETC.

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TO

GEORGE RAWDON R——,

IN ANTICIPATION OF HIS FIFTH BIRTH-DAY,

THESE

TALES OF THE GREAT AND BRAVE,

ARE DEDICATED,

IN TOKEN OF THE EARNEST LOVE OF

THE AUTHOR.

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TALES

OF

THE GREAT AND BRAVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF WALLACE.

ABOUT five hundred and forty years ago there was a king of England who was called Edward the First. He was so called because he was the first of the Norman race of monarchs of that name. He was of a proud and haughty nature, eager not only to govern his own kingdom, but to subject other countries to his will. For several years he had carried on war with Scotland, whose king, John Baliol, at last, broken down and dispirited by the continued attacks made upon him, resigned his throne, and delivered himself prisoner to Edward, who had him, together with his eldest son, carried to England; and here they were kept in confinement for many years.

Having succeeded in subduing Scotland, the English

king appointed several governors who, under his command, should rule the country, so that it was no longer a free nation, but was obliged to submit to whatever laws Edward choose to impose upon it.

I tell you all this, that you may know what it was that Wallace (whom you are now going to hear about) fought for.

Edward had returned from Scotland, secure that that country would give him no further trouble, but would at once quietly content itself with the idea that it was the slave of England and of England's king. In this, however, he was greatly mistaken, as you shall hear.

The Scots, who had ever been a brave as well as a free people, were very far from quietly yielding themselves to the yoke of the English. Hating the governors placed over them, they held their laws in contempt ; and collecting themselves into large bands, they wandered about the country, attacking the English whenever opportunity presented itself—burning their houses, taking some prisoners, and murdering others. Every day the number of these armed bands increased ; for the tyranny of the English was every day growing more insupportable, till, at last, the whole country became a scene of bloodshed and of terror.

At this time, William Wallace, the brave and noble champion of his hapless country, was first heard of in Scotland. Even when a boy he had hated the English. They were, he said, a proud and wicked nation ; but as he grew older, his hasty and determined temper was roused into passion, by the insolent and overbearing

treatment of their governors, and by the miserable state to which, through their means, he saw his unhappy countrymen reduced. He required but an opportunity to prove his deeply-rooted hatred to the invaders of his country, nor was this long wanting.

In the town of Lanark there was a young and beautiful lady, to whom it was said Wallace was going to be married. One day, when walking through the streets of that town, he was met and surrounded by a party of English soldiers. At first he attempted to pass quietly on, and to take no notice of their rude and contemptuous manner; but, when one of them struck him, enraged at the personal insult and burning to revenge, in some degree, the miseries which he saw around him, he drew his dagger, and stabbed the offender to the heart. The whole party immediately attacked him; crowds gathered in the street, and Wallace with great difficulty escaped into the house of the lady of whom I have told you. Eager for his safety, she pointed hastily to a back passage which led to the hills, where she new, amidst the caves and thickets, he could easily elude the search of the soldiers.

Wallace escaped. But the wrath of his pursuers was not to be appeased, and their whole resentment was now turned upon the innocent girl who had saved him from their revenge. The house was entered by the enraged soldiers, she was seized, and the next day the English sheriff, with a cruelty which we can now hardly believe ever to have existed, condemned her to be executed.

Wallace heard of her fate ; and great, and quickly accomplished, was the revenge he took. That very evening he collected thirty brave and faithful men, on whose courage he could rely, and with them, in the middle of the night, he entered the town, preserving the greatest silence, that they might not be discovered. They reached the house where the sheriff slept. Wallace rushed upon the door, broke it open, and, dressed in full armour, with his drawn sword in his hand, he stood for a moment before the terrified man. "Who are you?" asked he, "and why are you here?" "I am William Wallace," said he, "whose life you sought yesterday ; and now you shall answer for the cruel death of her whom you have this day slain." So saying, he seized him by the throat, thrust his sword through his body, and threw the unhappy wretch, bleeding and lifeless, into the street.

This fate was, perhaps, merited by the unfortunate Englishman ; but still it was a cruel and bloody murder ; and Wallace, after its completion, was again obliged to flee to the hills in search of safety. Here he collected a small band of brave and resolute men, who willingly submitted themselves to his command : for his great strength and bravery were already widely known through all the country.

As their numbers were yet very small, they seldom trusted themselves far from their friendly hills : but they frequently met and attacked small parties of the English soldiers, who were wandering about the country in search of booty, or who had been sent out for the

purpose of capturing Wallace and his little band. In these skirmishes he was generally successful. His own bravery, and the enthusiasm of his faithful followers, defeated each new attempt to compel them to submission.

Devoted to their leader, whose slightest will was a law to them, these brave men looked up to Wallace with an unbounded confidence. For his sake they would take long and rapid marches, and would endure days of fatigue and hunger without a murmur. Proud of their own frequent successes, they now began to look with contempt upon the nation by which they had allowed their country to be overrun, and to consider them far inferior to themselves in strength and courage, and in the knowledge of war. Numbers too, at this time, flocked daily to the hills, eager, under Wallace's command, to fight on behalf of their country ; so that, in a little time, their brave leader saw himself at the head of a large and powerful body of men.

At first, this warlike band, devoted to the cause of liberty, had consisted only of those of the lower class ; but now their renown spread through the country, and many lords, knights, and gentlemen hastened to give their assistance in subduing their powerful enemies, the English intruders.

Among these lords and gentlemen, the most powerful and the most gladly welcomed by Wallace and his troop, were two brave knights, Sir William Douglas and the young Bruce, lord of Annandale. Both of these lords had many followers and vassals, who went with them,

so that the band of Wallace was now increased to a considerable army, and they no longer contented themselves with attacking only such parties as chance threw in their way ; but, quitting their places of concealment, they wandered through the country, and, I fear, did much harm, and many wicked and cruel things.

The English priests, in particular, suffered under the hatred in which they were held by the Scottish soldiers. Whenever any of these poor, and perhaps harmless men were discovered, they were immediately taken prisoners ; and after being harshly treated, to compel them to give what riches they possessed to the soldiers, they were carried to some high bridge, and having their arms tied behind their backs, so as to prevent all hopes of escape, they were thrown into the river below. These were base and wicked deeds ; but though a brave people, the Scots were at this time wild and lawless, and their hatred to the invaders of their country knew no bounds.

Another act of the most treacherous cruelty about this period, on the part of the English, again awoke Wallace's thirst for immediate vengeance ; and again was it as speedily and as fearfully accomplished, as on that night when he slew the English sheriff in the town of Lanark.

Some of the Scottish leaders had been invited by a party of English to attend their council, which was held in a large wooden building or barn, on the pretence that they wished to obtain a few days' truce. Not doubting that the promise of safety given by the

English would secure them from danger, some of the best and bravest leaders of the Scottish army entered the barn. They were immediately seized by soldiers stationed there for the purpose, and were hurried by them to a room above, where they met with instant death.

Wallace, who had himself narrowly escaped falling into the same snare, saw in a single day many of his best and bravest friends cut off by the vilest treachery ; and he instantly decided how and when his revenge was to be accomplished.

In the middle of the night, at the head of three hundred men, he suddenly, and in silence, approached the wooden houses, in which he knew the English soldiers to be lodged. The night was dark ; the soldiers, who had been drinking to a late hour in the evening, slept soundly, and Wallace and his men were unobserved, whilst they continued their work of heaping wood covered with pitch against the houses, and fastening the doors on the outside, that none might make their escape. The word of command was then given by Wallace ; torches were held to the piles of wood, and in a few minutes the whole cluster of houses were all one sheet of flame. The English, who had triumphed in the fate of the Scottish leaders, now themselves met a yet more fearful death ; not one escaped, for if any attempted, by means of the windows, to fly from a burning grave, they fell into the hands of the Scottish soldiers, and died by the sword.

Edward of England, to whom the daring and ad-

venturous conduct of Wallace was made known, began to fear, that unless he sent a larger army than he had hitherto done into Scotland, and speedily succeeded in subduing this great leader, that he and his band would shortly be in possession of the whole country. This he determined, if possible, to prevent ; nor had he any doubt of his success. These Scots, he said, were outlaws, who would be frightened into submission by the appearance of a regular army marching against them. He commanded, therefore, the most powerful of his barons to collect their followers, and pass immediately into Scotland. This was soon obeyed, and a large army marched against Wallace.

When informed of the attack about to be made on him, the Scottish leader retired with his band to the hills. Here he concealed the greater number of his men, that when the English were marching on in search of them, and unprepared for the engagement, they might start from their hiding-place, and rush to the attack. He knew also that the river Forth lay between the hills and the field on which the English would assemble, and that it would be a favourable opportunity to assault them as they were crossing the bridge, which, from its being narrow, they could only do in small numbers.

Surrey, the English general, had under his command a much larger army than that of the Scots. He knew this, and thinking that Wallace must feel how little chance he had of success, proposed that they should try to make such arrangements as should prevent any bloodshed. The Earl of Lennox was sent therefore

with a flag of truce to propose terms of peace to Wallace, if he and his men would consent to yield themselves subjects to England : but he soon returned, declaring that Wallace had even refused to listen to his proposals, and that, notwithstanding his having offered bribes, he had not been able to persuade one single horseman or foot-soldier to desert his leader, and go over to the English side.

The Earl of Surrey, though thus repulsed in his first attempt, still hoped to be able to procure a peace ; and this time he sent two friars to propose terms, but they also returned unsuccessful, and brought with them this noble answer from Wallace : “ Go back,” he said, “ to your masters, and say to them, that we did not come here to be offered bribes, but to fight for the freedom of our native land, and to rescue her from her enemies ; tell your countryman to come on, we are ready, and will meet them hand to hand.”

When the English heard the brave and haughty answer of the Scottish chief, they cried aloud, “ He mocks us, and laughs at our offer ; lead us on, that we may cut him and his band to pieces.” They *were* led on ; already they had begun to cross the bridge when Wallace, rushing rapidly down the hill, attacked them before they had time to form their ranks, and threw them into the greatest disorder. Thousands fell beneath the blows of the Scottish soldiers, and many, in the vain effort to recross the river, were drowned by the weight of their armour.

Sir Marmaduke Twenge, a brave English knight,

found himself near the close of the battle, with only a few of his followers, surrounded by the Scottish soldiers. He looked to the bridge for means of escape : it was crowded with Wallace's men. "Let us throw ourselves into the river, and swim our horses across," said a young knight by his side. "Never !" answered Sir Marmaduke. "I shall never volunteer to drown myself, while I have a sword left to cut my way back to the bridge ; no such foul slander shall rest upon my name." He put spurs to his horse, and forcing it through the thickest part of the enemy, he cut a passage for himself, and reached the other side in safety.

The Scots still continued the slaughter : the defeat of the English was complete ; and the Earl of Surrey, who had a few hours before looked with pride on the extent and force of his army, now, alone and unattended, fled as hard as his wearied horse could bear him from the field.

The conquests of Wallace did not end here. In a little while all the castles and forts of which the English had possessed themselves were retaken by his band : and Wallace, the great deliverer of his native land, once more hailed her as a free country.

About this time there arose a famine in Scotland, and Wallace marched into England to obtain provisions for his army. Here, in revenge for what they had themselves suffered, they did much injury to the country, wasting with fire and sword such crops as were of no use to themselves, and inflicting great miseries upon the poor people, depriving many of their whole means of

subsistence. So much do scenes of war and of bloodshed corrupt even the kindest natures, that many of those who were now employed in laying waste a whole country, and who rejoiced in the misery they occasioned to its inhabitants, would, perhaps, in the time of peace, have shared their last mouthful with a stranger.

The rich churches, and monasteries, were in particular devoted to certain pillage by the Scottish soldiers, for in them they generally found the richest booty. One day, after attacking and plundering a large monastery, they pursued their march; but returning in a few hours by the same road, they re-entered the church, hoping to discover something which might before have escaped their notice. The poor monks, who had fled at the first approach of the soldiers, on seeing them continue their route, had crept back, and were trying to repair the damages done by their cruel enemies, when suddenly they saw them return. Terrified at their reappearance, they flew to conceal themselves; but the soldiers were already in the church, and brandishing their long swords over the heads of the trembling priests, they bade them say where they had concealed their treasure. "Alas!" said one of the monks, "you have yourselves deprived us of every thing: all that was ours you have taken from us." At this moment Wallace entered the church, and sternly commanding his men to desist, he upbraided them for their cruel conduct; then gently speaking to the priests, he told them to fear nothing for that they should be protected: and asked them to

read from one of the holy books that lay scattered about the church. They complied with his demand ; and Wallace, covered as he was with heavy armour, knelt devoutly, during the service, upon the stone pavement, and obliged his soldiers to do the same—such command had he over even their roughest moods.

When Wallace had returned with his band to his native country, the people, anxious to prove their gratitude, wished to confer some great honour upon him, and determined to elect him governor of Scotland. This was a high station, and one which he had nobly deserved ; but it roused the jealousy of many even of his own countrymen, as well as the indignation of the English king, who, incensed by the praises bestowed upon Wallace's bravery, even by his enemies, determined once more to wrest Scotland from the hand of its deliverer : and to accomplish this, spared no pains or expense in raising a powerful army, at the head of which he himself marched into Scotland.

Notwithstanding all I have told you of Wallace's success, in every engagement he had hitherto had with the English, he was quite aware of the advantage that, in an open field of battle, they would have over him, both from the better training of their troops and from the superiority of their arms. He knew, also, his own followers to be greatly inferior in numbers to the enemy he had now to contend with ; but his courage did not fail him. He marched his band to the encounter, and the armies met on the field of Falkirk.

Here the battle was fought, which decided the fate of Scotland.

The evening before the day appointed for the fight, the English army had halted on a heath near Linlithgow, where they were to pass the night. Fearful of being surprised by the Scots, the soldiers were not allowed to lay down their arms, but took what rest they could upon the hard ground.

Even the king of England had no shelter that night, but slept in the open air, with his horse standing beside him. In the middle of the night he was awoke by a sudden and violent blow ; the horse had kicked him in the side, and broken three of his ribs. There was a cry immediately through the army that Edward had been wounded ; and to prove that this was not the case, though he must have suffered great pain at the time, the king leaped upon his horse and rode round the field, cheering his men and telling them to fight bravely.

The next day was that appointed for the combat. On reaching the field, Edward proposed that they should pitch their tents and allow the soldiers some rest, but they called loudly to be led to battle. " We are certain of victory," cried they. " Lead us on, lead on." " Be it so," said the king ; and they immediately advanced to the charge.

Well and nobly was that battle contested. As often as Edward advanced, so often was he repulsed by the Scottish soldiers. At last, however, they began to yield. Such showers of arrows and large stones were poured among their ranks, by the English archers and

slingers, that no force could withstand them. The first line gave way ; the English cavalry rushed in, and the whole of the Scottish ranks were thrown into confusion. Many of the leaders with their followers were slain, and Wallace was obliged to fly for protection to the hills, with the small portion of his army which had escaped destruction.

This was the battle of Falkirk ; and here, as you have seen, poor Wallace was totally defeated. Finding that he could no longer resist the enemy, or be of any further use to his countrymen, he resigned the office of Governor of Scotland ; and with a few of his band, who, having loved him when prosperous, would not leave him in adversity, he lurked about the hills, and again found shelter from his enemies in the woods and caves.

Many of the gentry who had fought in the Scottish ranks, had, after their defeat at Falkirk, submitted themselves to Edward. But this Wallace resolutely refused to do. He had lived, he said, and would die a free man, and would never humble himself to the enslavers of his country.

The haughty spirit of Edward was not content with having conquered Wallace. He was determined also upon taking his life, and a large sum was offered to any who should bring him prisoner to England. For seven whole years the search was continued for him in vain ; but at the end of that time poor Wallace was betrayed into the hands of the English.

You will probably think it very wicked, and even cowardly, in Edward pursuing, as he did, a brave but

fallen foe. How much worse then will you think the person who betrayed him, when you hear that it was one of his own friends ! Yes, indeed : Sir John Menteith (for so this base dishonourable man was called) had once been the friend of the brave soldier ; and he it was who now succeeded in bribing the servant of Wallace to tell him where his master lay concealed. The house in which he was, was pointed out to his enemy. At night it was surrounded by the English soldiers, two of whom cautiously entering the room where Wallace slept, carried from it his arms and bugle ; thus leaving him without the power of defending himself, or of bringing his followers to his assistance.

Sir John Menteith remained outside ; for wicked as he was, he could not bring himself to look upon the man he was about to betray. The soldiers again entered the room, and awakening Wallace, they attempted to seize him ; but springing from their grasp, unarmed and defenceless as he was, he would not yield himself prisoner without a struggle ; and seizing an oaken seat which stood in his room, he attacked his assailants, and laid both dead at his feet.

Menteith now entered the room, and informing Wallace that the whole house was surrounded by soldiers, he told him that escape was hopeless ; and though at that moment he knew that he was going to deliver him to death, he gave him his honour that, if he would quietly yield himself prisoner, his life should be spared.

Incapable of treachery himself, Wallace was far from

suspecting it in another, and that other, one who had been his friend. He yielded himself prisoner to Menteith, who, so far from fulfilling his promise of safety, had him chained with many irons, and cast into a dungeon: notice at the same time being sent to Edward, that the brave man who had so long resisted his authority was now a captive in his power.

Orders were given to have him immediately conveyed to London; and here, with a crown of laurels placed in mockery on his head, he was taken before his judges, who accused him of treason toward Edward, and of having when he and his followers marched into England, burnt villages, and castles, and done much injury to the country and people.

Wallace indignantly replied: "I cannot be a traitor to Edward, for I owe him no allegiance. He is not my sovereign; he never received my homage; and while life is in this persecuted body he never shall receive it. To the other points whereof I am accused, I freely confess them all. As governor of my country I have been an enemy to her enemies. I have slain the English; I have mortally opposed the English king; I have stormed and taken the towns and castles which he unjustly claimed as his own. If I or my soldiers have plundered or done injury to the ministers of God, I repent me of my sin; but it is of God, not of Edward of England, that I shall ask pardon."

Of the latter part of the accusation he had confessed himself guilty. On this plea he was condemned to death. The crown of laurels was taken from his head:

with his hands chained behind his back he was dragged to the place of execution : and here, amid the murmurs of pity which the crowd could not but feel at his fate, the brave and noble Wallace met his death.

When taken down from the gallows his head was struck off, and placed on the top of a pole on London Bridge. And not only this ; for they still further took a poor and weak revenge upon his dead body ; and cutting off his arms and legs, they sent them to different towns in Scotland, that all passers-by might be reminded of the fate of the defender and champion of their country.

Edward thought by these means to frighten Scotland into a submission to his will ; but, on the contrary, the sight of the mangled limbs only awoke the pity of the people, roused their wish for vengeance, and recalled to them how long their beloved leader had resisted the force of his enemies, and for how long a time he had been the pride and glory of his country.

Thus ends the history of the noble Wallace. England with all her armies could never conquer him. He lived brave and free till betrayed by a man whom he had loved and trusted.

Edward now believed himself secure from any further trouble with Scotland ; but here he was again mistaken. Other brave men rose up to rid their country from its bondage ; and in less than six months after the death of Wallace, Scotland was again a free country.

Of this second deliverance from her enemies, however, I must tell you another day ; for I have written

this long story after you were sound asleep in your comfortable little bed, so that I am very tired, and must wish you good night, that, before I go to sleep too, I may pray that God may guard, preserve, and ever watch over you, my darling boy.

CHAPTER II.

ANECDOTES OF KING ROBERT THE BRUCE, FROM HIS FIRST
PROCLAIMING HIMSELF THE ENEMY OF ENGLAND, TO
THE CONQUEST OF BANNOCKBURN.

WHEN I had last night finished my story of Sir William Wallace, I promised, my dear little boy, that I should tell you what brave men rose after him, to fight for their country, and to free it from the power of the English ; and as you know that it is very wrong ever to make a promise that you do not faithfully keep, I am now going to begin my story of Bruce.

I remember, some time ago, when Herbert had promised to give some young rabbits to a little boy, he asked his mamma why he must wait till they grew older before he gave them. She told him that they were too young yet to live without their mother. "Do you think," she said, "that you could live without your mamma?" "Yes," he said, "Fitz could *live* without her;" and then added, in a very sorrowful voice, solemnly shaking his little head and long fair curls; "but he could do nothing else. He could not play, or run about, or be happy."

In the story that I am going to tell you you will hear about little boys who were obliged to live without their papa or mamma ; for at that time, even little boys were taken prisoners, and were shut up alone, without anybody who loved them, or who would be kind to them.

Do you remember that, among those who joined Wallace, there was one called Robert Bruce, the Lord of Annandale ? It is of him that I am now going to tell you, and I think that, when you have heard his story, you will like him very much. He was good, and brave, and generous ; so good, that when he was king of Scotland, he was always called the Good King Robert ; so brave, that now that Wallace was dead, he was well known to be the bravest man that lived in the whole of Scotland or England ; and so generous, that he often put himself into danger to help those who were in distress.

In the beginning of my story of Wallace I told you that Edward the First of England had dethroned the Scottish king, and had carried him prisoner to England. The right of succession to the throne of Scotland was then disputed by two competitors. The one was the head of a very powerful family of the name of Comyn ; the other was Robert Bruce.

Each of these barons thought that he was himself the next heir to the crown ; but they knew that Edward would oppose any attempt made by either to possess themselves of it, and that, unless they joined their forces together, and fought in the same cause, that there could be no hope of either succeeding.

When, therefore, Bruce found an opportunity of speaking in secret to Comyn, he said: "You must grieve with me to see our country under the dominion of strangers, and subjected, as it is, to the yoke of the English. Why should not one of us, for the good of our native land, forget that we have a claim to the throne, and assist in placing the other upon it, thus freeing ourselves from this shameful bondage? Give me your estates that you now hold, and I swear that I and my followers will aid you in chasing the enemy from our country, and in placing the crown upon your head. Or, if you prefer it, I will give you my large estates, and you will assist me in regaining the throne of my fathers." To this last proposal Comyn agreed; and Bruce was very well satisfied to give up his large possessions, for the good of his country, and for the hope of being one day upon the throne of Scotland.

Immediately after this agreement had been made, Bruce was obliged to return to England, and he intrusted to Comyn the care of furthering the scheme they had proposed. Had he better known the character of this man, he would never have disclosed to him his design of regaining his right. Comyn hated Bruce; and no sooner was he gone, than he dispatched messengers to Edward, informing him of what had passed between them.

Bruce suspecting from the manner of the King of England on their next interview, that he had been betrayed, though by whom he could not guess, found means to escape from the wrath and indignation of

Edward, and attended only by a single servant, he fled with all haste into Scotland.

I have told you that Bruce had no suspicion of who it was who had disclosed his secret to the king, but on flying into Scotland, he met, riding alone, a person whom he thought appeared as if he wished to avoid him. On approaching nearer, he knew him to be a servant of Comyn's, and immediately suspected that he it was who had acted so falsely toward him. No sooner had this suspicion entered his mind, than Bruce turned upon the man ; seizing his bridle, he threw him upon the ground ; and having searched his person, he found letters to the king of England, disclosing still further his own designs against that monarch.

The unfortunate bearer of these treacherous letters was instantly put to death ; and Bruce rode off with the proofs which he had thus obtained of the villany of Comyn, who he was determined to meet as if nothing had occurred to shake his faith in him ; and then, if he saw fit, he was to disclose the knowledge of his treachery.

Bruce and his betrayer met in Dumfries, in the church of the Grey Friars. He had brought with him a few attendants. Comyn was accompanied only by his brother. The two barons walked towards the altar, where they could converse without the fear of being overheard. At first they appeared to be upon friendly terms ; but soon their words grew high and angry, till, at last, Bruce accused his companion of a breach of faith, in having betrayed him to Edward. "It is

false!" said Comyn; and Bruce, firing at the words, drew his dagger, and plunged it in the breast of his enemy, who fell, weltering in his blood, on the steps of the altar.

It was the passion of a moment. Horrified and repentant for what he had done, he rushed from the church, and meeting some of his friends, he told them that he feared he had slain Comyn. "Fear!" said they; "and do you leave it in doubt? We shall make it sure;" and entering the church, they approached Comyn, who was still breathing, and repeatedly pierced him with their daggers; slaying at the same time his poor brother, who attempted to defend him.

This was a dark and wicked deed, committed, too, in the church of God; and long and bitterly did Bruce repent having thus given way to wrath. It was now no longer possible to carry on his schemes in secret; and before he had yet gathered round him a sufficient number of friends to maintain his cause, he was obliged to disclose his intentions. Thus he again felt the misery of his hasty and ungovernable passion.

No time was now to be lost. Bruce sent messengers in every direction, to entreat the assistance of the friends he had already secured; and he determined upon immediately going to the palace of Scone, there to have the crown of Scotland placed upon his head.

On his way thither with a small band, many of whom were brave and true warriors who had fought under Wallace, Bruce was met by a young baron, who, as the party approached, threw himself from his horse, and

kneeling before Bruce, owned him as his lawful sovereign, and asked permission to serve him. Gladly did Bruce accept the offer: raising the young baron from the ground, he kindly embraced him; telling the lords and gentlemen who surrounded him, that he was Sir James Douglas, son of Sir William Douglas, who had fought with Wallace, and that he doubted not but that he would do honour to the name of his brave father. This proved true; for Sir James Douglas almost rivalled Bruce himself in courage and in deeds of valour, and remained to the last devotedly attached to the cause of his royal master.

When Edward of England heard of the proceedings in Scotland, and knew that Bruce had actually been crowned at Scone, his indignation knew no bounds. It was only a few months since he had completed the conquest of Scotland, which had taken him fifteen years to achieve, and already the whole country was again up in arms against him. He swore to be revenged; and determined, though now an old man, and from long illness unable to bear fatigue, that he would himself lead an army into Scotland.

Great preparations were accordingly made in England, and a large and powerful force marched against Bruce. As they approached the neighbourhood of Scone, where the Scottish king and his small band of followers were stationed, the Scots drew up in form of battle, and prepared to fight. But the Earl of Pembroke sent a messenger to say, that as the day was already far advanced, they would defer the battle till the morrow.

Satisfied with the promise of the earl, that a truce should be held for that day, Bruce retreated to the woods ; where, undoing their armour, and resting their spears and swords upon the trees beside them, the men lay down upon the green grass, prepared their supper, or dispersed in small groups through the woods in search of amusement. While in this unguarded state, a cry was heard that the enemy had broken faith, and were upon them. Bruce, starting up, hastily replaced his armour, and he and his leaders had scarcely time to prepare for the encounter, when they were furiously attacked by the English, whose numbers were infinitely greater than their own.

A desperate struggle ensued ; four times was Bruce unhorsed, and his life in danger, and four times was he rescued and remounted by the bravery and devotion of some of his band. The contest was so unequal, that the effort on the part of the Scots from the first was hopeless ; many were slain, and it was with some difficulty that Bruce at last succeeded in retreating, with only a small remainder of his band, into the hills. Here he was very far from finding, like his predecessor Wallace, safety or repose. He was continually pursued and harassed by the mountaineers, who, accustomed from their childhood to wander about the rocks, would climb the steepest cliffs, and leap from crag to crag, like the wild mountain goat, or like the pretty chamois, which even your baby eyes followed with admiration in the valley of the Rhone, as its small graceful feet scarcely touched the rocks over which it bounded, in

its eager haste to get far beyond the reach of our observation.

Many a narrow escape did the brave Scottish king make at this time. Of some of these I shall tell you, that from them you may judge of the unusual degree of strength and courage possessed by this great man.

At one time three strong Highlanders, who had resolved at all hazards to get possession of his person, waylaid him, and all rushing upon him at once, one seized his bridle, and another attempted to drag him from his horse. With one blow of his battle-axe he felled the first to the ground: two assailants still remained, and one, springing on the horse behind the king, tried to plunge his dagger in his heart. Here the strength of Bruce was eminently displayed; shaking himself free from the iron grasp of the Highlander, he threw him to the ground; another blow of the battle-axe laid him lifeless as his companion; a moment more, and the third shared the same fate, and the triumphant Bruce returned uninjured to his men, who from a distance had seen and trembled at the unequal encounter, and who, now in the exuberance of their joy at his deliverance, could scarcely be restrained from grasping in their own rough hand the hand of the royal Bruce.

The cold and dreary winter was now approaching, and Bruce and his band suffered much from hunger, and from the coldness of the season; yet they did not dare, for fear of their enemies, to quit the hills and seek the low country, where they might have found provisions. Nor was it men and soldiers alone who thus

suffered for the sake of their country. Bruce's queen, with a number of other ladies, the wives and sisters of the different leaders, had joined their friends in the hills, and underwent with them all the hardships they had to endure. Sometimes they slept in the open air ; at others in cold, damp caves, with nothing but the skins of animals, which they had taken in the chase, to sleep upon ; and often they could not obtain food sufficient for their numbers. But every misfortune seemed to raise rather than depress the spirits of the Scottish king ; for though I dare say he often felt sad, he used to feign cheerfulness in order to support the drooping hearts of those around him. " Whatever happens," he would say, " let us never despair ; think always, that though it is now our lot to suffer, God may yet relieve us, as he has done to many yet harder beset than we : be of good cheer, my dear friends, I beseech you, and all will yet go well."

As winter advanced, however, they found it impossible any longer to continue the life they had been leading on the bleak mountains. They consulted among themselves what was to be done, and it was decided that Nigel, the young and beautiful brother of Robert Bruce, should, with a party of soldiers, accompany the queen and the other ladies to the castle of Kildrummie, where they hoped to be able to defend themselves from the enemy ; whilst Bruce with his remaining band was to cross over to Ireland. Having seen his queen depart, as he hoped, to a place of safety, he and his followers set forward on their march to Kentire, from which

place they were to sail for Ireland ; but when on their route they reached the banks of Loch Lomond, they looked in vain for a boat to ferry them across ; there was none to be found ; and as the dark cold night came on, Bruce and his men crept on their hands and knees through the narrow mouth of a cave by the side of the lake, and there spent the night.

In the morning the search for a boat was again continued, and Sir James Douglas did at last discover one, very old, small and leaky : it had been left lying there as utterly useless, and in this miserable boat did they determine to cross the lake. It was so small, that only three people could sit in it at once, and so leaky, that if they had not kept putting out the water as quickly as it came in, the boat would have filled and gone down. You may suppose that the passing over in this way of two hundred men, which was the number of Bruce's band, was a very slow and tedious process. The boat only held three, and as one was obliged to bring it back again, each trip backward and forward carried only two men to the other side. Some of those whose courage was much greater than their patience, tired of waiting for the boat, tied their clothes in bundles upon their backs, and holding their swords between their teeth, jumped into the water and swam across ; yet it was a whole night and day before the last of the party found themselves in safety on the other side. During all that time, the good king Robert had shared the fatigue and toil of the meanest soldier of his band.

But after this last adventure, the sufferings of these brave men were for a while at an end ; for they were gladly received and welcomed by the kind-hearted and hospitable inhabitants of the little island of Rachrin, where they passed the remaining month of winter in comfort and safety.

While the noble Bruce thus for a short time enjoyed repose, very different was the fate of the party he had left in Scotland. The castle of Kildrummie, to which the queen and her ladies had retired, was, by the order of Edward, besieged by the English. It was defended with great courage and bravery by Nigel Bruce, till one of his soldiers basely betrayed him to the enemy. He was then obliged to surrender the castle ; and he, with all the barons who had aided him in its defence, were carried away prisoners, loaded with chains, and immediately hanged.

Among those who were taken captive at this time, was the young Earl of Mar, not very many years older than you are now. They shut him up in a castle, and sent soldiers to guard him, for they were not wicked enough to put chains upon his poor little hands and feet, or to put him to death as they had done to others.

But of all who suffered at this time under the severity of the English, the fate of Nigel Bruce called forth the greatest degree of pity. Every heart but that of the cruel Edward bled for the youthful prince as he was led to the scaffold. That one so young, so beautiful, should die a death so ignominious, might

well move his enemies to pity, and his unhappy fate was long remembered even by them with sorrow.

The severity of Edward towards those who had attempted to resist his power in the castle of Kildrummie, was extended to the poor queen and the ladies of her party: they were carried prisoners to England, and there held in strict confinement for many years. For the Countess of Buchan, who had assisted at the coronation of Bruce, a punishment of the most savage nature was devised; she was shut up in an iron cage, which was hung on the walls of Berwick; and Mary, the sister of Bruce, was subjected to the same cruel treatment in the castle of Roxburgh.

In the meantime, Bruce, who, as I have told you, was kindly received by the inhabitants of Rachrin remained ignorant of the fate of his friends in Scotland. On the return of spring, when his band would no longer suffer from the inclemency of the weather, as they had done a few months before, he determined again to attempt rescuing his country from her foes, and returned to Scotland.

Their first effort was to be made upon Carrick, where lay the estates of Robert Bruce, all of which had been seized and disposed of by the English: but it was thought prudent not to risk the last remnant of their little band, unless they knew that the enemy did not greatly exceed them in number. A messenger was accordingly despatched, who was to act the part of a spy. He was to discover of what strength the

English were ; and, if he thought it advisable that Bruce and his band should come over and attack them, he was, on a certain day, to light a fire, which the king should recognise as a signal to advance.

The appointed day came, and every eye was strained in the direction where the wished-for fire was to appear. Towards evening a flame was seen. Gradually, larger and brighter, it rose high in the air ; and most gladly was it hailed by the soldiers, who were wearied of idleness, and longed again to be led to action by their brave leader.

I must now tell you, that the messenger sent over to Carrick by Bruce, found that the force of the English was such as might crush in a moment the little band of his master. So far from having lighted the fire, the moment he saw it, fearful of the mistake into which it might lead Bruce, he flew to the shore, in hopes to intercept their landing ; but he only reached the spot when they had already stood upon the shore of Carrick. The attempt he told them, would be hopeless, the force of the English was so great. "Traitor !" cried Bruce, "why then did you light the flame ?" "It was not I," he said, "who raised the fire, nor do I know by whom it was done. I saw it burning, and I hastened here to warn you, ere it was too late."

Bruce then inquired into the state of the country, and was unresolved whether to go on, or retrace his steps. He turned to consult his friends. "I know not what others may do," exclaimed his bold brother

Edward, "but here I shall remain, and follow out my adventure." His words were hailed with delight by the men, and Bruce consented that the attempt should be made.

It was night; darkness would favour the attempt: and with the utmost caution they approached the town, in which many of the soldiers were quartered. Believing themselves quite secure from any attack, the English had taken no precautions: the Scots dispersed themselves through the town, broke open the doors where the soldiers slept, and before they had time to arm themselves for defence, they were put to the sword.

No sooner did Edward hear of this attack upon his men, than he sent a large army to chase Bruce from Carrick; but the Scottish king, who knew his numbers to be very inferior to the enemy, did not wait for the encounter, but retired to the hills.

It is about this period that a very pretty story is told of Bruce and a spider. I do not know whether it is quite true or not; but as I do not see why it may not be true, I shall tell it to you.

One night, after having wandered about for many hours in search of shelter for the night, he entered a miserable shed, and throwing himself upon a heap of straw, he tried to forget for a little while, in sleep, the apparent hopelessness of his cause. But sleep would not befriend him; and he lay for some time, considering whether it would not be wiser to leave Scotland to its fate, and no longer to risk the lives of

his faithful followers in a vain attempt. Whilst thus engaged by his sad thoughts, his attention was attracted to a spider, which hanging by its long, thin web was trying to fasten it from one beam to another. Six times did it attempt to reach the spot, and six times had it fallen back unsuccessful. Bruce remembered that six times he had made an effort to free his country from her enemies, and, like the spider, six times had he seen his purpose defeated ; and he now resolved that, if the spider at last succeeded, he would once again march against England ; but that if it gave it up in despair, so would he. The spider stopped for a moment, then swinging itself with more force than it had yet used, it reached the spot, and fastened its web to the beam. " It has gained ! " said Bruce : " with perseverance I may gain too ; " and from that moment he never again thought of deserting Scotland.

Ever since this story was known of the persevering spider, and how it had made Bruce determine to fight against the enemies of his country, everybody of the name of Bruce, when they meet a spider, take the greatest care not to harm it, or to destroy its pretty web, as some people do who, when walking along, amuse themselves by breaking the long threads which it has taken so much trouble to fasten about the trees, or from one flower to another.

I remember, some time ago, I saw a very pretty drawing of a Highland brooch, which a gentleman had drawn for a lady of the name of Bruce. Instead

of having ornaments of silver and stones, as you know most Highland brooches have, he placed in the middle a large spider, and over it, in very thin silver, a round web, like that which some of the wood spiders spin. The house-spiders, you know, do not make pretty webs : they are thick and ugly, and covered with dust, while some of those in the woods shine like silver, and are very pretty.

But I dare say that you long to hear more about Bruce, and I can tell you of another narrow escape which he made from the treachery of three of his own followers, who had been bribed by the enemy to betray him. These men, a father and two sons, had, from their great strength and courage, frequently been kindly noticed by Bruce, who thought highly of their fidelity and attachment to his person. But forgetful of all his former kindness, on an offer of a large sum from the English, they basely promised to attack him, when alone and unarmed, and either to slay him, or make him their prisoner.

Fortunately for Bruce and for Scotland, one of his more faithful followers discovered the designs of these wicked men, and by informing Bruce of them he put him on his guard.

It happened that one day Bruce, accompanied only by a little boy, his page, was in a wild and solitary place, when he saw coming towards him the three men, who had probably chosen this remote spot for the scene of their wicked deed.

As they approached within some yards of him,

Bruce commanded them to stand still. "Villains!" he said, "advance not a step nearer, or you shall pay for it with your lives. I know that you have betrayed me to my foes." "Alas!" said one of them, "do you then take your trusty followers to be traitors?" As he spoke, he still came slowly forward; but he had hardly made another step in advance, when the king, snatching the bow and arrow from the hand of the little page, drew the string, and so certain was his aim, that the arrow, entering the brain of the unhappy man, he fell dead on the spot. The other two, seeing the fate of their comrade, rushed upon the king; but their courage forsook them in so bad a cause, and the brave and gallant Bruce laid both his enemies dead at his feet.

But the narrowest escape which the Scottish king ever made, and the danger which he found most difficulty in avoiding, remains yet to be told.

When sorely pressed by the enemy, the little band of Bruce would divide into different parties, who all turned in separate directions; so that their pursuers, who were intent only upon securing the person of Bruce, knew not which to follow.

To this last resource Bruce was obliged to look for safety, after a severe and hopeless struggle with the Lord of Lorn and his numerous followers. But Lorn, who had foreseen the probability of his making the attempt, had procured, I know not how, a large blood-hound, which had once belonged to Bruce. He knew that this dog would follow the steps of his old master,

and thus lead his enemies in the direction he had taken. When, therefore, the little band separated, as I have told you was their custom, the dog was let loose ; and though it did not see the king, the affectionate animal, putting its nose to the ground, knew the path he had taken, and pursued it, little knowing that it led his enemies to the retreat of its noble master. The few soldiers who had accompanied him heard the baying of the hound, and knew the danger of the king : again and again they separated in different directions, in hopes of deceiving the scent of the dog, but it continued unerringly in the path which Bruce, now only with a single attendant, had pursued. Already they began to look upon their escape as hopeless, when at a little distance they descried a running stream.

I must tell you, that the hound loses the scent if the step of the person it is following passes through water. Bruce knew this, and felt that a chance of escape was still left to him ; he sprang into the stream, and for some distance waded through the water ; then fearful of putting his foot again to the ground so near the side, in case that the dog should pass the stream, and running about in its eager search, again discover the scent, he caught by a branch that hung over him, and for some distance continued to swing himself from tree to tree. Thus having completely succeeded in eluding the search made for him he leapt to the ground, continued his retreat on foot, and, in the course of a day or two, was again surrounded by his faithful followers, all hailing with delight the safety of their leader.

Bruce's repeated attacks upon the English were now generally crowned with success. Indignant at the repeated discomfitures of the parties sent out against the Scots, the Earl of Pembroke resolved upon challenging their leader to leave his hills and hiding-places, and to meet on open field to decide their cause. Bruce consented, and on the tenth of May the two armies met at Loudon Hill.

I cannot enter into all the particulars of this battle, nor, perhaps, if I did, could I make you properly understand them. I shall only tell you, that by the careful and well-chosen arrangements of Bruce, his little band were enabled totally to defeat the mighty force led against them by the English.

The news of the victory spread through the country. Bruce's numbers continued daily to increase; and their late successes had given them a reliance on their own strength, and the superior qualities of their leader, which seemed to set at defiance every effort made to subdue them.

The tidings of the repeated failures of the English reached Edward when he was at Carlisle, where he had been obliged to remain from severe illness. Incensed at the news, he tried to believe himself sufficiently strong to march at the head of his army into Scotland. His son, and the friends who were with him, endeavoured to dissuade him, but to no purpose; the king rose from the bed of sickness, to which for months he had been confined, and mounting his horse, set out at the head of his army; but he was so ill, that in four

whole days he had only gone six miles. At the end of this time the poor king died, leaving his son Edward the Second, to complete the conquests of Scotland.

Edward the Second of England was a very different character from his father: already wearied of the fatigues and distresses of war, he would willingly have saved himself all trouble by resigning Scotland to its lawful king. This, after the great expense at which England had carried on the war, he was ashamed to do; but he put off from day to day what, if he wished to subdue the Scots, he ought at once to have undertaken.

In the meantime Bruce continued his eager efforts to obtain the throne of his fathers, till there was scarcely left, in the whole of the north of Scotland, a single castle in the hands of the English; and in every encounter which he or his brave brother Edward now had with the enemy, they invariably were the victors.

Edward the Second was, however, at length roused from his state of idle indifference. He saw that if something was not immediately done, Scotland, by the bravery of her devoted soldiers, would become a free country, and be lost to him for ever. He determined to make one great effort to recover the power he had so nearly lost, and he called upon all his barons to assist him in his design.

Bruce was informed of the preparations of the English, and summoning his whole band, they marched to Torwood, a large forest which lies between Falkirk and Stirling. The number of Bruce's followers was thirty thousand; that of the enemy was almost three

times the number. On the near approach of the English king, the Scots advanced as far as Stirling to meet him : here, drawing up his army in form of battle, Bruce desired that one of his heralds should proclaim in front of the line, "That any soldier who had not resolved to win the freedom of his country, or to die on the field they were about to fight, had now permission to depart, as he wished none to serve him unwillingly." Not one soldier moved from his post, but they set up a shout to express their determination to conquer or to die, which echoed loud and long through all the woods and hills, and which gladdened the heart of Bruce, for it showed the enthusiasm with which they entered into his cause.

I do not recollect if I mentioned among Bruce's brave leaders his nephew Randolph. Having a high opinion of the bravery of his young kinsman, he had committed to him the important charge of preventing the enemy approaching the castle of Stirling ; it was a strong fortress, and if once they obtained entrance, it would give them a great advantage over the Scots.

The English were aware of this, and a large party crept stealthily by the side of the stream, concealing themselves by the shrubs and rising grounds, and were almost upon the castle before they were perceived by Bruce, who instantly spurring his horse toward Randolph, exclaimed, "Oh Randolph ! how little did I dream that you would have allowed these men to pass a rose has indeed fallen from your chaplet." By this

he meant that, from his negligence, a stain would rest upon his name as a knight and a warrior.

Randolph, conscious of the truth of Bruce's words, and stung by the reproach, called his men hastily around him, and exclaiming, "I shall retrieve my honour, or perish in the attempt," he rushed upon the English. They turned to meet him: their numbers greatly exceeded his, and in a few minutes his brave, but small band, was completely surrounded by the enemy.

Douglas, who from a little distance saw the danger in which his friend Randolph had placed himself, asked permission of the king to go to his aid. But Bruce replied, "The fault was his, let him save himself as best he may." Douglas would not disobey his king; but he could not see his friend die without an attempt to save him. "My liege," he said, "I may not stand by and see Randolph perish." "Go then," said Bruce. No sooner were the words uttered than away he flew. But as he drew nearer, he observed that the English were falling into confusion, and already beginning to fly. "Stop," said he to his band; "These brave men require no aid from us; they have conquered: we shall not try to share their glory, since we are too late to partake in the danger." He returned to Bruce, and in a little while they were joined by the victorious Randolph.

The two armies now approached nearer to each other; and when Edward saw how comparatively few were the numbers of the Scottish king, he could scarcely believe that he really intended to fight. Just

at this moment the Abbot of Inchaffray walked slowly before the Scottish line, holding a crucifix in his hand. This was to remind the soldiers, that before an engagement so fearful, and on which so much depended, they should raise their hearts to God, and pray to him to support their cause. The whole army bent their knee on the greensward, and, with their eyes devoutly fixed on the ground, each offered up the prayer which his own heart prompted him to use. The English king, who from a little distance saw the whole Scottish army thus prostrate themselves on the ground, concluded that, awed by his numbers, they implored his mercy. "See! see!" cried he: "they yield, they ask for mercy." "Yes, sire," said one who stood near him, and who was better acquainted with the character of their brave foes, "they do ask mercy; but it is of God not of you: be assured they will win the day or die." "Be it so," said Edward. "We shall see how they will stand the test;" and he gave command that the attack should commence.

Boldly the English cavalry rushed upon the line of infantry commanded by Robert Bruce, but they were met with equal firmness. On the first onset, many of their horses were killed, and their riders, ere they could rise from the ground, were slain by the daggers or axes of the Scots; whilst other poor horses, rendered wild and unmanageable by the pain of their wounds, rushed in various directions, throwing the lines of the English into the greatest confusion. In the meantime other attacks had been made upon different parts of

the Scottish army, all of which were repulsed with equal success.

The English fought with great courage, but disheartened at last by the numbers that fell around them, they became impatient and unruly, whilst the strength and courage of the Scots seemed to increase in proportion as their hopes of success were strengthened.

The whole Scottish army, consisting of four parties, was now engaged in the attack. One commanded by Randolph, another by the Douglas, one by Edward Bruce, and the last by the king himself. But I think that the best thing I can do, will be to copy for you here the account of this part of the battle, by a writer of history, called Barbour. He says:—

“It was hideous to hear, and awful to behold. The ear was deafened by the clang of arms, and breaking and thrusting of spears, and the shouts of the knights, as they raised their war-cries. The horses, maddened with wounds, fled without their riders in every direction. The field where they fought was red with blood, and covered with multitudes of the slain, and pennons and scarfs torn and trampled under foot. Over the heads of the combatants the air was still thick with arrows, discharged at random by flying parties of the archers; and the furious cries of the combatants were mingled with the groans of the wounded and the dying.”

There was a shout heard through all the Scottish army, and the cry, “On them! they fail! they fail! the day is ours!” ran from rank to rank. The English

were indeed failing ; for now totally disheartened, their attacks became less frequent and less powerful. And now you will probably laugh as much as little Herbert used to do, when we told him the story, and he found how it was that this great battle was at last decided.

A large party of the servants and followers of the camp, consisting chiefly of old men, women, and children, to the number of many thousands, had been stationed on a hill, from whence they could see the fate of the battle, and how the day went. They knew how far the numbers of the English army surpassed their own ; they had watched in trembling the bold advance of the cavalry ; and now on observing the success of their countrymen, and the evident confusion into which the English were thrown, they could no longer restrain their joy, but all with one accord, rushing down the hill, hurried to the field of battle, and the English from a little distance saw with dismay the whole hill covered with what they believed to be a new army coming against them. The Scots, perhaps with the intention of forwarding this mistake, had fastened plaids, sheets, and blankets to long poles ; and these waving in the air, like the banners which are used in battle, completely deceived the enemy, who, hopeless of being able to resist what appeared so great a force, turned from the field and fled.

Edward of England, who had that morning looked upon his enormous force, and had fancied that a few

minutes would suffice to crush the little band of Scots, could scarcely believe the possibility of his defeat. His whole army fled ; but he refused to quit the field, till two English knights, seizing his bridle-rein, turned his horse's head, and compelled him to fly. One of these knights, Sir Giles de Argentine, having led the king to a little distance from the field, reined in his horse and said, "Farewell, my liege : may you reach England in safety ; but for me, I must return to the field. It must never be said that De Argentine fled from the enemy he could not subdue." He touched his gallant war-horse with a spur, and shouting his war-cry, "An Argentine ! an Argentine !" he rushed alone on the ranks of the enemy, and receiving innumerable wounds from the Scottish spears, the gallant knight was slain.

The few English stragglers who had not yet fled, were pursued and taken prisoners, or killed by the Scots ; and Bruce with his gallant band remained on the field victorious.

This was called the battle of Bannockburn ; and it was to this period that I promised to bring my story.

Bruce died in his fifty-fifth year. Four-and-twenty years he had reigned over his people, and was deeply beloved by them. Under his good and wise government, Scotland, which had so long suffered from the miseries of war, became a better and a happier country than it had ever been before. The people were no longer kept in a state of subjection by the tyranny of the English ; and they never failed to bless the good

and generous monarch under whose guidance they had obtained their freedom.

And now, from this little history, which it has taken me some time to write, my darling boy will see how, from being a poor exile, hunted from one hiding place to another, in hourly danger of his life, Bruce became, from his own bravery, and the bravery of his faithful followers, one of the best, the bravest, and the most beloved of kings that ever reigned in Scotland.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIFE OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

I FIND that I have been guilty of a great degree of vanity ; for I was fully determined to discover and prove, in my little boy's book, what no historian has yet discovered or proved—the reason why my present hero has always borne the title of the Black Prince. It is perhaps of very little consequence ; but fancying that it would be the first question which you would ask, on beginning the story, I could not satisfy myself with the answer, that it was not exactly known. So I turned over a great many old, dusty volumes, and lost a very great deal of time, all to no purpose, for in none of them could I discover the reason.

In some writers I have seen, “ the prince advanced in his black armour ; ” — “ the prince by his black armour was easily recognized ; ” so that it is probable he generally wore that colour, and thus gained a title to the appellation of the “ Black Prince.” But this is enough of such conjecture. I must begin my story.

I think that I shall first, in a few words, give you some idea of the character of the father and mother of this prince ; Edward the Third of England, and Philippa

of Hainault ; for I know not two sovereigns, particularly at the period of which I am writing, of whom I could enumerate a greater number of generous, noble, and beautiful characteristics.

Edward, a resolute and determined warrior, of the keenest courage, never, for a moment, forgot those kind and gentle feelings, which are so rarely met with in hearts devoted, as his was, to the tumult and excitement of war. Often by the most generous forbearance, by acts which evinced true courage as well as honourable feeling, he changed the hatred of his foes into love for his person, or admiration of his character.

Of Philippa, the good, the gentle Philippa, I shall be better able to give you an idea as I go through the history of the childhood of her son, my present hero.

Edward the third of England and Philippa of Hainault had been married two years, when the birth of an heir to the throne caused the greatest joy throughout all England. The happiness of the young king was excessive, and the pride which he felt in the beauty of the little prince was but the commencement of long years of affection, and unwearied efforts to train him in the path of honour, and to fit him for the high station which he hoped he was one day to fill, and to which, even in childhood, he promised fair to be an ornament ; for, whilst his father led him to every manly and chivalric exercise, and stored his mind with all the just and noble sentiments with which his own abounded, the somewhat fiery temper and too daring disposition of the king were softened into virtues, in the character

of the young prince, by the gentle precepts and example of his mother, Queen Philippa.

As he increased in years, and his character became more formed, it was often remarked of him, that, avoiding the faults on either side, he had possessed himself of all the virtues of both his parents ; that he had the valour without the rashness of Edward ; whilst the feeling heart and gentleness of disposition derived from his mother, so far from subduing that courage, raised it to a yet more noble and exalted feeling.

When the Black Prince had reached his thirteenth year, his father, even at this early age, accustomed him to an active life, inuring him to great fatigue, and to the constant use of arms ; such being looked upon, in these times, as the greatest accomplishments of a gentleman. And well did the youthful heir of England repay the efforts of his father ; and great was the promise he gave of the glorious but brief career he was destined to run.

At the age of fifteen, with an eager desire to mix personally in scenes with which, as yet, he was only acquainted by description, the Black Prince prepared for his first essay in arms. Edward of England was about to invade France, and the young prince was to accompany him in the enterprise. The late king of France had died without leaving any children ; and Edward, who was his nephew, thought he had a better right to the throne than Philip, who had already been crowned king of France.

The necessary preparations, to be set on foot before

quitting his kingdom, could not so entirely occupy the mind of the king as to make him forget all anxiety as to how the youthful prince, in this his first campaign, would fulfil his hopes and the hopes of his people ; for his noble bearing, and the expectations which it raised of his future life, had already made him the idol of his country. Should he answer these expectations, what pride for the heart of the father who had trained him by his own hand ! whilst, on the contrary, should he fail—but no, he would not wrong his child by admitting such an idea ; he thought of it no more, and he looked forward with delight to the renown which the young prince had now so fair an opportunity of gaining.

In July, thirteen hundred and thirty six, Edward the Third, accompanied by his son and a numerous fleet, set sail for France. After a short passage they reached Normandy, which they found totally unprepared for any defence ; so that, without difficulty, the whole of the troops were landed in France. It was the custom, at this time, for armies to destroy the whole face of the country through which they passed, in order to prevent their enemies from procuring provisions. Edward, who was aware of this, remained at La Hogue, where the army had disembarked, and causing a great supply of bread to be baked, he ensured the soldiers against the danger of starvation, through their long march.

When prepared to move, the army was divided into three parts, and each division had its own brave leader. In that commanded by the king himself was the Black Prince, whom his father wished to have under his own

observation. As they continued their march they had several encounters with small parties of French. They also attacked, pillaged, and burnt several towns. Among others, the town of Poix was levelled to the ground ; but here the inhabitants were themselves the means of causing its destruction. On the approach of the English they had determined to avert, if possible, the melancholy fate of every town which had offered resistance, and, they promised to pay Edward a large sum of money, if he would withdraw his men from their gates. He agreed, and, continuing his march, he left only a small body of men to receive the ransom. But no sooner did the people of Poix conceive the English army to be at a sufficient distance, than they resolved to break their faith ; and so far from paying the ransom to the soldiers left to receive it, they determined to attack and slay them.

Some of the party were fortunate enough to make their escape, and following the route which the English army had pursued, they soon overtook and informed them of the treachery they had met with. Headed by some of their leaders, a party of men galloped back to the city, and a few hours saw it reduced to ashes.

Many towns and villages shared, though, perhaps, in a less dreadful degree, the fate of Poix ; yet there is little to tell that could interest you about them ; I shall, therefore, pass on till I reach the great battle of Cressy.

Philip of Valois, who, on the death of Edward's uncle, had taken possession of the throne of France,

had not been inactive : he was now marching with a large army against Edward.

Had the English king wished to avoid meeting him at this time, he might have returned to England without hazarding an engagement with an army much more numerous than his own, and contented himself with having made a march as triumphant as it had been daring, through the kingdom of his rival. But this was not his intention ; his late successes, and the confidence he felt in his own troops, led him to look with indifference on the greatly superior numbers of the enemy.

Determined to give battle to the French king, who was now within a few hours' march of him, he sent different persons to examine the ground ; they were to decide on the most favourable spot for an engagement ; and the field of Cressy was fixed upon.

The plan of the battle was then arranged by Edward and by his most experienced warriors. But having completed this, the happy father, who had hitherto seen his fondest wishes more than fulfilled in his gallant son, determined to resign to him the post of honour in the combat of this day ; though even his courageous heart trembled at the recollection that the post of the greatest honour must also be that of the greatest danger. This idea, however could not alter his resolution ; and he told the youthful prince that that day should be his own ; that the honour of conquest, or the disgrace of a defeat, should rest upon him.

The Black Prince was at this time only sixteen. His father's anxiety had placed in the division which he was to command, all the bravest leaders of the army ; whilst two of the first and ablest warriors were never for a moment to lose sight of, or quit the side of their young commander.

It is said that the evening before the battle, the king, after feasting the leaders of his army at his own table, retired to a room alone, where long and earnestly he was employed in prayer. We may well suppose that he called down the mercy of heaven in behalf of his child ; and that protection for the gallant boy, through the hours of peril that were to follow, was humbly craved by the doting parent. How full must have been his heart at such a moment ! To what danger was he about to expose this object of all his love ! One fatal blow, and he might be levelled to the ground ; one stroke, and that heart, which now beat so high with youthful hope and vigour, might be stilled for ever. No wonder then, at such a time, the warlike Edward humbled himself before his God ; no wonder then he poured out the fulness of his heart at a throne of grace, and sought the protection of a heavenly Father for his beloved son.

Upon the following day Philip marched his numerous army to the spot fixed upon for the engagement by the English king ; but owing to the dissatisfied state of his troops, which prevented their listening to the commands and even entreaties of their leaders, they reached the field in confusion and dis-

order, very unlike the silent and careful array of the English forces.

The army of the French king did not consist alone of his own subjects. There were large bodies of men equally ready to fight on either side for hire ; among others, a body of cross-bow men from Genoa. These were now commanded to advance to the front of the army, and, by the discharge of their arrows, to break the line of the English forces.

A heavy shower of rain, which had fallen as the French were advancing to the field, unfortunately for the poor Genoese, had so loosened the strings of the cross-bows, which they held in their hands, as to make the greater number of them utterly useless. Not aware of their misfortune, they advanced upon the enemy, and by uttering loud and hideous cries, thought to confuse and bewilder them ; but these had no effect upon the disciplined and steady troops of the English Archers, who, after quietly waiting the approach of their assailants, drew their own bows from cases that had secured them from the damp, and showered their arrows so thickly and so well directed among the unfortunate Genoese, that they (only now discovering the injury they had received from the rain) were thrown into confusion. They had, I believe, no other arms, no other means of defence, and hastily retreating, they tried to shelter themselves behind a body of French cavalry.

Philip, who had watched the effect of this first onset, on seeing the flight of the Italians, instead of seeking to renew their courage, or urging them again to

the combat, with a cruelty which was part of his nature, commanded a body of his own men to fall upon the unfortunate Genoese, and cut them to pieces. You may imagine the confusion that followed—the flight and the pursuit ; the shrieks of the murdered victims ; the scenes of bloodshed and of horror ; and all this was increased by the steady discharge kept up by the English archers, in whose ranks the greatest order and discipline existed.

Whilst so disgraceful a scene was enacted by one division of the French army, another, under the command of the Count of Alençon, contrived, almost unobserved, to reach a spot where, free from the danger of the English bowmen, they could attack the band which surrounded the Black Prince ; but these, headed by the gallant boy, who was this day, for the first time, a leader in the fight, met them courageously, and were in no way daunted by the superior numbers of their adversary. The Count of Alençon, with several other leaders, fell early in the engagement. Their followers saw the dead bodies of their companions piled one upon another, as they fell under the blows of the English, and the whole party were soon thrown into confusion.

The German cavalry next advanced. They were unmindful of the showers of arrows that fell among them, till they reached the men-at-arms around the Black Prince ; and then, hand to hand, the fight was continued with equal courage on both sides.

Seeing that it was impossible for the young prince to

sustain a fight so unequal, (for at this time nearly forty thousand of the enemy surrounded the little body of men which he commanded,) the Earls of Northampton and Arundel, with their men, hastened to his assistance; at the same time that the Earl of Warwick sent a messenger to the king, who with his large body of reserve, remained at some distance from the fight, to let him know that the party with whom his son had to contend was every moment increasing in numbers, and urging him to lose no time in flying to his assistance.

The king asked, "Is my son dead or hurt, or is he felled to the earth?" "No," answered the knight who had been bearer of the message; "but he is hardly matched, and hath need of your aid." "Go back, then," said the king, "to those who sent you, and tell them, while my son lives, to send no more to me. Tell them, also, that I command them to let the boy win all the honour he may; for, with the help of God, I am determined that the glory of this day shall belong to him, and to those in whose care I have placed him.

This message was delivered to the young prince, and it inspired him and those around him with fresh ardour. Finding how much was expected of them, they renewed the fight with double vigour, and beheld, undismayed, one body of French after another come rushing on in numerous masses. The thousands of the enemy that lay weltering in their blood around the little band of English and their youthful and gallant leader, are almost beyond belief.

Charles of Luxembourg, who had fought long and bravely, seeing, at length, his troops either slain or flying from the victorious English, cast his arms from him, and, turning his horse's head, fled from the field. His father, the poor old king of Bohemia, who in his youth had fought many battles and gained many victories, stood at a little distance, inquiring the fate of the day ; for now, from extreme old age, he was quite blind. The knights who stood round concealed nothing from him. They described the confusion in which the cruel order of Philip, to slay the whole body of Italian archers, had thrown his army, and when the old man, at length, asked for tidings of his son, they could give him none ; for his banner was no longer seen upon the field. This, with the rest of the information given to him by his knights convinced him that all was lost. But still possessed with the pride and courage which had inspired his youth, the aged monarch determined not to quit, alone, a field where the honour of his nation had been lost, and, addressing the knights by his side, he said, "My lords, you are my vassals as well as friends, I therefore command you to lead me to the field, that I may strike one blow in the battle."

They, well knowing that honour was to him far dearer than life, did not hesitate to obey ; anxious, however, to give all the protection they could to the brave, blind old king, they surrounded him with their horses, and tying their bridles together that even in the confusion of the fight they might not be compelled to separate, they galloped to the field. Bravely for some

time did the old man fight, but then his banner was seen to go down ; and it is said that, the day after the battle, his body was found, his eyes now closed in death, and his long gray hairs steeped in blood : his faithful guards, men and horses, in death as in life, surrounded him, as was known from the bridles being found still knotted together.

Philip of France had fought with unshaken courage till the close of the day. But now, John of Hainault, who had remained by his side through the whole encounter, seeing that the French army was entirely routed, seized his bridle, and insisted, as all was so utterly lost, that he should quit the field. There was sufficient light left them to avoid the ranks of the enemy, and they, with some other lords, succeeded in reaching a place of safety.

From three o'clock till nightfall the Black Prince had been incessantly engaged with the enemy, and had not been forced, by their overwhelming numbers, to quit by one step the spot he had chosen for the fight.

Darkness had now come on, and the quiet which gradually spread over the field told that the remainder of the French army had sought shelter in flight, leaving the victorious English masters of the field.

Edward of England now, for the first time, quitted the hill from which he had watched the progress of the day, and had beheld with pride the cool and undaunted courage of his gallant boy. Hastening to the field, the father and son were locked in each other's arms ; and,

perhaps, the proudest feeling which the Black Prince had that day experienced was when (pressing him to his heart) his father exclaimed, "God give you perseverance in your course, my child. You are indeed my son; nobly have you acquitted yourself, and worthy are you of the place you hold."

The pride of the father, the glory of the whole army, in thus having subdued their numerous enemy, did not lead them to forget under whose protection they had been permitted to achieve so great a success; and the example given by the king and his gallant son was eagerly followed by the whole band, who, falling on their knees, offered heartfelt thanks and praises to their God, for the mercy he had shown to them.

I am not, I have told you, writing a history, but merely such events, in the lives of great men, as I think may interest you the most; I therefore pass over a great deal, and start, as I am now going to do, from one battle to another, leaving all the less interesting parts untold.

Notwithstanding a truce which had been formed between England and Spain, many Spanish vessels had attacked and captured English ships, and possessing themselves of the goods with which they were laden, they murdered the unhappy crews.

Many indignant messages had been carried from Edward to the king of Spain; but that monarch, surnamed Peter the Cruel, so far from listening to his just reproaches, fitted out a considerable fleet, and

despatched them to the English Channel; so that Edward saw that the total destruction of his ships, and the cold-blooded murder of many of his subjects, must ensue, unless he could by force of arms subdue the enemy.

This was quickly resolved on. They set sail from England, the king himself accompanying the expedition, and the Black Prince commanding one of the largest vessels in the fleet. At his own desire he carried with him his favourite brother, then a child of ten years old, afterwards known as John of Gaunt.

The Spaniards, who were sufficiently acquainted with Edward to know that he would not allow the injuries he had received to pass unnoticed, had prepared themselves against an attack. They built in their ships large wooden towers, from which the archers (themselves protected) might greatly annoy the enemy. Their vessels were infinitely larger than those of the English, and their men at arms much more numerous.

The Spanish ships appeared in sight, their decks glittering with the armour of the immense body of men which they bore so proudly along; and the flags and banners belonging to the different knights from every mast waved their bright colours in the wind.

Edward was the first to commence the engagement; running his own ship against that of an enemy, he tried by this means to sink it. But, as I have told you, the Spanish ships were of great size: and it was soon discovered, that, whilst it passed on unharmed,

that in which the English king was, had been so severely injured that it was rapidly sinking ; a few minutes more, and the pride of England would have gone down to the dark waters, beyond the aid of his numerous friends and vassals that surrounded him, many of whom would have been ready to risk their own lives for the sake of their king.

But the courage and presence of mind of Edward, even in a moment like this, never failed. He commanded his sinking ship to be securely fastened to one of the Spanish vessels. After a long and resolute fight, he remained the victor ; and he and his men springing on its decks, took possession of it, and left their own to its fate.

In the middle of the engagement the Black Prince nearly met with the same fate which his father had so narrowly escaped. He attacked one of the largest vessels in the Spanish fleet, and attempted to grapple with it ; that is, he sought to fasten the two ships together, so that the fight must continue till one or other should yield. On laying the vessel alongside, it was so battered with the huge stones which the Spaniards threw from their towers, that the water rushed in at every side, and already the ship appeared to be sinking : the only hope of safety was from boarding the enemy.

In vain the youthful prince, urged by his high courage, and by despair at the idea of such a death, not menacing himself alone, but also his young and favourite brother, and the many brave companions in

arms under his command,—in vain, I say, did such recollections inspire him with more than his usual degree of bravery: every effort to board the enemy was repulsed by their countless arrows; and large masses of stone were showered into his vessel, which was already filling so fast, that all the efforts made could not succeed in baling out the water so quickly as it came in. Already the brave hearts of the warlike band were beginning to droop under the hopelessness of their situation, when the Earl of Lancaster, the commander of another English ship, observed the efforts of the men who were employed in throwing out the water, and, altering his course, he flew to the assistance of his countrymen, attacked the Spanish ship on the other side from that on which the prince was engaged, and grappling with her, one half of the Spanish forces, in order to engage with their new enemy, quitted their attack on the Black Prince, who, having now a more equal number to contend with, shortly succeeded in boarding the vessel. And the Earl of Lancaster almost at the same moment obtaining a like advantage, the Spaniards were totally defeated.

Scarcely had a minute elapsed since the last Englishman had stood secure upon the deck of the conquered vessel, when their own went down, and was lost for ever in the depths of the boundless ocean.

At the close of that eventful day, not less than four or five-and-twenty of the Spanish ships had been taken by the English; others had been sunk, and the remain-

ing fleet were glad to make all sail, and escape from the conquering enemy. Thus another great victory was added to the list of those achieved by Edward and his gallant son.

The peace which followed this battle was not of very long duration: new insults on the part of the French were received or imagined, and new injuries awoke the thirst for war.

Edward the Black Prince was to sail for Bordeaux, and with a large army march into the interior of France; whilst the king was to lead another body of men to Calais, and thus attack the kingdom from two different quarters at the same time.

The pride and affection of the father was again seen in the fitting out of these two armies. Whatever might be supposed an advantage was yielded to the prince by the affectionate parent, who bestowed on the preparations for this expedition more care, more expense, and more thought, than he had ever given to any undertaken by himself.

After reaching Bordeaux, the Black Prince pursued his march; and victory followed every attack made by him on the town and fortified castles on their route, till, in the course of a very short time, a number of the strongest and best garrisoned towns in France were subjected to the English by their conquering prince.

The British army were now in the very middle of the French kingdom, when John who had succeeded Philip on the throne of France, advanced to meet

them, with a body of men sufficient to have crushed the band of the Black Prince.

John pursued his march in the belief that the English army were in advance. The English prince was under the same error, for he supposed the French king to be in close pursuit of him ; and knowing his band to be so inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, he wished for the present to defer the engagement. At last their mutual mistake was discovered, and it was known that John was in advance of the English army, who had now no chance of being able to avoid an engagement ; there was nothing left for them but to fight or yield themselves prisoners.

The Black Prince wished to discover the real extent of the French army, and sent forward a small body of men, who were to pursue the enemy, and return to him with what intelligence they could gain. The information which they brought back was not very comforting : the French forces, they said, were more than eight times as numerous as their own.

It did, indeed, appear hopeless attacking such a body of men ; and the young prince saw well all the dangers that would accompany the undertaking, and the almost certainty of the total destruction of his little army ; but he had no alternative : and " God be our help," he said. " Now let us think how we may fight them to the best advantage."

The French army, on learning that Edward was in the rear, had halted outside the walls of Poitiers. The Black Prince reached a spot where he could

perceive all the movements of the enemy ; and the two armies prepared for battle.

As the French forces advanced, their plumes waved, and their arms glittered over an immense space ; so that it was like the rolling onward of a great sea, prepared, in its strength and magnitude, to overwhelm everything that opposed its course.

With all the beauty of youth, pride, and exalted courage beaming on his brow, the Black Prince awaited their approach. Having once resolved to fight, the great disparity between the two armies appeared only to inspire him with more than his ordinary courage ; and, with a proud tone, which well became the youthful hero, he proclaimed to those around him, "that England should never have to pay his ransom ;" by this he meant that he would win or die.

That day's contest was a long and bloody one ; part of the French army had indeed been defeated and thrown into confusion by the almost unheard of efforts of the brave English ; but there still remained, under the command of the French king, a sufficient number to have overwhelmed the whole body of their foes.

At length the lines of the French army appeared to move, and one of the lords near the prince exclaimed, "On, on, my liege, and the day is yours ! Well do I know that the courage of the French king will never stoop to flight, but with the help of God he will meet enemies worthy of him."

"On, on, then !" replied the prince ; nor shall you see me tread one step back, but ever in advance. God

and St. George be with us !” he exclaimed ; the words echoed through the heart of every Englishman present ; and the whole party, who till now had never, from the commencement of the fight, moved from the station which they had first occupied, rushed down upon the French forces.

I must tell you that the Duke of Orleans, who had under his command no less than sixteen thousand men, none of whom had engaged in the conflict during the whole day, stood upon a hill between the English army and that part of the French commanded by their king. No sooner did they see the compact and well-regulated little band of English bearing towards them, than, without waiting to strike one blow, the whole party, headed by their most-inglorious leader, turned and fled.

The French king saw that more than half of the troops whom he had brought to the field were defeated, yet he felt no doubt as to the success of the day ; for on looking round he could easily perceive that the remainder of his own army was still greatly superior to that of his enemy : and the number of brave and tried soldiers that surrounded him, led him to hope that he should be able to regain the honour, which in the commencement of the fight they had lost, and that the day might be still their own. He encouraged his men by voice and gesture, and himself, fighting on foot, like the common soldiers, did all that great courage might do. But he had a powerful foe to contend with ; and “the Black Prince, (say some

writers,) kind and gentle as he was in times of peace, now raged like a young lion through the field," dealing death and destruction on every side.

At last the French began to yield, and they fell into that confusion, from which even the voice and example of their brave king could not recall them. As long as the royal banner floated over his head, he would not believe the day to be utterly lost ; but when at last it fell, the hopes, though not the courage, of John fell with it.

I think that I have forgotten to tell you that the French king was accompanied to the field by his four sons ; the youngest, who was still a child, had ridden by the side of his father through the whole day.

When, as I have said, the royal banner sunk upon the field, and the king found himself surrounded by enemies, all eager to claim the honour of having made him prisoner, he saw all further resistance was vain, and that now he had only to seek some means of escape. With his battle axe he cleared the way for himself and his little boy ; but, beset and surrounded on every side, he was at length compelled to resign his sword and yield himself prisoner of war.

This was the battle of Poitiers ; and there is scarcely more honour due to the Black Prince for the brave attempt and the wonderful victory which he here gained, than for the kindness and respect with which he received and treated his fallen foe. His behaviour to him was at all times such as it might have been had he visited the now captive king in his court of

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

France, surrounded by all his late power and pomp ; always addressing the dethroned monarch as his superior, waiting upon him, and serving him with his own hand.

Well might the Black Prince, when the tumult of the day was over, and he had time to collect his thoughts, look back with pride upon the victory he had gained. Rarely, if indeed ever, had a battle with such fearful odds been so bravely contested, so nobly won. With no more than eight thousand men, he had conquered an enemy of eighty thousand. What pride, what gladness for his happy father, when he should hear the tidings !

I must not lengthen out my story, by telling you the joy which the return of the Black Prince occasioned in England, or the preparations made to greet him with all the honour he so fully deserved, and which his faithful people so readily offered to the pride and glory of their nation. Fondly did they look forward to his filling, at some future period, the throne of England, while every passing year served only to increase their feelings of respect and admiration for their beloved Prince. How soon these hopes were blighted,—how soon that heroic heart was hushed in death,—how soon the fond father beheld the hope of his declining years laid in the grave, I am now going to tell you.

A great part of the south of France had been bestowed upon the Black Prince by his father ; and he, with the Countess of Kent, or as she was generally called from her great beauty, "The fair maid of Kent,"

whom he had married, returned to Bordeaux. Here he was visited by Pedro, the King of Castile, who came with his son and daughters to seek present protection and future aid at the hand of so great a warrior ; for Pedro, had been dethroned and chased from his kingdom by his subjects, to whom he had rendered himself hateful.

His misfortunes, his high courage, and the grace and gentleness of his manners, soon won the interest of the Black Prince, who was ignorant of his real character, for Pedro was a base, cruel, and dishonourable man ; but all these bad qualities lay concealed whilst he remained at Bordeaux. He expressed the greatest gratitude for the readiness with which the prince had undertaken his cause ; and he entered into many engagements, such as paying the troops which should be raised for his benefit, etc., etc., but all of this was forgotten as soon as he no longer required the aid which had been so generously lent to him.

Edward marched into Spain with an army of thirty thousand men. The forces with which Don Henry, the rival of Don Pedro, advanced to the field of Najara, were ninety-nine thousand ; but the young prince and his gallant band saw the approach of their immense numbers undismayed.

Victory did indeed seem ever waiting to crown them ; scarcely had they rushed upon the enemy, when two thousand horse, without striking one blow, fled from the field. A second division of the Spanish army was dispersed or overthrown almost with the same ease ; and

the English next turned to the large body of men commanded by Don Henry himself. Here the combat was better sustained on the side of the Spanish troops, and for a time victory seemed undetermined on which side to rest.

As the English advanced on the enemy, they were much exposed, and received great injury from the stones cast in among them by the Spanish slingers; but this annoyance they speedily removed, for the showers of arrows with which they returned the assault, soon dispersed that body of men, and threw them into confusion. After a severe struggle, the determined courage, the unbending resolution of the warlike English turned the day in their favour, and the Spanish army was completely routed.

During the whole battle Don Pedro had fought with the courage of a lion; flying from one part of the field to another, and seeking out the thickest of the engagement. He was the most eager, too, in the pursuit of the enemy, after they had fled from the field, and was amongst the last to desist from it. When at last he did return to where the standard of the English had been raised, he was breathless from haste and fatigue. Springing from his black charger, now covered with foam and besmeared with gore, he seized the hand of the prince, and thanked him in the warmest manner for the victory he had gained, which would, he knew, restore him to the throne.

The prince, with that moderation which he ever felt in the hour of victory, returned this answer: "Give

these thanks and praises to God ; for to His goodness, and not to me, do you owe the success of this day."

The first instance given at this time by Don Pedro, of the revengeful cruelty of his disposition, was on the morning after the battle, when, approaching Edward, he asked that all the prisoners of yesterday might be delivered into his hands, to be put to death.

Horried with the thirst of blood which such a demand betrayed, the Black Prince begged, as a boon to himself, that their lives might be spared. This Don Pedro, with the events of yesterday still so warm on his memory, could not refuse ; and, at the intercession of the prince, the prisoners were released.

After spending some time in Spain, Edward was anxious to return to Bordeaux ; and he found himself obliged to remind Don Pedro, before quitting the country, of his promise to pay the troops who had been engaged in his service. From day to day he was detained by new and false promises ; and dear did the perfidy of Don Pedro cost England. A fever broke out in the camp of the Black Prince ; he caught the infection : and though, after a time, he appeared to recover, his health was never completely restored. From that fever arose the illness which carried him to the grave.

When his strength allowed him to travel, he again demanded of the King of Castile the fulfilment of his promise. Though he did not absolutely refuse, Edward could no longer be deceived ; and perceiving that Don Pedro meant to repay his services with treachery and ingratitude, he was too proud to seek revenge, even had

the state of his troops permitted him to do so, but quitted the country which he had been the means of restoring to the false and tyrannous Pedro.

. I have no more feats of glory to relate ; no more victorious battles ; nothing but the slow and melancholy death of the English hero.

I meant to have passed over the rather uninteresting wars which now took place between France and the Black Prince. But enumerating, as I have tried to do, his many virtues, however much I may desire it, I think I must not pass over the only blot that ever rested upon his name. Weakened and irritated by disease, he had, perhaps, some excuse for the excess of indignation into which he was thrown, by the information of the treachery of some of the inhabitants of Limoges, one of the towns in France bestowed on him by his father.

He swore to be revenged on them ; and this vow he kept but too well. The town was attacked, its gates were thrown down, the English rushed in, and men, women, and children, at the very moment when they cast themselves upon their knees imploring mercy, were butchered by the soldiers ; and the Black Prince was carried through the town in a litter ; for, owing to his enfeebled state of health, he was prevented joining in the slaughter, to which he was a willing eye-witness.

This was, indeed, a stain on the character of a prince hitherto as remarkable for his gentleness of disposition, and kindness of heart, as for his undaunted courage and warlike achievements. It is true that he placed much

confidence in the inhabitants of Limoges, and that they had repaid his kindness by the basest ingratitude ; and it is, perhaps, the very perfection of his character which makes us more unwilling to forgive this one act, so much at variance with the whole of his former life.

The illness of the Black Prince had now increased to so great a degree that his physician recommended, as the only hope of saving his life, that he should revisit his native land, which for some years he had not seen.

For awhile the air which he had breathed in infancy appeared to revive him ; but it was only for a while : he soon sunk again. For nearly five years from the time of his leaving France he lingered on in life, but was altogether incapable of exertion. The prince who had led thousands to battle and to victory was now so enfeebled by disease, that frequently those around him already supposed him dead. Day by day his strength gradually passed away. At last the scene of suffering was closed ; and Edward the Black Prince, the hope, the pride, and the glory of England, was no more.

He died in the forty-sixth year of his age ; and long and deservedly was he regretted by his sorrowing country.

In his short life he had done more to raise the glory of England than any prince, however heroic, however justly venerated by posterity, that ever lived.

He was a great and gallant prince ; and when I began this book, I did not think that relating the death of any of my heroes could give me half the pain that this has done.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF JOAN OF ARC.

AND now, my dearest little boy, I have told you so many stories about brave men, that I am going to vary my book a little, and tell you, not of a brave and noble Englishman—not of a dauntless Highlander or fearless Scot, but of a woman, a brave Frenchwoman, whose wonderful courage led her to place herself at the head of an army, to be ever the foremost in the hour of battle, and to free at length her country from the bondage to which it had been subjected by the English.

Jeanne D'Arc, or, as I am writing an English story, I shall call her by her English name, Joan of Arc, was a peasant girl, born in a little village in France. Her parents were too poor to send her to school, and Joan could neither read nor write. But she was taught to love God, and to pray to him, so that she became very good, and gentle, and kind to the poor ; and many a starving creature called down blessings on her head, as she shared with them her scanty meal, or provided them with a night's rest and lodging in her mother's house.

At the time that my story begins, which is more than four hundred years ago, Charles the Seventh of France had for some time been carrying on a war with the English, who were in possession of the greatest part of his kingdom. They had taken from him his capital, the great city of Paris; and one town after another had fallen into their hands, till it appeared likely that the whole of France would soon be in their possession.

One place of great strength, the town of Orleans, still held out, though besieged by their powerful enemy, who enclosed it on all sides, and built many batteries and towers around it, to prevent the inhabitants from getting any provisions sent in to them.

By this means the poor people of Orleans were reduced to the greatest extremity; and though some brave men declared that they would rather die than deliver their country entirely into the hands of the enemy, there were others who called loudly that the gates should be opened, and that they, the women and the little children, might be saved from a death so fearful as that of hunger.

Joan of Arc, the peasant girl whose story I am going to tell you, was at this time eighteen years old. On all sides she heard of the miseries of her countrymen, and more particularly of those imprisoned within the walls of Orleans. The sufferings to which they must hourly be exposed occupied her thoughts all day, and I suppose that she dreamed of them all night, too; for she began to think that she was destined by

heaven to restore the king to power, and to free France from her enemies.

So persuaded was she of this, that she determined to apply to the governor of Vancouleurs, who she thought might be persuaded to assist her intention of visiting the King of France, which she wished to do, in the hope of prevailing upon him, when he had heard her story, to provide her with men and arms sufficient to make the attempt she proposed, of raising the siege of Orleans.

It is not to be wondered at that the governor should look upon poor Joan as an impostor or a mad woman : she was scarcely eighteen, yet offered, without fear or hesitation, to lead an army to battle, and, under her command, to make them achieve what the ablest generals of France had not accomplished. Scarcely listening to her story, he bade her go home, and tend, as formerly, her father's cattle ; a fitter occupation, he said, for a peasant girl, than that which she had proposed for herself.

But Joan was not to be so easily repulsed. She remained firm in her resolution of visiting the king, and applied to all who might be able or willing to befriend her. At length one, struck with the earnestness of her manner, offered to become her guide, and to conduct her to the French court.

Most gladly did Joan accept the proffered kindness ; and though, from the disturbed state in which the country then was, her journey was a long and dangerous one, her courage never failed her, and her

anxiety to be presented to Charles seemed only to increase as the probability of her being so appeared more certain.

On being conducted to the presence of the king, many questions were put to her concerning what she intended to do, and all the lords and gentlemen who surrounded the throne were astonished with the wisdom and judgment which she showed in everything concerning war.

She entreated Charles to provide her with men, horses, and arms; to trust in her, and she would relieve Orleans; for that God, in whom she trusted and believed, would assist and guide her, and enable her to rescue her country.

"I will raise the siege of Orleans," she said, "and I will place the crown upon the head of your majesty, for God has decreed it so; and then my task will be done, and I shall go back and live with my father and my people. But there is no time for delay; the loss of one hour may prove fatal to Orleans. Already the garrison is weakened by hunger and a long resistance: another week, and they will be compelled to surrender."

However much astonished Charles may at first have been at this most extraordinary proposal, he could not resist the earnestness of Joan's entreaties, or the assurances which she gave him of the certainty of her success. And he was willing to make a last attempt, though perhaps with little hope of its being a successful one, of saving his kingdom. He therefore provided

Joan of Arc with the troops she required, and gave her a suit of light and beautiful armour for her own use.

So much, even at this time, had her extraordinary fame spread through the country, that many, of their own accord, placed themselves under her command, and promised the strictest obedience to her will. Already all France looked to her as their deliverer, whilst the inhabitants of Orleans hailed her approach as that of a guardian angel.

Joan of Arc succeeded in throwing provisions into Orleans ; and soon after, amid shouts and exclamations of delight, she entered the town herself, on her beautiful white horse, and carrying her embroidered banner in her hand ; the inhabitants, as she passed, kneeling down, and thanking heaven for thus sending them so unlooked-for a means of deliverance, when they had no longer any hope of rescue.

After entering Orleans, Joan of Arc had written to the Duke of Bedford, the commander of the English forces, warning him that, if he would draw off his men and abandon the siege, they should be allowed to retire in peace ; but that if, on the contrary, he persisted in annoying the inhabitants, that she would lead her troops against him, and by force of arms would oblige him to quit the kingdom. The letter was sent by two heralds ; one of whom was detained prisoner by the English, and the other, after much bad treatment, was sent back with many contemptuous messages, which he was desired to give to his leader,

whose threats they said they despised, as much as they did the folly of those who had submitted to place themselves under the command of a woman.

But though the English thus openly proclaimed the contempt in which they held the enemy and their female leader, they did not see unmoved the ardour and resolution with which she had found means to inspire her hitherto almost despairing troops.

Charles the Seventh had issued express commands, that nothing should be undertaken without the approbation of Joan ; but some of the leaders, without consulting her or the Count Dunois, the governor of Orleans, collected their men together, and quitting the walls, they attacked a large party of the English. At first the sally appeared to be successful ; but suddenly their good fortune deserted them, and their anxiety for battle would probably have cost them dear, had not Joan of Arc heard the clash of arms, and hastened to their assistance. Starting from her bed, for it was already night, she hastily armed herself, and seizing her banner, which she always carried in one hand, she sprang on the horse of her page, which she found waiting in readiness in the court, and rushed to the conflict.

Her voice was sufficient to animate the soldiers, who were already beginning to give way before the English. She bade them turn and renew the attack. Her presence of mind and courage again changed the fortune of the fight, the English were defeated, and the French re-entered the walls victorious.

After this encounter between the parties, Joan again wrote to the Duke of Bedford, saying, that now, for the last time, she offered them peace, if they would agree to the conditions she had proposed. This letter she found a very ingenious way of sending, for she feared to trust another herald in their power, in case they should keep him prisoner, like the last, or perhaps even put him to death. She tied the note to the head of an arrow, which was shot into the camp of the enemy, a herald proclaiming in a loud voice, in order to call their attention to this new species of messenger, "Look to the arrow : it brings news." This letter was treated with the same contempt as the former ; the English only laughing at the idea of their being chased from their strongholds by a country girl.

Several successful sallies had been made by the French, in each of which they had been headed by Joan of Arc. They determined to attack one of those fortresses which the English had erected outside the walls ; but so long and so ably was it defended, that her troops, worn out and fatigued, were ready to give up what appeared to them a fruitless attempt ; when Joan, rushing into the thickest part of the engagement, seized a scaling-ladder, and placed it against the wall.

At this moment an arrow entered her neck and shoulder. She fell, surrounded by the English ; but starting from the ground, she bravely defended herself with her sword, till rescued by a party of her own men, who led her to a place of safety.

In the midst of danger and the excitement of the battle, she had forgotten her wound, but now the tears ran down the cheeks of poor Joan. In a few moments, however, her courage returned. She drew the arrow herself from the wound, which was deep and painful, and insisted upon its being examined and dressed on the spot, after which she returned to the combat. The English were brave and resolute, but the French were equally so; and, when joined by fresh troops from the walls, the fight could no longer be continued with equality; the English were totally defeated, and were driven from their strong post.

This was a great victory, and one much to be desired by the French. And as Joan and her victorious band re-entered the gates, they were met with delight by the happy people, who now looked forward with certainty to their speedy relief; and pouring blessings on the heads of their brave deliverers, they crowded to the different churches, there to offer up their thanks and praise to God, for his mercy towards them. And it seemed as if God, to whom they prayed, had heard their petition, and sought to reward the gratitude they felt for what had already been granted to them; for the English, completely subdued by their late defeat, determined upon raising the siege, and quitting the walls without further molestation.

Thus, in the space of eight days, Joan fulfilled her promise; and the inhabitants of Orleans were released from the yoke to which the English had for so long a time subjected them.

Joan of Arc now repaired to the court of Charles, where she was received with all the honours and consideration due to the deliverer of her country. When presented to the king, she knelt at his feet, saying that half of her commission had still to be fulfilled; that as yet he had been acknowledged only by a part of his kingdom as its sovereign; but that, if he would accompany her to Rheims, he, as all his ancestors had been, should there be crowned.

Charles hesitated, for Rheims as well as most of the towns through which he should have to pass, were still in possession of the English. But the enthusiasm of Joan again prevailed: the French flocked to her standard wherever she appeared. Auxerre, Troyes, and Chalons opened their gates to her, and entering Rheims almost without opposition, she placed the crown of France on the head of its lawful sovereign.

Joan of Arc had now seen accomplished all which she had from the first undertaken; and she much wished to resign her new mode of life, and to return once more to the village of her father. But Charles, who saw the effect produced upon the troops by her presence, and the security which they felt of victory when under her command, used every argument and entreaty to persuade her to remain.

Joan was most unwilling to consent; she felt her commission to be completed; but moved by the prayers of the king and the people, she at last agreed to remain with the army.

Many towns, on hearing that Charles had actually been crowned, offered him their submission ; others he compelled to it by force of arms ; and it seemed likely that Joan would shortly see the completion of what she had foretold,—the restoration of all France to its rightful sovereign. But such was not to be her fate. Poor Joan ! she left her home, and perhaps she loved it as much as I love my pretty woods and my own bright happy —— ; and her father, and mother, and brothers, and sisters she may have loved no less ; but she left them all to save her country, and to free it from a foreign yoke.

Yet one of her countrymen it was, who, jealous of the fame she had so justly acquired, betrayed her to her enemies ; though, perhaps, even the hardness and treachery of his heart might have been softened, could he have foreseen that a fate so horrible awaited the unhappy and defenceless girl.

I do not like telling my little boy of such scenes of horror, but as I have undertaken, and would not for a great, great deal resign the task of giving him his first lessons in history, I shall content myself, when such scenes do occur, by sketching them more slightly than I should wish to do those actions, (and there are many,) which may tend to raise his own dear little heart to the noble, just, and generous sentiments, which I hope may one day occupy it.

Joan of Arc, though she would not now, as formerly, take upon herself the entire command of the army, had joined in several engagements, in each of which,

except an attack on Paris, the French had been successful.

The Duke of Bedford was again in arms against France. He marched his army to the attack of Compiègne, one of those towns which had willingly submitted themselves to the king. But Joan hastened with a party of men to its succour, and was fortunate enough to succeed in entering the town before it was surrounded by the English.

The joy which her arrival occasioned was scarcely less great than had been felt at Orleans, for it was looked to as a certainty of deliverance. At the head of six hundred men she passed through the gates of Compiègne, with the intention of attacking the English, who were quartered at some little distance.

Never did Joan fight with more boldness and determination than in this engagement. Twice she forced the English to retire, though at every moment their forces were increased by fresh numbers. A third time she advanced, and again appeared likely to repulse them; but they rallied, and the French seeing that the whole force of the enemy would soon join in the attack, determined, whilst it was still in their power, to retreat for safety within the walls of the town.

The English, who had observed their intention, eagerly advanced to prevent it. The whole French troops were thrown into confusion. Terrified by the idea that their only chance of escape would thus be cut off, they rushed headlong forwards, trampling down and crushing each other under foot in the hurry of their flight.

The brave Joan alone retained her presence of mind, and continued to defend herself and her retreating party with unshaken courage. By the peculiar dress that she wore, and the banner which she always carried in one hand, she was easily recognised by the enemy, who crowded round her, each anxious to have some claim to the honour of making her captive. But the bravery of her defence, or perhaps the astonishment which it must have created in the mind of her foes, for she was now totally unassisted, aided her retreat. She reached the gates in safety, but when she would have entered, they were closed against her, and, deserted by her companions, she stood defenceless in the midst of her enemies.

That she was placed in this situation through the treachery of the governor, whose base mind was actuated by jealousy, thus to repay the efforts which she had made for his relief, is, I fear, but too true; though some writers have said, that the capture of Joan was owing to the crowd which surrounded the gates being so great as to prevent her entering them.

The strength and courage of this extraordinary woman seemed only to increase with the hopelessness of her situation; she made a desperate effort to escape from her assailants, and to reach the open fields, where she thought she might trust for safety to the speed of her faithful horse. But whilst defending herself by her sword from one party, she was attacked by another, who seizing her by part of her dress, dragged her from her horse; and the unhappy Joan was made prisoner

by the English, whose joy was beyond all bounds at having thus succeeded in securing one whose repeated conquests had taught them to tremble.

I shall not dwell upon the sufferings to which the unfortunate Joan was subjected, through a whole year of the most painful captivity. Enough that they were dictated by relentless hearts, whose only excuse, if indeed any can be offered, is, that they lived in times almost barbarous.

It was not till many months after her being made prisoner, that Joan was called to her trial. In vain did she entreat that she might not be carried before a court consisting only of her enemies, who she knew would condemn her unheard : her death had been already determined upon, and her prayers were unheeded.

She was brought before her judges ; the truth of all her assertions, her earnest pleadings for life, were of no avail. Joan was condemned to die, and by a death so fearful, that even some of those enemies who had been most impatient that her life should pay the forfeit of her supposed crimes, trembled at the sentence ; for she was condemned to be burnt alive.

When the decision of the court was announced to her, the unhappy girl burst into tears ; and, turning to her judges, she exclaimed, " Alas ! will you treat me so cruelly ? Rather would I be beheaded seven times than thus once die in torture and in flames."

The agony of poor Joan could not change the determination of her hard-hearted foes : she was taken back to prison, and next day was conducted in chains

to the place of execution. There some of her enemies were again moved even to tears ; she was so gentle, so humble in her conduct, and there was, too, so singular a mixture of resolution, with fear for a death so horrible, as, after begging the crowd to pray for her, she herself prayed fervently that God would blot out the memory of her sins, and would in mercy receive her soul ; that he would afford her strength to endure the suffering to which she was about to be exposed, and that these sufferings might not be of long continuance.

She was fastened to the fatal stake, and the executioner setting fire to the wood which surrounded it, the flames and smoke gradually arose, till their work was accomplished ; and the brave, the victorious, and unhappy Joan was no more.

It is generally said that Joan perished in her twenty-third year ; but as she was born, if I am not mistaken, in one thousand four hundred and eleven, and died in one thousand four hundred and thirty-one,—as she was only eighteen when she joined the French army, and perished two years after that date—at the time of her execution, she could only have been twenty years of age. Alas ! how young to die a death of so many terrors !

And now, my dearest little boy, which of all my stories that you have read do you like the best ? It has just occurred to me that I can tell you one, of your own brother Herbert, which will no doubt appear in your eyes, as in mine, a most unequalled degree of

heroism, particularly as it was exhibited when he was very little more than four years old.

He was one day playing beside his mamma, who was lying on the sofa. He did not make much noise ; but as she was ill, the pattering of his little feet disturbed her, and she bade him collect all his playthings, and go into the back drawing-room, and shut the door, and not do any mischief.

“Mamma,” he said, “Herbert will not take in his playthings, because he is quite tired of them all ; but he will get chairs, and make a carriage and horses, for that will not be doing any mischief.” His mamma agreed, and away he went.

For a little while he contented himself with sitting on the table, driving ten or twelve in hand, all the time holding long conversations with his horses in French, English, and Italian. But then he thought that his carriage was too low, and that it would be a great improvement if he put on the top of the table a light chair that stood in the room ; a cushion he found was next required. The sofa, unfortunately for him, supplied that : first one pillow, then another was piled up, and on the top of all was placed a footstool.

This was the summit of his wishes ; and, content with the height he should now attain, he climbed up, how, I cannot say. The top, however, he did reach in safety ; but no sooner had he seated himself, than his weight, though it was very slight,—for at this time he was a little boy, with rosy cheeks, and dimpled

shoulders, and tiny hands and feet, and long curls that danced about like sunbeams,—so that he looked like a little fairy, or like one of those pretty creatures with wings that go floating about, looking so bright, so good, and so happy in some of the Italian pictures. But I am forgetting my story. No sooner had he reached the wished-for height, than the cushions slipped from under him, and cushions, footstool, chair, and Herbert, all came rolling down upon the marble floor. His mamma heard the noise, and ran into the room. He was still lying on the ground, his little face all bathed in tears; but he tried to stop crying, and said, "Herbert is not hurt very much, mamma; only," as she put out her hand to lead him away, "only you must not touch my arm, for something has gone wrong in it." "Something has gone wrong!" she said, looking very frightened; for she saw that the poor little boy was suffering great pain, though he did not say so. Then Herbert got frightened too, and burst into tears again, and said, "Yes, mamma, something must have gone wrong, because I cannot raise my arm, or move it in the least." The poor little arm did indeed hang by his side as if it had no power to move. Then one servant ran for the doctor, and another for hot vinegar; for they all loved Herbert very much, and were sorry to see him in such pain.

It was some time before the doctor came, and all the while Herbert lay on his mamma's knee, and she brushed away his tears, and her own, turned about, and kissed and blessed him a thousand times: for

when he was suffering so much, she could not tell him how foolish he had been to climb up so high, instead of sitting, as he had often before done, safely on the table.

At last the doctor did come, and he made him stand before him, and raised his arm up and down, and told his mamma it was not broken as she had feared, but that the shoulder was dislocated. Then he rubbed it with his hand, and sometimes pulled it out; and then he would push it back again, all the time asking if it gave him pain, but he always shook his head and said "No," or turned to his mamma, telling her "it did not hurt Herbert, not hurt him very much."

When the doctor had finished setting the shoulder, he said, clapping him on the head, "There, now, my little hero, it is all done." Herbert looked up in his mamma's face and smiled, and then fell back on her knee in a faint: he had endured the pain as long as he could without one sign or look of complaint; but when he heard that he had nothing more to suffer, he fainted away. He was carried to bed, and kept there for some days, for his arm was still swelled, and very painful.

I did not live in the same house with him then, but I used to go to him every morning after breakfast, and his mamma and I used to tell him stories, and I do not think that all the time he was ill I ever once heard him fretful or impatient. There were some people there who were very kind to him, and used

to come and see him, and to bring him pretty toys and books to amuse him, so that the time passed away very well ; and I do not think that he has ever made his driving-box so high since the unfortunate day of his fall.

CHAPTER V.

THE HISTORY OF RICHARD CŒUR DE LION.

RICHARD the First of England, whose bravery and determined courage gained him the title of the Lion-hearted, was the second son of Henry the Second. I wish I could pass over the early part of his life, and leave untold crimes which must ever be as a dark and hideous spot upon his name. For, except ingratitude to God, indifference for his many benefits and mercies, and forgetfulness of His word and commandments, there is not, I think, a greater sin than that of which Richard was guilty; for he repaid the care of one of the best and kindest of fathers with ingratitude, and his love with hatred. He even rose up in arms against him: as often as he was forgiven by his too lenient parent, so often did he err again. And when his undutiful conduct, and that of his brothers, had broken the heart and shortened the life of the good king, his dying bed was left unattended by his sons, and his body was carried by strangers to the grave.

I have told you that Richard Cœur de Lion was the second son of Henry of England. He had three other sons: Henry, who was older than Richard, but who

died at the age of eight-and-twenty: Geoffery; and his youngest and favourite child, John.

Scarcely had the three elder reached the years of manhood, when, instigated by their wicked mother, Queen Eleanor, to rebel against their father, they demanded that he should resign the greater part of his kingdom, and divide it among them.

Kind, gentle, and indulgent as he ever was, their father would not consent to so arrogant and extraordinary a proposal. He refused, and his three sons rose up in arms against him.

Henry, the eldest, I have said, died early. On his death-bed he was seized with remorse for his unnatural conduct towards his father, and he sent a messenger, earnestly entreating that he would visit him and grant him his forgiveness; but the king, who had formerly been deceived by his son, mistrusted the message, and supposing it to be some new act of treachery, refused to comply with the request. A few days afterwards he heard that Henry was indeed dead, and severely blaming himself for not having hastened to grant him his forgiveness, the poor father burst into tears, and forgetting all the ingratitude which for the last few years Henry had shown, he remembered only that he had lost a child.

Richard was now heir to the throne, but the repentance of his brother, which came too late to redress the wrongs which he had done, made no impression on his mind,—he continued to pursue his wicked course; and the king saw himself com-

pelled to a succession of wars, the instigators of which were his own children.

The repeated shocks that he met with on the discovery of every new offence, soon destroyed the health of the good old king; for unreturned as was his love, he still felt for his rebellious sons the affection of a parent.

To John alone, who had hitherto remained true to him, he looked for the support and comfort of his old age. His favourite son would, he trusted, never deceive him, and on him therefore he centred all his affections. No wonder, then, when this last stay deserted him, that the poor king sank under the blow. John went over to his enemies, and his desertion broke the heart of his unhappy parent. In a burst of wrath and despair, he heaped curses on the heads of his sons; and shortly after this last proof of their unworthiness, he resigned a life which his own children had rendered miserable.

The body of the king was conveyed to Fonterrault, and, before it was interred, lay in the abbey there. Richard, happening to enter the church at the time, and seeing the lifeless form of his aged father stretched before him, was struck with horror and remorse. Now, for the first time, his own character appeared to him in its true light. He remembered the unvaried gentleness and affection of his parent, and his unsuccessful efforts to awaken in his sons a sense of duty. Much he would have given to have recalled his father to life, that he might have seen, but for one moment, his

sorrow and repentance. Such thoughts did, indeed, come too late for the happiness of the old king ; but they left an impression on the son which did not pass away.

Richard became king of England. His early life might lead us to expect little of good, noble, or generous in his character. But it was not so. His feelings of remorse, awakened by the sight of the lifeless body of his parent, whose days he had shortened, and whose gray hairs he had brought down in sorrow to the grave, altered and softened his disposition ; and he became not only a great but a good king.

The first act which proved a reformation in his character, was his kindness towards all those who had remained faithful to his father, and who had consequently been against himself. He retained them in the high offices they had held during the late king's reign, and bestowed many favours upon them ; whilst those who had assisted or encouraged him in his rebellion were looked upon with contempt and suspicion.

He sought, also, to blot out the memory of his offences to one parent by heaping benefits upon the other ; and towards his mother, and his now only surviving brother, John, his generosity was unbounded.

At this period expeditions, or crusades, to the Holy Land were very frequently formed, to free that country from the power of the infidels ; and as such enterprises crowned their undertakers with fame, so was it considered a blot on the character of any king who had

not lent his aid to the expulsion of the infidels from that land, rendered so sacred from its having been the birthplace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; the scene of his innumerable miracles and acts of kindness to a sinful race ; and lastly, of his sufferings and death, when to save you and all mankind, he laid down his life upon the cross.

Immediately after the coronation of Richard he commenced arrangements for an expedition to the Holy Land, and amassed large sums of money to forward the enterprise. While he was thus engaged, ambassadors were sent over from France, informing him that Philip the King of France, with all his barons, and a large force, would meet him at an appointed place and from thence accompany him to Jerusalem.

Richard, with his numerous followers, set sail from England. His fleet was shortly separated by a heavy storm, and the king was obliged to seek safety in the island of Crete ; whilst two of his largest ships were wrecked upon the coast of Cyprus. Many were drowned ; and those who did escape, and who reached the shore in safety, were seized and imprisoned.

The ship which conveyed the sister of Richard, and the Princess Berengaria, to whom he was betrothed, was driven by the high winds close to the harbour. Here they might have found shelter, had not the tyrant Isaac the Prince of Cyprus, refused them admittance, and they were obliged to lie at anchor, exposed to all the severity of the weather.

Richard, who heard of their distress, hurried to relieve it. Incensed at the cruelty of Isaac, he sent to demand the release of those of his fleet who had been taken prisoners, and on this being refused, landed his men, attacked, and defeated him. Nor were the Cypreots unwilling to receive the King of England for their governor, instead of the tyrannical Isaac. They promised him submission, and assisted him with money and provisions.

The arrival of the French and English forces in the Holy Land, inspired the Christians there with new hope, and with the expectation of at length obtaining victory over the infidels.

The two kings, Richard, and Philip of France, as well as their different followers, vied with each other in deeds of valour; but on Richard, in particular, the eyes of the whole world were turned in admiration. His natural courage, which he had always possessed in so great a degree, was now heightened by the romance of his situation, and it was at this time he gained a reputation almost unequalled, for bravery and devotion to the sacred cause in which he had engaged.

His surpassing courage, his acts of liberality and magnificence, soon raised him, in the estimation of all, far above Philip of France, who, jealous of the high reputation thus gained by his brother king, and wearied of being but a secondary person in the eyes of those around him, at length informed Richard of his intention to return immediately to his own kingdom.

Richard agreed, and a treaty was entered into between the two monarchs, binding Philip not to molest England, or such provinces in France as belonged to the English king, during the stay of the latter in the Holy Land.

The Christian pilgrims, now under the sole command of Richard, determined to besiege Ascalon, to wrest it, if possible, from their brave and powerful foes ; and, if they succeeded, to march on to Jerusalem, the freeing of which city from the power of the infidels was the chief object of the crusades.

Saladin, the Saracen king, with an army amounting to three hundred thousand men, marched to intercept the Christians on their route to Ascalon. The troops on either side were brave, courageous, and determined ; whilst their two great commanders, Saladin and Richard, were equals in military skill and resolution. At first the English army fared the worst, the right and the left wing were thrown into confusion and their ranks broken and defeated ; but Richard, advancing eagerly with the main body, attacked the enemy with great fury, giving time to the other disordered troops to recover ; and he soon obtained a complete victory, forty thousand of the Saracens being left dead upon the field.

Other enterprises were undertaken by the Lion-hearted Richard : success crowned them all, and already he and his victorious army were within sight of Jerusalem. The object of his highest hopes appeared almost within his grasp, when, to his great

sorrow, he found that he must resign all thoughts of further conquest.

His troops had reached the Holy Land full of vigour, health, and determined courage, animated by the glory which they had hoped to gain; but now, from a long sojourn in a foreign land, from disease, and the fatigues of war, they were weakened in health, and, notwithstanding their repeated victories, dispirited in hopes. All (the king alone excepted) expressed a desire to return to England, there to recruit their means and strength; and not even the entreaties of Cœur de Lion, beloved as he was by them, could persuade them to undertake the siege of Jerusalem. Greatly mortified, yet compelled to submit, Richard now wished to make some agreement with the Saracens, in order to secure to the Christians the conquests he had obtained. A truce was accordingly entered into, which was to last for three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours; and after this agreement, Richard set sail for England.

On his way home, the English king was shipwrecked near Aquileia. Alone, and in the disguise of a pilgrim, he determined to pursue his way through Germany; but fear of discovery compelling him to quit the direct road to England, he passed through Vienna; and here, forgetting to assume the appearance of poverty, and the manners as well as the dress of a pilgrim, his disguise was discovered, and he was arrested and thrown into prison, by the order of the Duke of Austria, to whom the haughty spirit of

Richard had given some offence when they fought together in the Holy Land.

Richard, who knew that, notwithstanding the treaty between them, Philip of France had taken advantage of his absence to molest his dominions, and that his brother John, on whom I have told you he had heaped benefits, had repaid his kindness with ingratitude, so that his whole kingdom was in a disturbed state, had been hastening home for the purpose of restoring it to quiet, and of counteracting those designs of his enemies, which his long absence in the Holy Land had favoured.

These reflections, you may imagine, did not lighten the miseries of his imprisonment; whilst he, the monarch and glory of England, the fame of whose achievements had rung through the whole world, lay loaded with chains in a solitary dungeon in Germany. His subjects were overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow when the tidings of his fate reached them. They saw what fatal consequences must arise, if he could not be released from his captivity, and every effort was made on their side to obtain his freedom.

I remember to have heard or read, when I was a child, an interesting story of Richard Cœur de Lion's imprisonment, but I cannot recollect whether it was in a true or fabled history, and I cannot find it in any book near me now; however, I shall tell it to you as I remember it, and then you can ask wiser people than I am, whether it is true or not.

When the poor king was thrown into a dungeon, his place of confinement was kept concealed from his

subjects, perhaps till the payment of a high ransom was agreed upon. One of his devoted followers, of the name of Blondell, determined to set out in search of him, and to discover, if possible, the prison where his master lay. The means he took were these: he went over to Germany in the disguise of a minstrel; and travelling on foot, he visited every castle which he thought likely to be used as a place of security for the imprisonment of so noble a captive. On approaching them, under the pretence of amusing the inhabitants, he would sing or play below the windows some of Richard's favourite airs, trusting that, if the king should hear them, he would know it to be the voice of a friend, and return some answer, or discover some mode of informing him of his place of concealment.

For a while the efforts of Blondell met with no success; but at length, singing an air well known to the captive king, he was startled and delighted by hearing the measure continued by a voice from a window, and the faithful vassal knew it to be the voice of his king.

Now, having told you this story, only on the chance of its being true, I shall return to what I know to be so.

It was agreed that, on the payment of a very large ransom to his captors, Richard should obtain his liberty. New taxes were imposed, and large sums of money were collected in England; yet when all was called in, it came far short of what was required to purchase the liberty of their king: but the zeal of his

people for his return quickly did away with this difficulty : great sums were voluntarily given, and churches and monasteries melted down or disposed of the plate, and the rich gems, which had long been the pride of their different possessors. Immense as the ransom demanded was, in this way it was speedily amassed ; and Richard Cœur de Lion once more trod his native land.

The joy with which his people hailed his return was excessive. His sufferings in Germany had endeared him to their hearts almost as much as the fame gained by him in the Holy Land, where the name of England and her glorious conquests were long remembered.

Shortly after Richard's return to his native country, impatient to revenge himself on Philip for all the wrongs which he had received from him, he determined to pass over to France, and to carry on war against its monarch ; but of this period there is little to relate. Indeed, except his glorious expedition to the Holy Land I find little in the life of Cœur de Lion that would interest you. He has been made the subject of many fabled histories, and in this way a higher opinion of his character is entertained than I think it deserves. After attacking some small towns, a truce was agreed upon by the French and English kings, and the latter returned to England, having added nothing to his conquests.

During this short war with France, Prince John, who at the commencement of it had sided with Philip against his brother, deserted him, and coming over to

Richard, he threw himself at his feet, and craved his pardon for his numerous offences. Richard, who well knew the disposition of his brother, was not very willing to take him again into favour; but, moved by the entreaties of his mother, Queen Eleanor, he at last consented, saying, at the same time, "I forgive him, and I hope I shall as easily forget his injuries as he will forget my pardon."

I am now going to tell you how Richard met his death. A vassal of England, named Vidomar, had discovered underground on his own estate, a great treasure, part of which he sent as a present to Richard; but the king, not content with a portion, demanded the whole, and on its being refused, besieged the castle of the Viscount Vidomar. On his approach the garrison offered to surrender; but Richard returned for answer, that as he had had the trouble of coming there, he would take the place by force, and would hang all the inhabitants. Towards evening, the King of England, accompanied only by one of the leaders of his party, rode near the castle, in order to survey it, when an archer from the walls took aim at him, and sent his arrow through Richard's shoulder. He immediately gave orders for the assault to begin: the place was taken, and all except Bertrand de Gourdon, the person who had wounded the king, were hanged, whilst he was reserved, in order to inflict upon him a yet more cruel fate.

The wound, which of itself was not dangerous, was so unskilfully attended to by the surgeon, that it be-

came mortal, and Cœur de Lion knew that his death was near. He sent for Gourdon, probably to condemn him to a painful death. "Wretch," said he, when he was brought before him, "what have I ever done to you, to oblige you to seek my life?" "What have you done to me!" he replied; "you have killed with your own hand my father and my two brothers, and you intended to have hanged myself. I am now in your power, and you may take revenge by inflicting on me the most severe torments; but I shall endure them all with pleasure, as I can now think that I have been so happy as to ensure your destruction."

Richard, whose haughty heart was humbled by the near approach of death, was moved by this reply, instead of condemning his prisoner, he desired him to be set at liberty, and a sum of money to be given him by way of some atonement for what he had suffered.

Richard died of his wound in his forty-second year. Ten years he had reigned over England, but a very few months of that period were spent in his own kingdom, his whole time having been engaged in his wars with France, and his expedition to Palestine, besides the fourteen months when he was detained prisoner in Germany.

I am much afraid, my dearest little boy, that I have not made this story so interesting as I had wished; at least I am sure that when I read it over, which I am now going to do, I shall not like it myself. But if I have failed this time, I can only say that I am very sorry for it, and shall try to make up for it in my

next, which will I hope be as much more interesting to you as it will be easier to me ; for the life of the hero whom I have chosen for my next story is well known to every Highland heart ; and I am glad to say that I can lay claim to being a Highlander.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LIFE OF PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD STUART.

WHEN I began the first story that was written for this book—the life of Wallace—I was, my darling baby, sitting in your nursery at S——. I carried my table close to the side of your little bed, and I opened and put aside the white curtains, that when I looked up I might see your sweet rosy face ; and I often laid down my pen, and forgot all about Wallace and my story, to look how comfortably your cheek rested on your little fat hand ; to see you smile in your sleep, or with what a cross look you would brush away the short round curls, if by straying down a little too far, they only ventured to touch the closed lids of your blue eyes, thereby daring to disturb, though it could not break, your sound sleep.

None of these things will happen now to interrupt my story, for I am five hundred miles away from you and from my home, and I can no longer go to bless my little boy, as I used always to do before going to sleep ; and I can no longer see him running about, and tumbling down at every moment, as if he was made for nothing else but to tumble about, without being hurt.

All this makes me very sad indeed when I think of it ; but two months will soon be over, and then I shall see my little boy again, and love him all the better for having been so long away from him : whilst in the meantime, I shall be able to write a great many stories for him, for there are no pretty woods and fields to tempt me to go out, no bright beautiful streams dancing merrily along : nothing but crowded streets, and a great deal of noise, which I do not like at all. In short, I do not like London ; and so much the better for you, for to put me in mind of home, I sit by the fireside the whole day long, and write your book.

The story which I have fixed upon to tell you to-day, is that of the Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

I am sorry to say, both for your sake and my own, that no very good history ever has been written of this brave but unfortunate descendant of a long line of kings. This seems strange ; for never was there a time so full of romantic interest, as that when the young prince went into Scotland, in the vain hope of recovering the throne of his ancestors.

James the Second, the grandfather of Prince Charles Edward, was King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His father, Charles the First, had rashly tried to establish a despotic government in England, and failing in the attempt, was driven from the throne, and perished on the scaffold. James did not profit by so terrible a lesson, but carried his designs still further, and openly declaring himself a Roman Catholic, endeavoured to overturn the established religion of his

country. He too was driven from his throne; and deserted by his own family, the unhappy king fled for protection to a foreign land.

It is said, that the last and severest blow, and the one which fell most heavily upon the heart of the unfortunate monarch, was the desertion of his favourite daughter, the Princess Anne. On being told that she had fled from his protection to that of his enemies, he burst into tears, and in the greatest agony of heart exclaimed, "God help me! my own children have forsaken me."

Broken and depressed in spirit, he could no longer combat against the tide of sorrow and misfortune that pressed upon him: he resigned his kingdom, and with his queen and his youngest child, then a baby, he passed into France.

His son-in-law, the Prince of Orange, who had married the Princess Mary, was by the people elected King of England. At his death, as he had no son, the Princess Anne, who so unkindly had deserted her unhappy father in the midst of all his misfortunes, became queen; and she also dying without children, the crown descended (according to the settlement made on James's quitting the country, which excluded all Roman Catholics from the throne) to George the First, the great-grandson of James the Sixth of Scotland, but a foreign prince.

Had the Chevalier de St. George—for so the son of James the Second was generally called—quietly submitted to this settlement of the crown on one so dis-

tantly related to the royal line, and had his son, Prince Charles Edward, acted in the same manner, they would no doubt have been considered weak men, possessed neither of courage nor of an honourable ambition. But this submission to the will of their enemies they were far from feeling: they proudly asserted their right to the throne of England, and though unsuccessful, many and persevering were their efforts to support their claim.

I have given you this little sketch, that you may understand in what situation Charles Edward, son of the Chevalier de St. George, and grandson of James the Second was placed.

Till the time when my story is about to begin, the young prince had lived in France; but now his eagerness to regain the land of his ancestors, to see his father, through his means, restored to the throne, was no longer to be restrained.

The Jacobites, (that was the name given to the party who still fondly hoped to see the house of Stuart one day restored to their kingdom,) of whom, both in England and Scotland, there was a considerable number, had held a correspondence with the young prince in France, and had promised to assist him if he would come over to England and assert his claim to the crown. Alone, and with very little money, he embarked for Scotland, and determined to trust the furtherance of his cause to the affection of those who still looked upon his father as their rightful king.

I have told you that many, both in England and

Scotland, had long and secretly cherished a hope that the banished Stuarts might be restored ; but the greater number of these were to be found among the brave and loyal Highlanders. To the Highlands, therefore, Charles determined to direct his steps.

I must here tell you, that those who befriended his cause, and had promised him their assistance, had done so upon condition that he should bring with him an army of soldiers provided by the French king. But Charles, finding that he had no chance of assistance from France, embarked alone for Scotland, and trusted, as you have seen, solely to the attachment of his own people for assistance.

His first interview with his Highland friends was not very encouraging to his hopes. He was assured by Macdonald of Boisdale, that without the aid promised to him by France, to rise in arms against England would be an act of madness so desperate, that if the prince resolutely refused to desist from the attempt till a later period, when they should be better prepared for the contest, he and his friends must decline joining his standard.

Dejected, but still determined, the prince sought an interview with another chieftain of the name of Clanranald, on whose affection and disinterested counsel he knew he could depend. In the truth, courage, and devotion of this chieftain he was not disappointed ; but the young prince was driven almost to despair by the assurances which he and his kinsman Kinlochmoidart gave him, that every effort to assert his rights

must, at this period, prove a total failure ; giving many reasons for urging him to defer the enterprise, at least for some little time.

Charles, in the most moving terms, conjured them to befriend their rightful prince, their countryman, and their friend, but all was of no avail. The design, they said, was hopeless, and they would not lend their aid to bring destruction on the head of their prince.

While thus engaged in discussion, they walked up and down the small deck of the ship which had conveyed Charles to Scotland. A young Highlander, the brother of Kinlochmoidart, stood near them ; he heard his chief, Clanranald, and his brother, refuse to fight in his behalf ; he saw that his repeated and urgent entreaties met only a more decided refusal. The colour changed on his cheek from red to pale, his eyes flashed with indignation, and he half drew his sword from his scabbard, as if eager already to fight in favour of his youthful prince.

Charles observed the action, and turning hastily towards him, said, " Will not you assist me ? " " I will ! I will ! " exclaimed the Highlander ; " though not another man in Albyn should draw his sword, my prince, I am ready to die for you." Moved even to tears by the words and the gallant bearing of his new-found friend, again and again the prince thanked him for the warmth of affection and devotion of feeling expressed by him. Nor was this the only good he derived from the loyalty of the brave Highlander. Kinlochmoidart and Clanranald, roused by the scene

they had just witnessed, no longer refused their aid, but gave a promise that they, and all under their command, should join the standard of their prince ; and having thus at last consented to support his cause, they determined to risk everything in his behalf.

Before continuing my story, I must try and explain to you about the different clans of Scotland. Each tribe or clan, that is, all those who bore the same name, had a chief of its own. The Camerons, the Grants, the Macdonalds, the Frasers, and a great many others, all lived under and obeyed their separate chiefs. And so devoted and submissive were these brave, warm-hearted, though at this time almost savage tribes, to the leader of their clan, that his slightest will was a law to them : the interests of their chief was their interest ; an injury or a benefit done to him was an injury or a benefit to themselves ; and good or evil thus received was alike speedily repaid. They were ever ready to die in behalf of their chieftain, and often have they been known to throw their own persons between him and danger, contented to receive the blow aimed at him, and to die rejoicing in having saved his life.

Each clan had a tartan which belonged peculiarly to themselves, and which none of any other name ever wore ; so that, when strangers met, they always knew to what clan each belonged, and what name he bore. They wore also in their Highland bonnets, a sprig of a tree or shrub, which was called their badge ; all the Macdonalds, for instance, wore a sprig of heather ; the Macduffs, holly ; the Drummonds, ivy ; the Frasers, yew.

To return to the prince. He had, as I have told you, obtained the promise of assistance from Kinlochmoidart; but this was not sufficient: and others, to whom he trusted for help, still refused their aid.

Among those friends on whose assistance the prince had most dependence, was Lochiel, chief of the Camerons; a powerful clan, which had ever been attached to the house of Stuart. On hearing that the prince had arrived in Scotland, he set out with the intention of visiting him; but he was fully determined that nothing should prevail on him to countenance an attempt at that time so hopeless. He would urge, nay, insist upon Charles's returning into France, and not blasting all their hopes, by entering too precipitately into a contest with England.

But vain were all his determinations: Charles possessed an influence over his hearers, which won every heart to his purpose. Earnestly for awhile did Lochiel continue to point out the hopelessness of the enterprise; but the ardour of the prince would submit to no delay. "In a few days," he said, "I will proclaim to the world, that Charles Stuart has come over to claim the throne of his ancestors; to win it back, or to perish in the attempt. Lochiel," he continued, "whom my father has often spoken of as our best and truest friend, may remain at home, and from the public papers learn the fate of his prince." "No!" exclaimed Lochiel, "the fate of my prince I will share, come weal, come woe. I and my clan are alike at your disposal."

From this time the followers of Charles became daily

more numerous. A gathering of the clans took place throughout the whole country ; and large bands of armed men, under the command of their chiefs, were hurrying from every direction to join the standard of their prince.

In the meantime England commenced preparations against Charles ; and Sir John Cope was despatched at the head of a large army into Scotland. They marched towards the Highlands, where they expected to meet with the prince ; but here they were disappointed, for he was already on the route to Edinburgh, which town, after a very slight resistance, he entered, and took up his abode in Holyrood-house, the palace of his ancestors.

The young prince had entirely succeeded in winning the hearts of those who had devoted themselves to his cause. Aware of their partiality to everything that they considered national, he had adopted the customs peculiar to their country : he wore the Highland dress ; he lost no opportunity of conversing with the Highlanders in their own language, by which means he speedily acquired it ; and even his assertion, that he preferred oat-cake to every other sort of bread, was hailed as a new virtue in their beloved prince, by this simple-minded and devoted people.

There was, too, something so winning and graceful in his manner ; he was so young, and, to use the words of another writer, " so comely in his looks," that even those who refused to lend him their aid could not help wishing him success.

Cope, who had discovered, though not till too late, the mistake which he had made in leading his army

into the Highlands, had taken shipping at Aberdeen, and landing his troops at Dunbar, was now marching towards Edinburgh.

The prince, who was informed of his movements, determined upon going to meet him, and giving him battle. He set out accordingly on his march by Duddingston, where they halted for the night, and where, summoning part of his band around him, he consulted with them as to what they should do on the morrow. Among other things, he asked some of the Highland chiefs how they thought their men would behave when met by the regular troops of the enemy. Macdonald of Keppoch, who answered the question, said the country had been so long at peace, that very few of the men had ever seen a battle, and he could not therefore answer for their behaviour. But he could promise, he said, to his prince, that all the gentlemen of his army would be in the midst of the fight ; and that it was well known the clans would follow their chiefs, though led by them to death.

Charles proposed that he, at the head of a band, should be the first to attack the enemy ; but the urgent entreaties of his friends prevented him from thus placing himself so needlessly in a post of danger. The two armies met at Preston. The Highlanders commenced the conflict by rushing on the enemy with the yell or shout which they were accustomed to use in battle. Their resolute advance, their gallant determination to win or die, was not to be repulsed by the cannon, or the points of the bayonets on which they appeared

fearlessly to throw themselves. The English soldiers were here far from supporting their usual character for bravery ; some, even before joining in the fight, turned and fled ; and none, after having made one attack, could be prevailed upon to attempt another, put throwing down their arms, they left the field. The whole battle did not last above six or eight minutes ; and in this brief space the young prince saw his faithful band the undoubted conquerors of the day.

The Highlanders are by many accused, at these times, of wanting that pity for a fallen foe which every generous heart must feel ; but there are many instances which will contradict this assertion, at least after the battle of Preston. Those who were found on the field wounded, but still alive, met with the greatest kindness from their conquerors. Some dressed their wounds to the best of their power : others carried them to places of shelter, and even left such small sums of money as they could afford to pay for their support ; but the poor Highlanders met with no return of kindness, when they, in their turn, were conquered by the English.

After this battle, the prince, with his victorious army, returned to Edinburgh ; and, on their way to Holyrood-house, a hundred bag-pipes belonging to the different clans, played the welcome air of "the King shall enjoy his own again."

For some time Charles remained at Holyrood, acting as the eldest son of the rightful king ; but he did not here meet with the success he had hoped for. No new

adherents flocked to his standard ; they were not possessed of the romantic and disinterested spirit of loyalty which influenced the brave Highlanders ; and at the end of six weeks, he found that his army had been augmented only by a very small number of the inferior class.

Disheartening as this must have been to the prince, he was still determined to pursue his intention of invading England. He proceeded toward London, and here his route was marked everywhere by conquest ; for though George the Second had sent forces against him, few attempts had hitherto been made to stay his progress. He was now within one hundred and twenty miles of the city, and the prince began to look forward with more of hope than he had yet dared to do, to the termination of his adventure.

But just at this time, those who had so eagerly and with so much ardour devoted themselves to his cause, drew back. They appeared to think the approaching conflict with the numerous army of English who waited their advance, too hazardous, and proposed to retreat into Scotland.

With prayers, entreaties, even with tears, Charles conjured of them not to throw away the advantages they had obtained. But it was all to no purpose ; a retreat was decided upon, and the cruel disappointment of the prince at the overthrow of his hopes is not to be told, as with a saddened heart he slowly pursued his route northward and again entered Scotland.

In the next engagement which took place between

the rival parties, the battle of Falkirk, the Scots were again successful. The English forces, under the command of General Hawley, met with a defeat scarcely less decided than that at Preston. But here the star of victory, which had shone with such unvaried constancy on the efforts of the youthful prince, now set for ever. In a very little while all the devotion of his gallant band, all the vigour and heroism of his own character, was to be quenched on the bloody heath of Culloden.

The Highland army was in Inverness when intelligence reached them, that their enemies, commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, brother to the English king, were on their way to the north. Charles Edward, to whom the tidings were first told, immediately gave orders for his soldiers to collect, and himself informed them that a considerable force was coming against them. He was received by the whole army with their usual delight at his presence, which they testified in their own wild manner, with loud huzzas, and throwing their caps in the air; and with light hearts, and eager for the fight, they were led to the field of Culloden, from which so few were destined to return.

It was proposed by the prince and some others to surprise the army of the Duke of Cumberland, who was then at Nairn, by marching against him, and attacking him in the night. This, after some difficulty, was agreed on, and proved an unfortunate attempt. The ground, which was marshy and bad, greatly prevented their making progress sufficient to allow of their

reaching Nairn before there would be enough daylight to expose them to the enemy. Fatigued and dispirited, they were therefore obliged to return; and they reached Culloden Moor worn out and famished with hunger.

One of the greatest sorrows of the poor prince at this time was the impossibility, unprovided as he was with money, of giving his troops regular pay. They had at this time received none for a month; they were not, therefore, able to procure a sufficient quantity of provisions, and all the stores now in their possession was a single biscuit for each man.

In the course of the morning, many, unable any longer to endure the fatigues of marching without sufficient food to support them, quitted their ranks, and made their way back to Inverness, or wandered through the country in search of a meal. Some of these, when met by the officers who went in search of them, were conjured by them to return; but the poor famishing creatures prayed of them rather to "shoot them at once, than oblige them to starve of hunger." Thus, when drawn up in readiness for the combat, the army of the prince was found to be grievously diminished. It consisted only of about five thousand men, which number it was known the forces of the English nearly doubled.

Before the attack began, Charles Edward rode up and down in front of his lines, entreating his followers to be of good cheer, and to act on this eventful day with their usual courage and bravery. Again he was

hailed with cheers of delight, and with vows to win all, or to die in his behalf.

As in the battle of Preston, the Highlanders were the first to begin the contest. Then came the pouring in of the English cannon ; to which, from its situation, the prince's army was so exposed, that each new volley stretched whole lines of the brave Highlanders dead upon the ground. Already their ranks were visibly diminished, till, unable any longer to witness the un-avenged deaths of their friends and clansmen, the Highlanders rushed forward, and hand to hand the fight was continued.

I must here tell you, that since the victory gained at Bannockburn by the ancestor of our present hero, the gallant Bruce, the clan of Macdonald had in every succeeding battle fought on the right wing. They looked upon this as a preference due to them ; and when now, through some mistake, they had been placed upon the left, they resented it as an insult, and refused to fight. In vain did their leaders conjure them to advance. They were not to be moved. They stood still amidst the fire of the enemy and the confusion of the day. They did not quit the field, but they persisted in remaining inactive.

Very different was the conduct of the other clans. They rushed upon the enemy with a force to which, for a moment, they were obliged to yield. It was but for a moment ; for if one line of the English army gave way it was instantly replaced by another.

The brave Highlanders knew the day to be already

lost ; but the despair of that feeling seemed only to endow them with new courage. They rushed upon the points of the bayonets, and met indeed their own death ; but they were contented at this price to secure that of their enemy, by striking at him with the dirk or broad-sword, thus giving their own lives to avenge the slaughter of their friends.

It is said, that when the unhappy prince saw how nearly all was lost, he sought by his usual animated tones and gestures to inspire his men with hope ; but the only answer which their broken spirits and devoted hearts could return was, " My prince, ochon ! ochon ! "

As you are at least half a Scotsman, my little boy, you should know how much of sorrow this little word " ochon " expresses. Deep indeed must have been the despair of these brave hearts, when such was their only reply to the entreaties of their beloved leader.

The day was lost, and the true and generous, the brave and devoted Highlanders saw themselves utterly defeated. When Charles now, for the first time since he had entered Scotland, beheld his brave Highlanders flying from the enemy, he could, it is said scarcely believe that Heaven had indeed tried him with so deep a sorrow. Full of grief, not only at the sudden overthrow of his own hopes, but yet more at the fearful massacre of those who with such noble disinterestedness had supported his cause with their lives, he was led from the field by the few attendants who had passed unscathed through the horrors of that bloody day.

I have told you that the Highlanders, when con-

quered by the English, met not with a return of the kindness which they had shown to the wounded of the enemy, after their victory at Preston.

When the battle was ended, the English soldiers, not content with the entire defeat of their noble foes, took a weak, cowardly, and savage-like revenge on the bodies of the slain ; as well as upon those in whom life still faintly lingered, and, rushing over the field, they inflicted new wounds on the dead and on the dying, with their bayonets and swords.

This period has always seemed to me the darkest page of the English history. The whole nature of the nation appears suddenly to have changed. The cowardice of the troops displayed at Preston and at Falkirk is unparalleled ; and the cruelty, the scenes of bloodshed and of butchery which followed the battle of Culloden, will ever, I hope, remain a solitary instance of the absence of every noble or generous sentiment in the breasts of an English leader and of an English army.

But to return to the prince. His miseries and sufferings after his defeat are beyond all description. . Even the dangers encountered by Bruce, when wandering an outcast among the hills, appear tame when compared with those of the unhappy Charles.

Conscious that the last blow had been struck ; that there was not a possibility of again facing the enemy ; aware that a price had been set upon his head, a large sum of money held out as a reward to whomsoever should deliver him, dead or alive, to his enemies ; and surrounded by dangers from which he had not the

means of escape, he wandered about the remote hills, through which an eager search was daily made for him by the English soldiers.

Charles's first retreat was the island of Benbecula but fearful to trust himself for any number of days in one place, he and the two or three followers, all that were now left to him, were ever wandering from one island to another, in the wretched boats they were enabled to procure. Sometimes they spent the nights in an open shed ; sometimes on the bare moor. And here his followers would say, the prince's sleep was long, but always disturbed by the anxiety of his mind ; for that often he would start in his sleep, and murmur words in Italian, French, or English, the last being the only language understood by those around him. At one time, when he was watched by Malcom Macleod, starting from his heather bed, but still asleep, he exclaimed, "Oh God, my poor Scotland !" words long remembered by his faithful followers.

The dangers that surrounded the young prince became now daily more imminent. Orders had been given that no person was to be allowed to leave the Long Island (in which for a few weeks he had remained concealed), without being examined, and receiving a passport from a party of English stationed there. But this danger was averted by the heroism and devotion of a young highland lady, Flora Macdonald, whose proudest thought, till the day of her death, was, that she had in all probability saved the life of the noble and distressed wanderer.

Having agreed with the friends of the prince how their plan of escape was to be pursued, she went to demand a passport for her own use, for that of her man-servant, and of her maid, Betty Burke, (the name assumed in his disguise by the prince,) as she was anxious to return, she said, to her own family in Skye. She then procured the dress of a peasant girl for the prince, and thus disguised he passed for the maid-servant of his deliverer.

At this time it was impossible for him to be accompanied by even one of his own followers. An addition to their number might have created suspicion ; and in great sorrow he bade farewell to the last remnant of his faithful band.

As the prince and his new-found friends approached the coast of Skye, they perceived, with much alarm, that the shore was lined with armed troops, who called loudly for the boat to be brought to land : but the rowers only redoubled their efforts, rowing with all their strength, to enable them to get out of reach of the shot of the enemy, which was now pouring in on every side, in the hope of sinking the boat, or disabling the rowers.

Charles, fearful of the danger for his conductress, who had periled her life for the security of his, entreated her to avoid the danger, by lying down in the bottom of the boat, where the shot might not reach her ; but she said she had come to provide for his safety, not to consider her own, and conjured him not to endanger his life by refusing to take advantage of this place of

safety, nor would she listen to any arguments till he had consented. She then bent down and concealed herself in the bottom of the boat, till, by the exertions of their attendants, they were freed from the danger that menaced them.

The presence of mind, the heroic devotion of Flora Macdonald, were repaid with success. Her part of the task was completed, and with many prayers for his safety she resigned her post to new friends, who were to lead him further on his way.

At one time, beset on every side by danger, from the strict search made for him by the English, when the prince feared to trust himself under the roof even of his firmest friends, he was told, that in a cave, in a remote part of the country, called the hill of Corambian, on the banks of Loch Ness, there lived seven men, some of whom had served in the prince's army, but who were now driven, by poverty and the dangers of the times, to pursue a lawless life : yet to these men he was assured that he might intrust his safety ; and Charles, who had received so many proofs of the devotion of the Highlanders to his name, agreed, without hesitation, to accept the shelter of the cave and the hospitality of its rough inmates.

Glenaladale and Macdonald, two friends of the prince, who were now acting as his guides, left him at a little distance from his destined hiding-place, and entered it alone. They found the men assembled at dinner ; for they had killed a sheep, of which they begged Glenaladale and Macdonald, whom they had formerly known,

to partake. They consented, but asked permission to bring in another friend, whom they had left not far from the cave. The robbers inquired his name, and on Glenaladale's telling them that it was the young Clanranald, for he feared to let them know that it was the prince, they assured him that no one could be more welcome, and begged of him to seek his friend. He did so ; but no sooner did the prince approach within a few yards, than they recognised him, and falling on their knees, they thanked him for thus trusting to their fidelity. Charles at this time had suffered much from his long marches, and passing the night in the open air, as he had so often been obliged to do. His clothes were such as the poorest man in his army might have worn ; his coat being of the roughest and coarsest material ; a torn handkerchief was tied round his neck, and his shoes were so worn that they scarcely remained upon his feet. But his *honest* robbers soon supplied him with everything he required ; for hearing that a party of English soldiers were to pass at a little distance from their cave they concealed themselves, and lay in wait for their approach. They allowed the greater number to pass on unharmed ; and then attacking some servants who followed with the luggage of their masters, they seized upon some of the portmanteaus they carried, and bore off in triumph their contents to the prince.

With these faithful guardians Charles remained for some time secure, though the sum of thirty thousand pounds was offered for his person ; for no gold could

bribe them to betray him. No wonder, then, that after such instances of fidelity, a song, which I remember somewhere to have seen or heard, should end each verse with

“Highland hearts as true as steel !”

Wallace was betrayed by a servant, and delivered to death by a friend. Bruce narrowly escaped the snares laid for him by several of his followers. Prince Charles alone stood secure from betrayal, amid untaught hearts, amid scenes of poverty and distress—sometimes even of starvation. One word would have showered down riches upon the head of him who spoke it, but that word was never uttered.

But the strongest instance of devotion towards their prince,—for it was given not under the influence of his presence, nor in the excitement of the hour of battle, but calmly and deliberately, happened, I think, about the same time as the story of the cave I have now told you. One of those who had joined the standard of the prince in Edinburgh, of the name of Roderick Mackenzie, was, like many others, after the battle of Culloden, wandering in search of subsistence among the hills. It had been remarked that he bore some resemblance to his prince, and proud of what he considered a distinction, he had assumed as nearly as possible the same dress and the same manner of arranging his hair.

Wandering one day through the woods of Glenmoriston, he was met by a party of English soldiers.

He made an effort to escape, but was speedily overtaken ; and learning, from the discourse of his captors, that they mistook him for the prince, it immediately occurred to him, that by confirming them in this idea, he might, though the price must be his own life, purchase the safety of his master. The news that the supposed prince had been captured would soon spread through the country ; the search after him would be discontinued ; and Charles might be able to pursue in safety his intention of crossing over to France.

No sooner had this idea taken possession of his mind, than he determined to act upon it. Assuming a lofty air, such as he could fancy the prince adopting on a like occasion, he bade them "beware of acting the part of traitor to the son of their lawful king."

For a moment they held a consultation whether they should lead him prisoner to England, and deliver him alive into the hands of his enemies, or, by killing him on the spot, avoid all chance of his escaping from them. The latter was determined upon. But the anticipation of instant death could not alter his resolution ; and even when mortally wounded, he continued his assumed disguise, exclaiming with his last breath, "Traitors, you have murdered your prince !"

The purpose for which this heroic act had been accomplished, was achieved. The Duke of Cumberland hurried to London with his bloody trophy, the head of the supposed prince ; nor was his mistake

discovered till he had reached that city. In the meantime many of the troops had been withdrawn from the Highlands, and the comparative safety of the prince had been bought by the bloodshed of one devoted heart.

Shortly after this event the welcome news was brought to Charles, that two French vessels had been sent to provide him, and such of his band as could avail themselves of the opportunity, with the means of escaping to France. Elated as he was by the intelligence, it was with deep and heartfelt sorrow that he took his farewell glance of the blue mountains and dark lakes he was never more to revisit, and of that land, peopled as it was with hearts devoted to his cause. A number of his faithful friends had accompanied him for the purpose of seeing him embark; and tears filled the eyes of many a brave man, as the anchor was weighed, and they saw their beloved prince, the idol of their warmest affections, slowly borne away from them for ever.

After many years' exile in a foreign land, for Prince Charles Edward never again openly revisited his native country, he died, and strangers laid in the grave the descendant of so many kings.

How often have I read this story,—how often, when not many years older than you are, have I cried over it,—and even now, when a great many years older, I cannot say I never do so. I must tell you that, once upon a time, when, certainly not very old, at least not very wise, I used to try and write poetry.

And one day, when the sun shone too bright and warm for climbing high hills, and jumping over burns, I sat down on the green grass below the old tree where you have so often since gone to play, and began to read the history of Prince Charles Edward. I remember well that day. I felt so proud of my country people—the brave Highlanders—and so sorry for the fate of their young Prince, that I walked very slowly home, trying all the way to make some poetry about what I had been reading, that I might show it to your mamma and M——, for, in those happy days, your mamma, and M——, and I, were always together.

Now I am going to try if this poetry can be found, or if I can remember it; and then I shall write it here, and you must learn to say it when you read this book. And however far away you may be at the time, at the end of every verse send one thought to me; and this will be the payment you give me for all the trouble I take to make you like your book, my very dear little boy.

I have found the lines. They are dated Oak Wood, June 2.

It is past, it is past, the conflict is o'er,
The heath of Culloden is crimsoned with gore;
The mighty are fallen, the loyal laid low,
And our tartans are soiled by the foot of the foe.
The sons of our mountains have sunk on the field,
Their bosoms they gave as their young prince's shield:
But the justice of Heaven was veiled, and its wrath
Was showered on the warriors and clans of the north.

In vain was the Slogan, the shout, and the cry,
 Of "Rescue your prince and your country, or die!"
 They fought for the prince they were doomed not to save,
 And our warriors sunk in a warrior's grave,
 The white rose of Scotland, the eagle's dark feather,
 The badge of the yew,* of the broom,† and the heather,‡
 Were soiled in the dust of that dark bloody plain,
 And they never will shine in their glory again.

Shame on thee, Macdonald ! unloved be the name
 That could bring on our warriors the dark blot of shame ;
 The hearts that were hid 'neath the folds of a plaid,
 Heard the son of their king implore vainly for aid ;
 Saw their prince's despair, and yet heedless stood by,
 Refusing to fight, though disdaining to fly.
 Shame on thee, Macdonald ! but for thee we had gained,
 And a Stuart would reign where his forefathers reigned.

* Fraser.

† Gordon.

‡ Macpherson.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

SINCE I began this book, my dearest boy, I have always intended that it should contain the life of Napoleon Buonaparte; partly because from its late date, which may render it more interesting to you, you ought to be acquainted with it, and partly to please Herbert, whose particular request it was that it might be written, and whose almost daily inquiries when he was still here, if it was yet begun, was never met by the wished-for answer.

Shall I tell you the reason of this? It was because I felt it would not only be the longest, but by far the most difficult I had undertaken; and I have, therefore, I am ashamed to say, put the attempt further and further off, till now it comes to be the last chapter in my book.

That I *do* fear the difficulty, and yet *wish* to undertake it, is proved by the sigh and the smile with which I now sit down to it. When I think of the interest I myself take in the history of Napoleon, I feel that it will be easy to write his life; but then again, when I recollect my own indecision as to what he was,

whether possessed of most good or evil qualities, I fear my power of making you understand the dark and bright sides of his varied character.

Besides, I love to picture you to myself a few years hence, what Fitzherbert is now, and this adds to my difficulty ; for I see you with the same quick feeling for all that is just and honourable ; I see you, on the discovery of an act of cruelty, (and I grieve to say that such must often here be told,) in a fit of indignation throw the book aside, declaring that no cruel man can be brave ; that he *must* be, *can* only be a coward. And when such so generally is the case, how am I here to draw the line of distinction? Napoleon *was* brave, but his bravery arose from ambition ; he was cruel, but his cruelty, at least in his own opinion, was always an act of necessity. But here, without further comment, I shall begin my story : I fear that I have only been making excuses for myself, in the idea that I shall fail.

In the year seventeen hundred and sixty-nine, Napoleon Buonaparte was born in Ajaccio, a town in Corsica. His family were noble, but not greatly distinguished. It is said that, when a child, however severely used, no punishment ever made him shed tears ; and one trait is told of him, which showed both resolution and honourable feeling. He was suspected of a fault which another had committed, and rather than betray that other, who, if I recollect aright was his sister, but of this I am not certain, and it is of little consequence, he submitted to be punished, and

kept in confinement for three days. He was sent, when very young, to a military school, where he was not generally liked by his companions, though by one or two in whom he confided, he is said to have been looked up to and beloved. At sixteen he entered the army, and received a commission in the artillery.

I must here, in a few words, try to give you some idea of the fearful state into which, shortly after this period, the whole country of France was thrown, by the breaking out of the Revolution, which for so many years stained her history with scenes of bloodshed and of crime, such as had never previously been heard of among civilized nations. With the exception of a very few who remained faithful to their king and country, the whole mass of people rose up in arms, with the intention of dethroning their sovereign, and establishing for themselves a republican government. They wished for no king, and no distinction of rank, but that all men should be alike ; and they determined to gain by force of arms what appeared to them the liberty of their country, but which must prove, as was soon discovered, her destruction.

The unhappy king had already been dethroned and murdered ; his family had fled for safety to other countries, and France was groaning under the yoke of a succession of tyrants, whose reign has been termed the "reign of terror."

It was at this time that the military talents of Napoleon first discovered themselves. The siege of Toulon had been continued some time without any hope of

success, and the French soldiers were about to abandon it in despair, when the command of the artillery was bestowed upon him. He hastened to the spot; his decisive mode of acting turned the victory in favour of the French, and Toulon shortly surrendered.

I must tell you that France, not content with the miseries brought upon herself, wished to spread the same republican feeling over other countries; and for this purpose a large army was destined for the invasion of Italy. Napoleon, who I have told you had already greatly distinguished himself, was appointed to the command of these troops. This was in the year seventeen hundred and ninety-six; he was then only twenty-six years old.

On joining the army which was now to serve under him, Napoleon found its numbers to be very great; but it had long suffered much from scarcity of food, clothing, and stores of every sort; and with a daring which a character like his would alone have been capable of, he decided upon making his way at once into Italy, there to take by force whatever was necessary for the relief of his army; and addressing his soldiers, he informed them, that if they could succeed in entering that country, its sunny plains, its rich towns, should all be their own; that glory and wealth awaited them if they had the courage to claim it. Such assurances could not fail to raise the hopes of the French soldiers; and eager to obtain the promised reward, they set forward on their march.

Poor Italy! how long did she suffer from the trust

she placed in the false French. They had held out the hope of liberty—they themselves became her tyrants ; they spoke of protection, and they were the robbers of all she possessed. Too many listened to their pretended friends, and real enemies, as they assured them that they had but to rise in arms, and with their assistance destroy for ever the power of the nobility, so as to become a free and independent nation. Many listened to such promises, and only discovered when too late, that they had given themselves and their country over to their enemies, and were now suffering under a tyranny they had no power to shake off.

But you must not suppose that Napoleon met with no resistance. There were those who remained steady to their rulers ; many a hard contested field, many a well defended city had felt the force and power of the French ; and tidings of one victory after another reached Paris, till the joy of the nation knew no bounds ; and the praises of the young and dauntless leader, who was likened by them to the heroes of old, spread far and wide.

The delusion of such parts of Italy as had believed in the independence and freedom they had been promised, soon passed away ; their houses and churches were pillaged, and large sums of money were demanded of them, which they were compelled to pay. In one instance the people of Lombardy, who had welcomed the French as their deliverers and friends, roused to indignation by the treatment which they met with in

return, rose in arms to revenge their wrongs, and a band of eighty thousand strong, but consisting chiefly of armed peasants, ignorant of war, attacked Milan, then occupied by a great part of the French army. This effort to free themselves from the invaders of their country was unsuccessful; but another party likewise, consisting principally of peasants, who had marched against the garrison at Pavia, were for a time more fortunate: they succeeded in forcing their way into the town, and closing the gates against the troops of the enemy.

Napoleon well knew the danger of allowing such feelings to spread. The example thus set might be followed by the whole of Italy; and he determined, therefore, to subdue immediately, and so completely, the first effort at regaining their rights, that all should tremble for their own fate, if they ventured to dispute the power of their conquering foes.

Headed by Napoleon, a band of French marched against the city of Pavia, to crush, at one blow, those who had dared to rise in defence of their country. The walls were stormed; the gates forced open; and the victorious troops, filling the town, hewed and cut down the terrified and yielding peasants. Orders were given to permit of plunder by the French troops; and the magistrates, and such as were supposed leaders in the insurrection, were, by the command of the general, shot in cold blood. This was one of the cases in which Napoleon argued that it was necessity, not choice, that led him to an act of cruelty, to which

even the customs of war can offer no excuse. His intention, however, was gained. His name was a terror through all Italy. Her people groaned under the weight of misery they endured, but seldom ventured even to express openly their hatred of their oppressors.

But whilst Napoleon was thus heaping upon himself the odium of the Italians, his name, in his own country, was daily winning new honours from the almost unvaried success of his arms ; and the devotion of his soldiers, from first to last, is, I believe, unequalled in history. At one time, when the seizure of a post on which the after-success of the French army much depended, was most bravely contested, Napoleon, undaunted by the shot which flew thickly round him, seized a standard, and advanced to place it, with his own hand, on the disputed bridge. But now the firing became still more rapid and destructive ; the French hesitated to advance, and seizing their resolute and fearless general in their arms, they bore him along in their retreat : they were pursued ; and in the confusion Napoleon remained behind, alone, and surrounded by his enemies. No sooner was this discovered, than the cry went through every rank, and "Forward, to save the general !" "Rescue for our brave general !" was heard on every side. Back rushed the gallant troops, and Napoleon was borne triumphantly from the very midst of his foes. At another time, when he had been displeased by the conduct of two of his regiments in some engagements,

he thus spoke to them :—"Soldiers, you have shown neither courage nor constancy : you have allowed yourselves to be chased from positions where a handful of resolute men might have kept their ground against an army. Soldiers of the thirty-ninth and eighty-fifth, you are no longer French soldiers ;" and turning to the chief of the staff, he desired that these regiments might have written on their standards, "They are no longer of the army of Italy."

On hearing these words, the brave men, thus accused of cowardice, forgot all rules and discipline : sounds of grief rose along their lines ; and crowding round the general, they entreated him to lead them once more into action, and to judge them by their behaviour if they were not worthy of being among his band. Napoleon consented. A few days afterwards they were led to battle ; and by distinguishing themselves for bravery and determination, beyond almost every other regiment, they regained the place they had lost in his opinion.

But I must not remain too long in Italy, or my story will never come to an end. I have, I hope, succeeded in giving you some idea of his proceedings there. He was now called to assist in the arrangement of affairs in France, where increasing disorders gave daily proof of the miseries of a republican government ; and bidding adieu to one of the best and noblest armies the world had ever seen, and whose unbounded love and devotion followed him through life, he left the scene of all his conquests to return to Paris, loaded with the curse of

one half of the Italian nation, who had discovered, too surely, the perfidy of his actions, and praised, extolled, and followed by the other half, who still trusted to the promises held out to them of the freedom and liberty of a republican government, or who, indifferent to everything else, hailed him as the hero and conqueror of so many fights.

On reaching Paris, Napoleon Buonaparte was received and welcomed as the bravest general France had ever possessed. He was informed of the intention of the Directory, as the leaders of the republic were called, to invade England, and he was offered the appointment of commander-in-chief of the invading army. He gladly accepted the trust. But respect for his great military talents was not the only reason for pressing on Napoleon this situation. The Directory feared that, if he remained in Paris, he might take too great a part in the government of the nation, and rise, by degrees, to be her only or principal ruler. Such, even at this time, was the intention of Napoleon ; but he knew that he was not yet prepared for the attempt ; and he felt also that he would further his cause, and raise himself yet higher in the opinion of the people, by increasing the number of his victories.

The high command intended for Napoleon was offered to him by Barras, one of the Directory. "Go," said he, "and strike terror into the hearts of the English people. Let the conquerors of Italy march under your banners. The ocean will be proud to bear them : it is still a slave, but it blushes to bear the fetters of

England." As you will already have read, before you begin this, the story of Nelson, and cannot forget how invariably he was the conqueror, you will know what Barras meant by calling the ocean the "slave of England." England never has, never will, I hope, yield her superiority over every other naval force. He went on to say, that, "No sooner shall the tricolor flag (the badge by which the republic were distinguished) appear on the banks of the Thames, than it will be hailed by a cry of joy, as the signal of approaching freedom from a tyrannical government."

How little this was likely to be the case, was clearly shown by the eagerness with which every English heart answered the command of their king to prepare for arms, should the French continue their purpose of invasion. Great preparations were begun, both upon sea and upon land. The spirits of our proud, brave countrymen rose as the danger which threatened them increased; and, with high hopes of success, they were ready to meet the conqueror of Europe and his hitherto invincible army.

But when Napoleon examined the coast and shipping of France, and made inquiries as to the then state of England, he was, from various reasons, not inclined, at this time, to attempt the proposed invasion. "It was," he said, "too doubtful a chance;" that he would not hazard on such a throw the fate of France.

But it was not the difficulty and danger of the undertaking alone that led Napoleon to resign it for the present. His whole thoughts had for some time

been occupied by the possibility of another scheme—that of subduing Egypt, and rendering that vast country, with all its riches, submissive to France. After much difficulty, permission to lead his troops thither was obtained from the Directory, who put under his command forty thousand of the best troops of the army of Italy ; and the fleet of the brave Admiral Brueys was destined to convey them to those distant shores, from which he, you already know was never to return.

Napoleon, having completed his preparations, set sail : and seldom can there have been so splendid a sight as that fleet, when it moved proudly onwards, conveying within its wooden walls no less than thirty thousand soldiers, added to the ten thousand seamen who sailed under the command of Admiral Brueys.

Malta, which was the first object of attack, made little or no resistance, but, throwing open its gates, surrendered to the French. They then continued their way to Alexandria ; and it was at this time that Nelson, who had been sent out in search of the fleet, owing to the thickness of the fog, passed them unobserved during the night. In this way Napoleon was permitted, without any interruption, to land his troops within a few miles of Alexandria, when they marched immediately against that city.

Egypt was, or believed itself to be, at this time at peace with France ; and was therefore altogether unprepared for resistance. On hearing, however, of the arrival of the forces, the Turks assembled such an army as they could collect in so short a time ; and closing the

gates of the city, determined to resist the entrance of the enemy. But against the superior force and discipline of the Europeans the bravery of the Turks was of little avail. The French were victorious, and took possession of the town.

Napoleon, in addressing his soldiers before they had quitted their own country, told them that he was going to lead them where they were to amass riches as well as glory. When, therefore, on continuing their march, they had to pursue it through wide deserts of sand, where the heat was excessive, and where, for days, they were unable to refresh their parched lips by one drop of water, their indignation and disappointment was loudly expressed. They were, too, without coming to any decided battle, continually annoyed by the attacks of small parties of Mamelukes, a brave and warlike people, who, with their long sabres and shrill cries, mounted on their magnificent horses, came rushing on them in a moment, and almost as immediately again disappeared.

At length the French army discovered the distant outline of the enormous Pyramids, a range of monuments raised to the memory of Egyptian kings, the most ancient as well as the most immense masses of building which the world contains. Between the army of Napoleon and these gigantic structures lay an immense body of men, already prepared to meet the enemies of their country.

Most gallantly did the splendid cavalry of the Mamelukes advance: as gallantly did the French stand to receive their wild onset. With loud cries

they rushed headlong on the lines of the bayonets; they backed their noble horses upon them; till grown desperate at length, by their vain attempts to force a passage through the firm ranks, they dashed their pistols in the face of the enemy. Nothing could move the brave and steady French, and the continued firing soon thinned the lines of the devoted Turks; gradually they gave way, and then there followed a scene of terror and confusion, such as I need not hope, even could I wish, to describe. Thousands, in the idea of securing safety, threw themselves into the Nile, and were drowned; while of that immense army, which a few hours before had shone with such splendour, only one small party of the Mamelukes, headed by their leader, succeeded in retreating to Upper Egypt. Lower Egypt was entirely conquered.

After this great victory the very name alone of Napoleon Buonaparte was sufficient to cause the whole of that mighty nation to tremble. His soldiers no longer called in vain for the riches they had been promised; they ransacked towns, and rifled the bodies of the slain Mamelukes, whose custom it was to conceal all their riches about their dress.

But whilst Napoleon was thus securing victory on every side on land, great misfortunes awaited him at sea. It was at this time that the great battle of the Nile was gained by our gallant Nelson; and thus, by the destruction of the fleet of Admiral Brueys, the French were deprived of every means of returning to their native land.

This was a dreadful blow to Napoleon. He had been looking forward, after having completed the entire subjection of Egypt, to a glorious return to his native country, and to a yet more glorious invasion and conquest of England, which was, he felt, all that was wanting to make his name unequalled in the pages of history.

When thus cut off from every chance of escape from a hostile land, should their enemies, now gathering on every side, prove too strong for them, the energies of Napoleon seemed only to increase ; and he determined, without loss of time, to march his army against Syria, where the great Turkish force was assembled. He traversed vast deserts, and took possession of different forts and garrisons, some of which offered great, others no resistance to his arms. At Jaffa, a brave defence was made ; but, as usual, the French carried every thing before them, and gained possession of the town. One brave band, amounting in number to nearly three thousand men, had possessed themselves of a strong post, and continued to defend it with the greatest courage for some time after the rest of the town had been vanquished ; but at last, finding that there was no chance of receiving the aid of their countrymen from without, they agreed that they should lay down their arms, and deliver themselves as prisoners, if their lives might be spared ; but that if they were not assured of this, they would, they said, fight to the last.

Two of Napoleon's officers, who thought that they might promise them safety, accepted of the submission,

and the whole band, resigning their arms, were led before Napoleon. He received the information of the promise made by his officers with the greatest indignation. He called a council of war, to decide what was to be done with them. "He could not," he said, "burden his army with so great a number of prisoners ; and if they were left to go free they would join the enemy." There remained, it was affirmed, but one resort, that of putting them all to death. For two whole days the fearful question remained undecided ; while the unhappy men continued, during that time, bound together, with their arms fastened behind their backs, awaiting the certainty of death in its most fearful form : that it was a certainty they already felt ; and each brave heart, who would gladly have fallen, fighting hand to hand with the enemies of their country, now looked forward with an almost stupified despair to being shot in cold blood, without the means or hope of defence. Their fate was decided : Napoleon signed the fatal order for their immediate destruction ; the wretched band was marched down to the sea-coast, and there, bound and chained, they were piled in bloody heaps upon the sand, by the repeated discharge of musketry, which, from the vast mass of the fated victims, had continued without interruption for several hours, before its dreadful work was ended.

This act alone, this most fearful cold-blooded massacre, is of itself enough to leave on the name of Napoleon a blot which no time, no renown, however great, even no after acts of mercy, can ever wipe away. I might well

feel that this life, of all others, would prove the most difficult to me. To discuss such horrors, to tell you, my gentle innocent boy, that such monsters have lived and breathed ; that human nature can descend so low, can be sunk to such an excess of crime—is very painful ; and often I have felt inclined to pass over, and leave unnoticed this hideous scene. But I have already so acted, more than once, in these few pages ; and as hitherto I have chosen for my book such characters as have not only possessed “one virtue and a thousand crimes ;” but who, in addition to their bravery, were capable of noble, generous, and virtuous feeling, I must not, because I do not myself like to dwell upon scenes of horror, leave you ignorant of the true character of my present hero. Even the bravery of Napoleon rose from a very different source from that of any others of whom I have told you. They all fought to free their country from the yoke of an enemy ; Napoleon to fix chains and slavery on states born to freedom, though unable to maintain it against his unrivalled career of victory.

I shall pass over the remainder of Napoleon's stay in Egypt, his universal success, the long and painful marches of his troops, and the various hardships undergone by them, and bring him at once back to Alexandria. Here he gained information of the state of the French nation, which for fifteen months he had been entirely ignorant of. It was not such as to give him pleasure. The whole country was in a disturbed and dissatisfied condition ; and Buonaparte had no

sooner been made aware of it than he determined to leave the army in Egypt to other generals, and without loss of time make his way back to France. With only a few persons, who were informed of his intention, and who were to accompany him to that land, he set sail, having succeeded in procuring two small frigates for their conveyance.

Notwithstanding that the English ships every where covered the Mediterranean, Napoleon succeeded in reaching in safety the coast of France. Here, as conqueror of Egypt, as the invincible leader of so many fights, as the expected restorer of peace to his native country, his return was eagerly hailed by every expression of joy.

The proceedings at Paris at this time would be of little interest to you ; I shall merely say, that new thoughts of ambition were raised in Napoleon by the joy expressed on his arrival, and the confidence placed in him by the people, now groaning under the tyranny of the Directory. The first step to his advancement was not far distant : in little more than three months after his arrival from Egypt, he was, to the great joy of the people, who were eager for any change which should free them from their present misery, elected Chief Consul of the Republic.

Napoleon, though he did not now bear the title of king, was yet at the head of the government of France, and possessed of more influence than most of its rightful monarchs had been for many years. Much that his arm had gained before quitting France for

Egypt, had, during his stay there, been again lost ; but to him the determination of regaining it and his doing so was almost the same thing. Holland, Switzerland, Italy, were again the busy scenes of bloody war. At the head of his army, the chief consul himself entered Italy, and at the end of two months returned triumphantly to Paris, having, in that short time succeeded in reconquering all the Italian states which had been lost during his absence ; and again was his return hailed with loud and continued rejoicings.

The general joy with which the people looked to the exalted station in which Napoleon now was, was not without exception ; and there were those who did not hesitate to seek every means of hurling him from it, even by attempting his murder. At one time an Italian undertook to become his assassin ; and with this design, he, with several of his accomplices, assembled in the opera-house, where the murder was to be committed. But one of those to whom the secret was known, less hardened in guilt than his companions, betrayed them to the friends of Napoleon, who had them arrested and secured at the very moment that they were in expectation of having their destined victim in their power.

The first attempt upon the life of the chief consul being unsuccessful, it was shortly followed by another, which had more nearly succeeded, through the means of what was called the infernal machine—a cart containing gunpowder, which was so arranged as to burst at the moment when Buonaparte, on his way to the theatre, should pass it. It happened that on this

evening the coachman of Napoleon drove more quickly than usual, and thus, by so slight a chance, was the life of this great conqueror saved. The gunpowder blew up about one minute after he had passed, but that minute was sufficient to secure him from the danger.

Whilst Napoleon had been engaged in recovering Italy, England had sent her armies into Egypt, and had liberated that country from the power of the French. On being informed of this, Napoleon's only answer was, "Then we must carry war into England."

And now, my dearest boy, I must, indeed I must, pass over the midnight murder, in a solitary cell, of the young, brave, and generous Duc d'Enghien. A few minutes ago, and I was shuddering over the fearful tale of the massacre of Jaffa, and now I am already where another picture of cold-blooded, fearful tyranny and cruelty ought to be told. But you must ask your mamma to tell you his story; and you must forgive me, for I have wished, I have tried to write it, and I cannot do it.

The horror with which the murder was regarded by all Paris, soon spread over the whole of Europe; and from that hour tyranny and cruelty were ever joined with the name of Napoleon. Yet notwithstanding the general condemnation of this bloody deed, so loudly expressed by the whole of the French nation, scarcely had one month passed ere the perpetrator of it was raised to that height at which he had so long in secret been aiming: Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor of the French. When the decree was made known, it

was received with dissatisfaction and dislike by a great part of the populace, indeed by nearly all, excepting the soldiers, who, I have already told you, were devoted to Napoleon. Their joy was excessive, for their brave general, the undaunted resistless conqueror of half the world, appeared to them the only being worthy to govern so great a nation ; and others, after a time, were reconciled to the event, from the hope that, now that he had gained the height of his ambition, he would allow the blessing of peace once more to be known in their disturbed and unhappy country.

Such of the French people, however, as looked and longed for a cessation of war, were not yet to be gratified. Sweden, Russia, Austria, were again up in arms, and England still remained their enemy ; but the time had not yet come for engaging with that party. Napoleon ordered his large army from the coast of France, where it had been stationed, opposite to England, and directed them to march towards Germany, whilst another, already in Italy, was to force its way into Austria. New victories struck new terror into the hearts of the enemies of Napoleon : his march was crowned every where by conquest, and every day his name acquired new glory.

But while victory thus surrounded on every side the French emperor, a distant, but fatal defeat was prepared for him, by the brave Nelson, whom you may remember had already, by his success at sea, destroyed some of the greatest triumphs of Napoleon.

Spain had at this time united herself to France, in

declaring war against England, and the Spanish fleet was now at the disposal of the French. The joint naval forces of the two nations greatly surpassed that of Nelson, when he undertook the pursuit of them. They met, and the engagement which followed was the glorious, but fatal battle of Trafalgar, for it was purchased by the death of the brave Nelson.

The tidings of this defeat seemed only to inspire Napoleon with a greater anxiety for new conquests ; and putting himself at the head of his army, he marched to the attack of the united forces of Austria and Russia. On the morning on which it was expected that the battle would take place, Napoleon, before daylight, rode from one post to another, and at every line which he visited, he was met by large fires of lighted straw ; loud shouts of joy rose from the ranks ; the soldiers reminded him that it was the anniversary of the day on which he had been crowned emperor, and promised to celebrate that event by a glorious victory. Well was that promise kept ; the bravery of the Russians availed them nothing, all gave way before the invincible French ; and the allied emperors with difficulty succeeded in making a retreat, with all that now remained of their immense armies. This was the battle of Austerlitz : and it was immediately after that victory that Napoleon bestowed upon his brother Joseph the throne of Naples, where he was proclaimed king in the stead of the royal family, who had fled from thence in search of safety. Louis Buonaparte was made king of

Holland. Different principalities were bestowed on his sister Eliza ; and on Pauline, his youngest, most favourite, and most beautiful sister, the sovereignty of Guastalla, a province in Italy.

Thus a few months saw not only Napoleon assume the high title of Emperor of the French, but each of his family raised from the rank of private persons to that of princes, in the possession of crowns, bestowed upon them by this great conqueror of almost the whole of Europe. I ought to have told you long ago that Napoleon, at the time that he was general of the army of Italy, had married Josephine de Beauharnois, but some years after his ascending the throne of France he dissolved this marriage, in order to receive the hand of Maria Louise, an Austrian princess.

Hitherto France and Prussia had not been at war with each other ; but on the latter discovering a proposed act of treachery, which was not, however, accomplished, on the part of Napoleon, the whole country was roused to indignation, and the hatred and distrust of the emperor, which had long secretly been felt among them, was loudly and openly expressed. The young and beautiful queen, and Prince Louis, brother of the king, both of whom, from their high, generous, and romantic natures, were the idols of the people, encouraged by their example the enthusiasm of their vassals. The queen herself rode at the head of the regiment that bore her own name, and cheered them on to save their land from the tyranny under which so many countries were suffering.

Napoleon was no less eager than the Prussians to engage in war. The two armies met; and the keen eye of the emperor soon discovered that the conquest would be an easy one, for the Prussians had too widely separated their forces.

Prince Louis, at the head of his corps, came gallantly forward, but he was almost immediately overpowered by the steady defence of the French. Louis himself fought hand to hand with an officer in the ranks of the enemy, who, wishing to spare the life of the brave young prince, desired him to surrender: in the despair of the moment, at seeing the probable defeat of his army, he heard not the words of kindness, or if he did, resolved not to outlive the freedom of his country—he answered only with another thrust of his sabre, and was immediately cut down and killed. The whole of this division of the Prussian army was defeated, but that under the command of the Duke of Brunswick had still to be engaged by the French. They met at Jena in Saxony, for the Prussians had made a great error in leaving their own frontier, and going in search of, instead of waiting for the arrival of the enemy. For some time the battle was very equally maintained; but fresh reinforcements joined the French, and they making a general charge, the Prussians were driven from their ground. They continued, however, their retreat in good order, till another body of cavalry rushing upon them, amid shrieks and confusion, they fled in every direction. Other victories of lesser note followed, and in one

short week the proud government of Prussia was no more.

At the battle of Jena the brave Duke of Brunswick had been wounded, and carried from the field. He had, after the defeat, retired to his own state, but here he was not free from the resentment of the emperor, who, indignant at his having lent his aid to the Prussians, was resolved to destroy his city, and displace his family for ever. The unfortunate duke determined to seek safety from his bitter enemy in England ; but before reaching that country he died of his wound, which had become mortal from the haste he had been obliged to use on his journey. His son, considering him murdered, vowed that his death should be avenged, and ordered that the body of men who had served under him should continue to wear mourning till that vow had been accomplished.

It is in vain to continue a description of all of Napoleon's victories ; the bare recital of them would fill this volume. The defeat of the brave Russian armies in Poland, who sought to defend their possessions in that country from the power of the conqueror, was followed by the peace of Tilsit, leaving Napoleon leisure to turn his attention to Spain, which he subdued with little opposition ; and, driving out the royal family, he gave the crown to his brother Joseph, whom, as I have told you, he had first made king of Naples. The war with Austria succeeded, in which victory still attended his arms, though fighting at one

and the same time in Italy, Poland, the north of Germany, in Spain and Portugal, the latter of which countries was wrested from the power of the French by the bravery of the English troops, under the great Wellington.

It was at this period that the restless ambition of Napoleon, as if drawing him on to his own destruction, led him, undeterred by the repulses which his arms had met with in Spain and Portugal, to meditate the invasion of Russia, and a vast army was prepared for this purpose.

At Dantzic, where he had halted to enable him to make some arrangements, he addressed his army in these words :—"Soldiers, the destiny of Russia must now be completed. Let us march forward, let us carry war into her territories : our second campaign of Poland shall be as glorious as our first, but our second peace shall put an end for ever to the influence Russia has held for fifty years over Europe." The unfortunate country of Poland was then, as now, in part subject to Russia, and it was in his successful invasion of Poland that Buonaparte had been last engaged with the Russians.

Very different from the address of Napoleon to his soldiers was that used by the czar. He told them, that as far as honour permitted, he had sought to preserve peace to his country ; he bade them aid him in asking assistance from heaven ; and concluded with these words :—"Soldiers, you fight for your religion, your liberty, and your native land. Your emperor

will be with you. God is the friend of a just cause, and the enemy of the oppressor and tyrant."

During the war in Poland, the Russians had received a lesson which now taught them to draw, if possible, the French army into the very middle of their own country, before hazarding a battle. The troops, therefore, received orders to retreat slowly, as the enemy advanced, and to destroy and lay waste on their route the surrounding country, that the French might not be able to procure sufficient food for their vast numbers, which amounted to four hundred and seventy thousand men, while the force of the Russians was not greater than two hundred and sixty thousand.

The czar had also another reason for wishing to avoid a battle. This was, that the long and intense cold of the Russian winter might set in, as he well knew that the French, unaccustomed and unprepared as they were, must suffer greatly from its severity. As the vast hosts of the enemy moved onwards, they met with no opposition to their march. Even large cities had been left by the Russians totally empty; but before quitting them they had destroyed all their magazines and stores. The bare walls and deserted houses alone were left to repay the French for their long and painful marches.

In the meantime, the enthusiasm of the Russians brought daily large supplies of stores, men, and money to the assistance of the czar. Noblemen hastened to prove their devotion to their country by serving in the ranks, under men their inferiors in birth, but more

experienced in war; and the peasantry crowded from every province, asking for arms and instruction to use them.

When the French approached the city of Smolensko they found it strongly garrisoned by part of the Russian forces. Three times did Buonaparte attack it, and three times was he driven back. Night came on, and during the darkness the garrison retreated, to join the rest of the army, which lay at a little distance; but before quitting the walls they set fire to the town, and the greater number of the houses being built of wood, the whole city was shortly reduced to ashes.

It was with much difficulty that the brave Russians had been persuaded to continue this system of retreat. They had submitted to it only because it was the will of their beloved king, whom they called by the more affectionate name of father, and whose wish was as a law to them. It was, however, now determined, that between Borodino and Moskwa they should await the French, and engage with them in battle.

In the midst of a thick fog, which almost concealed them from each other, at four o'clock in the morning the two armies met. So powerful was the onset of the French, that the Russians, for a moment, were obliged to give way. It was but for a moment: thousands fell, but new thousands were ready to fill the vacant lines. Peasants, who till now had never seen war, rushed into the thickest of the fight; and at the close of day, after fearful losses on either side, Napoleon withdrew his troops, and resigned all hopes of being

able to force his way through the ranks of these resolute warriors. Never had he been engaged in a field so well contested. Neither the brave French nor the gallant Russians had yielded one step of the ground on which they had stood at the commencement of the fight.

The Russians, who did not choose, without reinforcement, to continue the battle on the following day, again slowly retreated ; but they generally permitted the rear of their army to be observed by the French, in order to draw them on.

At length the gilded domes of the great city of Moscow appeared in view, the rich and ancient see of a long line of czars, and a cry of joy ran through the ranks of the French army, at the long wished-for sight ; but on entering the gates, they discovered that, excepting by a few of its oldest and most wretched inhabitants, it had been entirely deserted.

The Russians, having resigned their principal city to the enemy, without even an attempt to strike a blow in its defence, caused great astonishment to the French, who little dreamt of the snare which had been laid for their destruction. All day the soldiers roamed about, entering the deserted houses, taking possession of such rich and costly articles as they could carry with them, and destroying others. At night they retired to rest, as they believed, in perfect safety, but in a few hours they were roused by the cry of " Fire ! " A great part of the town was already in flames, and for some time the soldiers worked in vain to extinguish them. They did,

however, at last succeed. The town was restored to quiet ; the fire was supposed to have been accidental ; and the French officers were again occupied in choosing such houses as they intended to take possession of during their stay in Moscow. But again, at night, the flames burst forth, and this time from different parts of the town at once. The soldiers rushed as before to the pipes, which conveyed water through the streets, but they had been cut and destroyed, and various materials to attract and increase the fire, were discovered to have been laid in different parts of the city. It was evident that the Russians intended to deprive their enemy of shelter and provisions, at the expense even of the ancient and magnificent capital of their country. The flames rose on every side, and forced the French to quit the walls. They marched the distance of a few miles, when they halted ; and for four days they watched with dismay the destruction of that city which had so long been held out to them as the prize which was to repay all their labours.

Napoleon had written a letter to the czar, making proposals of peace ; but day after day passed, no answer was received, and the situation of the French was hourly becoming more dangerous. News was received of the defeat of two separate parts of their immense army. The determined peasantry resisted their every effort to enforce the supply of provisions ; the force of the Russians was daily increasing, and the long and terrible winter was fast approaching.

Again a letter was addressed by Napoleon to the

Russian emperor ; but ere an answer could have been received, the news of another defeat, together with the hopelessness of his own situation, led him to quit the ruins of Moscow ; and he did so with such haste, that the sick and the wounded of his army were left behind, unable to assist themselves, and deserted by their companions.

It is said that from this time Napoleon felt that his good fortune had deserted him ; and it is certain that now his only wish was to withdraw, with as little loss as possibly, his army from Russia. He marched accordingly towards Smolensko, the city which I have told you was so bravely defended, and afterwards burned by the Russians. Scarcely a day now passed which did not bring with it some new misfortune. The main army of the Russians hung upon his rear ; clouds of Cossacks hovered around his line of march ; while thousands and tens of thousands perished from the severity of the climate. The miseries undergone by that once magnificent army are beyond all that can be described. The poor horses, unable to endure, through a long march, the fatigue and cold, were left to die in thousands ; and many were killed by the starving soldiers, who were glad to procure their skins for covering.

The discipline of these conquerors of so many countries had now entirely disappeared. They were too wretched to endure control. One hundred and twenty thousand men had quitted Moscow ; of that number scarcely twelve thousand remained ! All the defeats, all the disasters of that fearful march it would be impos-

sible to relate. The haughty spirit of Napoleon alone did not sink under the weight of misery ; yet the ease with which he, compared to the rest of his band, endured hardships, did not lead him to remain with them, and to aid in relieving them from the dangers into which his ambition had brought them. When still within a long march of Prussia, to which country they were hastening, he informed the remnant of his army, that the news which he had received from Paris obliged him to quit them, and return thither without delay ; that he left them under the command of his brave generals ; and that a few days would see them in Prussia, where rest and peace awaited them. He then bade them farewell ; and attended only by one or two officers, he set out in a traineau, or sledge, which, without wheels, is dragged by horses along the frozen snow ; and at the end of a fortnight reached Paris in safety.

Meanwhile the army, thus abandoned by their leader, continued their miserable march. Every day their numbers were decreasing : many who lay down to sleep never woke again, but were found by their companions frozen to death ; thousands daily perished by the attacks of the enemy, which they had no longer the power to resist ; and of all that numerous band, scarcely one thousand men, capable of bearing arms, succeeded in reaching Prussia ; where, notwithstanding the injustice that that country had met with from the French, they were received with kindness.

Thus ended the invasion of Russia : nearly five hundred thousand, at the call of an ambitious

whole nation. His invincible army, they said, had been conquered by the climate not by the enemy. Every effort was made to raise men, arms, and money ; and a few weeks only had passed, when Napoleon found himself again at the head of three hundred and fifty thousand soldiers. Scarcely was this army completed, when they were called into action. Prussia, determined no longer to endure the yoke of the French Emperor, had risen in arms ; Russia, with its brave troops, hastened to its assistance, and England with its gold.

Napoleon marched his army into Saxony against the two allied monarchs, the brave Frederic William of Prussia, and Alexander the Czar of Russia.

During the four months that followed several fields were fought, but in none of these did either side gain much advantage. The fortune of the French seemed entirely to have forsaken them ; they were indeed still unconquered, but one battle was not now, as formerly, sufficient to decide the fate of a whole nation ; and misfortune and defeat were rapidly preparing for the now falling emperor.

Austria hastened to join her troops to the already numerous armies of Russia and Prussia. All seemed resolved, by uniting their strength, to extinguish the power which had so long held the greater part of Europe in subjection.

For a little time success seemed again to have visited those ranks of the brave and resolute French that were headed by Napoleon himself, but it was of short dura-

tion ; tidings of defeat reached him on every side ; one division after another of his army had been obliged to retreat before the rapid advance of the allied forces ; and he was at length himself compelled to quit Dresden, which he had always looked to as a sure place of defence.

Napoleon retired with his army towards Leipsic : scarcely had he reached that city, when the enemy appeared in view, and every preparation was made for battle. It was commenced as early in the morning as the light permitted, and raged with equal fury till night closed in. Much loss had been sustained by the French army, though not by that part commanded by the emperor, whose very presence seemed still to secure the utmost bravery and devotion of his troops. But gallant as their behaviour had been, he found himself compelled to continue his retreat from Leipsic. And so humbled by his repeated losses was now the brave and haughty spirit of Napoleon, that he sought to obtain peace by yielding up whatever he possessed of Poland, Holland, Spain, Italy, and Germany. But it was now too late ; the allied princes had sworn to trust to no treaty offered by the French, and to consent to no cessation of hostilities, as long as there remained one soldier belonging to the enemy in their dominions. No answer was therefore returned to Napoleon, and he continued his dangerous and hurried retreat through a country crowded by his foes, and receiving every day new tidings of evil. Yet the presence of mind, the determination of this great man, whose talents had

hitherto been so ill-directed, never deserted him ; and the bravery of his gallant followers, even in the hour of victory, never surpassed what they now displayed in that of defeat.

The pursuit of the French army, fortunately for them, had been intrusted to the Austrians, and they continued it with much less rigour and cruelty than the Prussians, from their deep hatred of their foes, would probably have used. The flying army reached the banks of the Rhine, and on passing that river, felt themselves once more to be in security ; whilst the brave preservers of their countries, who followed close upon their steps, uttered loud shouts of joy at seeing the enemy, so long their terror, thus recrossing the boundary, and compelled to retreat for safety to their own land.

Napoleon returned to Paris, but his fall was fast approaching : the whole of France, with the exception only of the army, was wearied of war, and as the promoter of it, hated even the name of Napoleon. Such of the French as had remained during all this time faithful to the exiled family of their murdered king, were glad to take advantage of such feelings to spread an interest in the cause of the rightful successor of the throne. Thus discontent and division surrounded the emperor in his country, at the very time that he looked forward to an invasion of the allied monarchs, and that he learned the almost total defeat of his armies in Italy and Spain.

Destruction was indeed fast preparing for Napoleon :

English troops headed by the brave Wellington, of whom I shall soon have much to tell you, had entered the south of France. The Russians were fast advancing on the north, the Prussians and Austrians on the east.

In vain did Napoleon now attempt to raise, as formerly, the enthusiasm of the nation : the army alone supported his cause : his hour of glory and of triumph had passed away for ever.

Nearer and nearer every day the enemy approached ; all gave way before their conquering numbers ; and veteran generals, long accustomed to victory, found themselves compelled to retreat before the eager advance of their foes.

The emperor quitted Paris with the intention of again heading his army, and the defeat that followed at La Rothiere, he himself said had almost led him to resign the crown of France to its rightful monarch ; but a fresh body of troops arriving, his hopes of success were again raised. During the few following days he was repeatedly victorious, and part of the enemy's forces were driven back with great loss ; but any advantage now gained by the French was always followed by defeat. I think that this is the period of the history of Napoleon which excites most admiration of his character, though perhaps it is only because at this time it asks for most pity. But the fearlessness with which he attacked armies so vastly more numerous than his own—his unwearied efforts—the rapidity of his movements from one enemy to another—his willingness to undergo the same or a greater degree of fatigue

and danger with the lowest rank of his army, all call for that respect which every one must feel for his talents as a general.

The whole anxiety of the emperor was now to prevent, if possible, the allied armies from marching against Paris. The dissatisfaction of the French nation had at this time risen to such a height, that with the exception of the army, all would have rejoiced at the total overthrow of the emperor. What he so much dreaded was already near at hand—the enemy were on their way to Paris. He resolved instantly to follow them, in the hope of coming up and engaging with the rear, before the city had been compelled to surrender. Once more his devoted troops eagerly obeyed his command to press forward with the utmost haste. No moment was allowed or asked for rest or refreshment ; all were intent only on rushing forward, but all was of no avail. Long before they reached Paris the forces left to protect that city had yielded to the superior numbers by which they were attacked, and the last battle which was to decide the fate of many nations had been fought.

Napoleon heard the tidings : he stopped the hurried march of his soldiers, and returned to remain that night at the palace of Fontainebleau. He knew that his destiny was sealed ; he felt that he was no longer in the possession of a kingdom.

Though the monarchs of Austria, Russia, and Prussia had openly declared that they invaded France, not with the purpose of making war with that nation, but

of compelling Napoleon to resign the authority he had usurped unlawfully over other countries ; and that, having accomplished this, they would leave her people to choose their own king, and decide under what government they should be ruled ; yet they were not unwilling that the royal family, the Bourbons, should through their means be restored.

Meanwhile Napoleon, seeing that he had nothing now to hope for, drew up and signed a solemn act, declaring that he was willing to resign the throne, and even to quit France for ever, providing that the right of succession was preserved to his son, then a child of five years old. The officers who were to convey this abdication to Paris, asked what stipulations they should insist upon for the emperor himself ; he answered, "None ; make the best terms you can for France ; for myself I ask nothing." The resignation of Napoleon was received, but the condition with regard to his son was rejected. In one instance, however, he received more than he condescended to ask. It was agreed that he should indeed quit France for ever, but that he should still continue the title of emperor, and should keep possession of the small island of Elba.

Illness prevented the dethroned monarch from immediately quitting the palace, which he had no longer a right to inhabit ; and before leaving it he heard that the Bourbons had been restored, and that Louis the Eighteenth would shortly be in possession of the throne of his father. Before setting out on his journey, Napoleon was once more surrounded by a

body of officers and men, who gathered round him to receive his farewell, and to express again and again their attachment to himself. It is said, that when he bade adieu to the brave friends, of whom no change of fortune had been able to deprive him, that tears filled his eyes, and calling them his brave companions, his friends, his children, he bade them once more farewell.

On reaching the French coast, where he was to embark for Elba, he found a vessel prepared to convey him to that island ; but his dislike to sail under the flag of the Bourbons made him prefer an English frigate, by which means he was carried to all that was now left to him for a kingdom. Here he continued the same observances, and, as much as possible, the same appearance, as when he had been emperor of half Europe. But the sovereignty of Elba was not many miles in extent, and could not long satisfy a nature like that of Napoleon. He sunk into a state of dejection and listlessness, from which he was only roused by the situation of France, which was such as to awaken within him dreams of ambition and of conquest.

The family of the restored monarch never had been popular in France ; they were now even less so than formerly ; and ere the close of summer, hope was strong in the heart of the exiled emperor of again heading an army of his faithful soldiers, and with their aid raising himself to the height from which he had been hurled. He excused himself for the breaking of a treaty, which he had been the first to propose, by pronouncing it

not to be binding, since his conditions with regard to his son had not been agreed to. For some months secret ambassadors were continually passing between France and Elba ; and by their means the army, still devoted to the cause of their brave leader, was informed of his intention of again placing himself at their head. All was arranged, and Napoleon had once more raised his standard in France, before it was suspected that he was not still the subdued and submissive governor of the island of Elba.

He landed in France, accompanied by his little band, consisting only of eight hundred men, and pursued, for some days, his march towards Paris, without being joined, as he had hoped, by any of his ancient army. At length he came suddenly upon a body of men, who had been sent out to attack him, and to prevent his further progress. On observing them, he commanded his own band to halt, and advancing alone to the approaching party, he threw open his surtout, and exclaimed, "If there be among you one soldier who desires to kill his general, let him do it now ; here I am." The old cry of "Live the Emperor !" which they had been so long accustomed to use, burst from every lip. Napoleon threw himself among them, and asked one old soldier if he could have had the heart to have killed his sovereign. The old man dropped his ramrod into his musket, to show that it was uncharged, and answered, "Judge if I could have done thee much harm : every other gun is the same." The two troops united, and continued their march together.

Shortly after this, Colonel Labedoyere, then in the service of Louis the Eighteenth, appeared at a little distance, at the head of a considerable force; the two bands immediately rushed forward to mix in each other's ranks, and "Live Napoleon! live the Emperor!" again was loudly heard. Thus, as Napoleon continued his march, his numbers almost hourly increased; and entering Lyons with scarcely an attempt at resistance from its inhabitants, he was welcomed with enthusiastic delight by the troops which it contained.

A large body of men, under the command of Marshal Ney, marched from Paris to join the standard of Napoleon; and the safety of Louis now depended solely on those troops commanded by Marshal Macdonald, who, from the superiority of his numbers over those of Napoleon, trusted yet to be able to crush his hopes by an utter defeat. His men were drawn up in line of battle, to wait the advance of the enemy, and were amusing themselves in singing and listening to songs in honour of the Bourbons, when an open carriage suddenly appeared advancing rapidly towards them. Their ancient general was recognised by the men, and forgetting everything but their devotion to him, they raised a shout of joy, surrounded the carriage with loud cries of "Live the Emperor!" and tearing the white cockades, the badge of the Bourbons, from their hats, they trampled them in the dust. Marshal Macdonald, who alone of all that numerous body of men remained faithful to the cause of Louis, escaped with difficulty to Paris. Thus, without one blow

having been struck, that unfortunate monarch was again obliged to fly from his capital, and Napoleon once more made a triumphant entry into Paris, and took possession of the throne.

Thus far everything had been in his favour ; but scarcely had he again assumed the title of Emperor of the French, when all Europe prepared once more for war. Armies from Russia, Prussia, Germany, and England, these last commanded by the Duke of Wellington, were once more in preparation, not only to dethrone Napoleon, but effectually to prevent his ever again being able to spread war over the face of Europe.

Great preparations were immediately begun in France, to raise an army sufficient to enable them to meet the enemy ; and before two months had passed from the time that he had landed on its shore, Napoleon was at the head of a well-armed, well-disciplined, and numerous force. All the energy of the reinstated emperor was now indeed necessary : his enemies were approaching on every side, and his dangers and difficulties daily increased with a fearful rapidity.

After strongly fortifying Paris and various other cities and posts of defence in France, the emperor determined, at the head of his army, to march against those enemies the most in advance : these were the English and Prussians, who had already made Brussels the head-quarters of the army.

The English, I have told you, were commanded by the Duke of Wellington ; the Prussians by the brave

Marshal Blücher, whose heroism and eagerness to advance had gained him among his soldiers, by whom he was much beloved, the name of "Marshal Forwards."

Napoleon had always a high opinion of the bravery and talent which so greatly distinguished the leader of the English forces: on stepping into his carriage to leave Paris, he exclaimed, "I go to measure myself against Wellington." So rapid was his advance, that the English were not aware of it till it was announced by the sound of cannon in the distance: and so little had it been expected, that the Duke of Brunswick, and many of the officers, English and Prussian, were at a ball given by the Duchess of Richmond, when the bugle sounded a call to arms, and many rushed from that scene of amusement and of mirth to one of glory, but of bloodshed and of death.

Some of the English troops had only that night arrived from England, and without being able to procure any rest, were obliged to march immediately for Quatre-bras, and to prepare for action.

Napoleon was at first undetermined whether to attack with his greatest force Blücher at Ligny, or Wellington at Quatre-bras. The Prussians were at this time the greatest army of the two, for they were already all assembled; while some of the forces under the command of the English duke had not yet reached Brussels, he determined, therefore, upon marching the greater part of his army, under his own command, to Ligny, whilst the defeat of the English, with a smaller number of men, he entrusted to Marshal Ney.

The Duke of Wellington lay under great disadvantages : his forces did not nearly equal that of the enemy, and many of them were still suffering under the fatigue of a long march ; but a well-merited confidence in his troops, and an equally natural reliance in his own powers as a general, led him, without hesitation, to accept the battle. A bloody day followed, but night found the English in possession of the post of Quatre-bras.

In the very beginning of the fight, the gallant Duke of Brunswick fell. He did not live to see how well the vow made to avenge upon the French nation the death of his father was fulfilled. I have told you that, after the death of the old Duke of Brunswick, his son had given orders that the army should wear mourning till the moment when he might be revenged. The soldiers of Brunswick beheld the fate of their gallant leader, and now of their own accord renewed that vow, and swore never to change their sable dress for one of a brighter colour, till the death of the son as well as that of the father had been deeply avenged. How speedily this was accomplished you will shortly learn.

Blucher's army had not met with a like success with the English ; his numbers were greatly inferior to that of the enemy, and the bravery for which the French troops had been so long distinguished was undiminished. At the close of the day the Prussians were forced to retreat, but they did so without any signs of disorder or confusion.

Having thus, as he hoped, almost completed the

defeat of Blucher's army, Napoleon left the pursuit to Marshal Grouchy, and turned to join his great force with that of Ney, against the Duke of Wellington, who had now quitted Quatre-bras, and stationed his army on an open field, at a short distance from the small village of Waterloo. The day was cold and stormy ; but the spirits of the English soldiers were raised by the recollection of their success at Quatre-bras, and by the hopes of a yet more glorious victory now awaiting them.

The Duke of Wellington and Blucher had agreed to join their forces, and this Napoleon had been eager to prevent. Messengers were now despatched by Wellington, to inform the Prussian general of his movements, and to remind him that two of his divisions would be expected, on the following day, to support the English army. The brave old Blucher returned for answer, that he would leave one division to prevent the advance of Marshal Grouchy, and that with all the rest of his army he would himself march to the field of Waterloo. This, however, by the rain which continued to fall in torrents, and from the badness of the road, he was prevented from doing at so early an hour as he had expected.

Napoleon's great fear had been, that the English, without entering into any decided battle, would gradually retreat till they came upon the Prussian army, when he would have to engage with the forces of those two great nations at once. When, therefore, from the top of a hill, he saw the English prepared to give

battle on the field of Waterloo, his joy was very great, and he exclaimed, "At last, then, have I these English in my grasp."

Wellington's object was to defer the battle till the arrival of the Prussians should increase his number; that of Napoleon, immediately to engage, in the hope of defeating the English before any aid could reach them.

About twelve in the day, the French commenced the contest by attacking the right wing of the English army. For some time it was well and equally maintained on both sides, but at length the French were forced to retire. The centre of the English line was next attacked. The English cavalry advanced: sword to sword the fight continued, till the French gave way and fled for protection to their own lines. The English followed: they were charged by a fresh body of cavalry, and in their turn were driven back with great loss. Thus, for some time, success and defeat seemed equally divided between the two contending parties.

The third attack was made by the French cuirassiers, a magnificent body of men. They charged the English artillerymen and drove them from their guns. They then rushed upon the infantry, who had been formed into squares. These remained steady and immovable, watching the furious onset of the enemy till they were within a few yards of them, and then fired; the cavalry were driven back, but immediately renewed the attack. Several times they were forced to return, and as often did they again advance with the same fearless bravery;

but their exposed situation to the repeated and incessant fire of our infantry, soon thinned the lines of these gallant men, and after a fearful loss they were obliged to withdraw.

The fire of the whole line of the French cannon was now again opened against the English, who were ordered to lie down flat on the ground, in order to allow the balls to pass over them.

At this time the loss of our gallant countrymen amounted to ten thousand, that of Napoleon to fifteen thousand. So far the battle had proceeded, and no aid had yet arrived from the Prussians. Between six and seven in the evening, however, they were discovered to be within a short distance of the field. Unless, therefore, by one last and powerful effort, Wellington could be forced to retreat from that station, of which he had not yielded one inch, during the seven hours that the fighting had continued, the arrival of his allies would almost certainly decide the day in his favour.

For this last effort, then, Napoleon prepared. He told his troops, that the Prussians, who were now seen in the distance, were flying before Marshal Grouchy. He bade them advance boldly, and by one blow crush the hopes of the English ; but his high hope and spirit had now deserted him, and he did not, as he used to do, himself head the charge : he left that duty to Marshal Ney, while he remained on the top of a small height, from whence he might observe the fate of the day.

The French columns of the French Imperial guard

had approached the summit of the low ridge on which the front line of the English were placed, but were met by such a storm of musketry and grape, that they stopped, hesitated, endeavoured in vain to open into line, lost order, and at last turned and fled.

Napoleon had watched the onset. Suddenly he became pale as death, and exclaiming, "They are mingled together ; all is lost for the present," he galloped from the field.

Wellington now ordered a general advance, and placing himself at the head of his troops, attacked the few battalions of the old guard, who had either rallied their forces, or been left in reserve, and which were all that now remained unbroken of the French army. They made a gallant resistance ; but nothing could withstand the victorious English, and they were quickly lost in the crowd of fugitives, hurrying in irretrievable confusion from the field.

It was not till shortly before the last fatal charge that the Prussians had appeared in force on the extreme right of the French army, and their cannon shot, rebounding over some of the higher ground, and coming upon the flank at once of the British and the French guard, as the latter retired, equally incommoded both, until Wellington sent to request they would cease firing.

Now, for the first time, the English and Prussian generals met, and Blucher readily undertook to continue the pursuit of the flying enemy during the night, thus giving rest to the hard wrought and victorious English.

Never had a field been more hardly contested, or more gloriously won, than that of Waterloo. Never, said Wellington himself, had he fought so hard for victory; and never, by the gallantry of the enemy, been so nearly beaten.

Napoleon continued his hasty retreat to Paris. He had sent thither repeated assurances of victories gained; but when he thus returned alone, the truth could no longer be concealed. It was known that an engagement had taken place, and that a defeat, a total defeat, had followed.

I have told you that the army alone, of all the French nation, was attached to Napoleon: that army was now no more; and he was, shortly after his arrival in Paris, informed that his power was over—that he was no longer Emperor of the French. Thus ended the second reign of Napoleon, which had been only of one hundred days' duration.

All of hope that now remained to the fallen monarch was to effect an escape to America. Happy had it been for him had he succeeded in the attempt; but it was prevented by the number of English vessels which lined the French coast, with directions to cut off all means of escape, should such be attempted. To avoid the dangers which menaced him in France, he was at length compelled to embark in an English ship, the *Bellerophon*, to sail for England, and there to wait the decision of his conquerors, as to what his future destiny should be.

The decree of the allied powers was soon known, It

was this, that Napoleon should not be permitted to land in England, but should immediately be conveyed to St. Helena, where, without being actually imprisoned, he should be held in such security as to allow no chance of another escape ; and that he should take with him some officers and domestics to whose services he had been accustomed.

Thus, then, an exile, and in all but the name a prisoner, was to end the earthly career of one who, but a few months before, made all Europe tremble for its safety. Then he had beheld thousands of brave hearts willing to purchase glory for him, at the price of their own lives ; he was the mover of great events, the possessor of unlimited power, the governor of nations ; and now a prisoner and a slave. Nearly six years did he linger out in exile, from which only a slow and painful death released him.

Some have blamed, others extolled the treatment that the fallen emperor met with from the English at St. Helena. Perhaps there is truth on both sides. I cannot decide the question. His fate was a hard one : it may also have been necessary and just.

My last story is ended, my darling boy. While writing it I have very often missed the help of my little critic ; and my great fear is, that you will miss it also ; that I may have made this story less easy to be understood than my former ones, when Herbert was here, insisting upon almost every page being read to him as it was written, and often reproving and cor-

recting me for words that he thought too long. I must, however, comfort myself with the recollection of what he one day said to me, when I complained of the difficulty of always finding words and expressions suited to my little five years'-old reader : " If it gives you so much trouble correcting it, now that it is written, never mind ; when he is five years old I shall be nine, and by that time I shall surely be able to explain every one of the words to him, though I do think them a little long now."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISTORY OF PETER THE GREAT.

I do not think I can better begin the life of Peter the Great—"Father of his country," and "Emperor of all the Russias;" for such were the titles he gained among his people—than by copying a passage from the writings of an historian that lived at the same time as our hero. "None," he says, "who knew him rightly, can question his being the most judicious minister, the best private soldier, the most experienced general-officer of his whole empire, the most learned of all the Russian divines and philosophers, well versed in history and mechanics, a good shipwright, and a still better sailor." No monarch ever lived, none probably ever will live, of whom all this can be said. Many kings, in all ages, have gained the name of heroes and of great men, for battles won and kingdoms wisely governed; but Peter the Czar of Russia differed from them all.

At one time, laying aside his crown, he left the splendours of his court, and, wandering in disguise, sought, by mixing with his people, to learn the best and wisest way of governing them. At another, he was content to serve in the ranks of his own army; that he

might thus not only give an example to others, but that he might himself learn thoroughly the duty of a soldier. Besides this, by visiting other countries, discovering and practising the most useful arts used in each, he introduced them into his own. In one he studied the art of watchmaking and of printing : in another, laboured among common carpenters, and worked with his own hands in all the different branches of ship-building ; till, from the casting of cannon to the making of ropes, he not only thoroughly understood them all, but could instruct others.

There was, in short, nothing that could benefit his country, raise it from its state of ignorance, or augment its power and riches, that he thought unworthy the notice of a great monarch. But, in the course of his life, you will learn all this, and much more than this ; so that I had better at once begin my story : and first I shall tell you a little of the country you are going to read about.

It is the largest in the world, larger than the whole of the rest of Europe ; but then it is not inhabited as other countries are. Many, many miles must lie entirely waste ; for there are not in Russia nearly enough of people to cover its immense space. To give you some idea of the great difference of population between it and other kingdoms, I shall tell you that, by a calculation made of the inhabitants in England, there is for every square mile two hundred and eighty people ; while Russia, in the same space, has no more than ten. Yet Russia contains not less than sixty millions of

persons—men, women, and children:—does this give you some idea of its great extent?

I will not go further back in history than Alexis, father of Peter the Great. He was a good king, and laboured to benefit his country; but died early, before having achieved much worthy of relating. He left at his death one daughter, the Princess Sophia; and three sons,—Theodore, who at the age of fifteen ascended the throne,—Iwan, or John, a very weak prince both in body and mind, who is said by some historians to have been blind, and deaf, and dumb,—and, next to him, Peter, afterwards the Great, who was only four years old at the time of his father's death.

Theodore reigned but six years; and, at the time of his death in 1682, believing John altogether incapable of governing a country, he named the younger brother his successor.

His having deprived the elder of his right, in favour of a child only ten years old, excited much discontent among the people. Feelings of dislike and rebellion towards the young prince were fostered by his sister the Princess Sophia; and scarcely were the ceremonies that followed the funeral of Theodore completed, when a revolution broke out in the country.

The Princess Sophia had encouraged the rebellion of the people, in the hope of being raised by them to the throne. She reached the height she wished for; and, in conjunction with John and Peter, reigned over the empire of Russia until the latter was seventeen years old; when, jealous of the power he had already obtained

over the minds of his subjects, she laid a plot against his life. Fortunately for the after-prosperity of Russia it was discovered ; and the Princess Sophia was sent prisoner to Moscow.

This, to one of her ambitious and independent temper, was a severe punishment ; but it was one justly merited by her wicked act, and still more wicked intention towards her brother, who, from this time, in all but name, reigned sole sovereign over Russia—John taking no share whatever in the government.

The young Czar had now much cause to regret the ignorance in which it had been the interest of the Princess Sophia to have him brought up ; and one of the first instances he gave of his anxiety to overcome difficulties and reform errors, was, commencing at this late period his own education.

Almost without assistance he taught himself the German and Dutch languages. These he considered the most likely to be of use to him, for he had already determined upon introducing many arts into his empire ; and he looked to Germany for instruction in various manufactures, while Holland he then believed to excel all nations in navigation. On his after-visits to England, however, he admitted her superiority ; and, from that time, had all ships built according to the instructions he received there.

Peter the Great was very fortunate in having a friend and willing assistant in all his plans of improvement : this was a young Swiss of the name of Le Forte.

When he first met the Czar, he was page to the ambassador from the court of Denmark ; and, on his way through Russia, had studied the language with such success, that he now acted as interpreter for his master.

One day the young Czar, being much struck by the appearance and manners of Le Forte, remarked to the ambassador how well he spoke the language. "Yes," answered the other "he has a genius to learn anything ;" and added that, beside perfecting himself in this, he had in the four months he had known him, gained a thorough knowledge of the German and Dutch tongues. The Czar expressed a wish to have him in his service : it was readily agreed to ; and from that time he remained the faithful friend and ready assistant of his noble master.

Le Forte had visited many courts ; among others those of Savoy, France, and Denmark ; and had marked in each, all that was worthy of imitation : he became, therefore, an invaluable assistant to the great reformer of his country.

Le Forte had never himself been a soldier, but, at the Czar's desire, he undertook to remodel the army. He raised a small company and clothed them in uniform, as was customary in other countries. The long coats then worn by some of the Russian regiments, he did not approve of ; while others, who dressed each according to their own fancy, looked, he said, when collected together, more like a mob from different nations, than a well-disciplined army.

The Czar, who was delighted with the prospect of

improvement which these changes held out, resolved upon entering the company of Le Forte, and insisted upon performing the duty of a private with the same regularity and submission as his subjects and fellow-soldiers. Nor was this all : he lived on the small pay allowed in the regiment, and lodged in a tent no better than that used by the rest of the company.

Perhaps you may think that all this was unnecessary, and that he might have done as much good had he kept his own rank, and insisted upon his subjects performing their duty ; but then you must remember that his intentions were no less than to reform a whole country of vast size—to do away with all old customs—to give new laws, new ideas—to do, in short, in one lifetime, what other countries had taken centuries to perform. He acted upon the old saying that example is better than precept, and he succeeded ; for none who saw their sovereign taking upon himself the part of a private soldier, hesitated to go through like discipline.

To the small company first raised by Le Forte, the Czar gradually added others, till he possessed at length a considerable body of well-armed, well-disciplined men. These he kept constantly exercised in mock fights ; so that before one real battle, they had gained the experience of many.

Peter was at this time also engaged in another pursuit of more difficulty than even remodelling a whole army,—this was establishing a navy. A slight accident it was that had first prompted him to the attempt. While walking one day, he discovered floating on the

water, a worn-out and shattered English boat. Delighted with the construction, he resolved to have others of the same sort, and set out for the city of Archangel, in whose ports were ships from England, Holland, Sweden, and other parts. Here he possessed himself of all the information he could obtain; and having sent for a number of foreign workmen who, in their own country, had followed the trade of ship-building, he employed them in his service.

At first they only attempted boats and very small vessels, but afterwards large ships fitted for carrying on the commerce he was anxious to introduce, and lastly he built men of war.

I must here tell you an anecdote of Peter the Great, that appears very strange in one of so independent a character and so strong a mind, as you will find him to have been. He had so great an aversion to water, that he even avoided walking in one of his gardens where there was a small stream. This is said to have arisen from his having, when a child, been suddenly startled from sleep by the sound of a waterfall, near which he passed in travelling. The shock was so great as to throw him into a fever; and from that time he could not, as I have told you, bring himself to approach within many yards of even a little, quiet stream.

One day, when out hunting with some of his attendants, they led him, without his knowledge, towards a small brook. The Czar reigned in his horse immediately; but one, wishing to cure him of the aversion, urged his drawing a little nearer. "Your majesty will see," he

said, "with what ease the horses will pass and repass the shallow water." In fear and trembling the Czar advanced but a few steps ; when some of his followers, springing to the ground, crossed on foot ; and then, but not till then, he gained courage, drew a little nearer, and at last—oh, brave prince—allowed his horse's hoof to touch the edge of the bright, clear stream. It was not many inches deep ; but, when he had at length passed over to the other side, he had achieved what was to him a greater feat than the overthrow of a whole army. From this time he lost entirely the antipathy that, had it not been got rid of, must have marred many of his greatest projects.

I must now return to my history. Disputes concerning the boundaries of either countries had frequently arisen between Russia and China. A peace had now been happily signed between them ; but with the war-like Turks, who were also at variance with Russia, the Czar did not find it so easy to treat ; and he had, therefore, an early opportunity of trying the strength and skill of his new army.

Peter the Great wished to possess himself of the Black Sea ; and, to forward this design, marching against the town of Azoph, he commenced a siege ; but, owing to the treachery of one of his followers, it proved unsuccessful. I must tell you, that bastinadoing, or flogging, was at this time very frequent in the army ; and Russians, even of high birth, submitted tamely to a punishment now considered by us too degrading for the very lowest ranks. It happened

that a Dutchman, of the name of Jacobe, who was at this time in the employ of the Czar, had been sentenced by the general to be flogged : he was compelled to submit ; but, writhing under a punishment which, in his country, was held most disgraceful, he was resolved on revenge. This was easily accomplished, for he had under his direction the whole of the artillery : he spiked, that is, drove nails into the touch-holes of the cannon under his charge ; and, deserting to the Turks, he turned Mahometan, and defended the besieged walls with great success against his former master.

Thus were the Czar's first efforts at a siege rendered unsuccessful. He was not, however, to be discouraged : on the following year he again marched against Azoph, and compelled, at length, that city to surrender.

It was about this time that Czar John died, leaving his brother in sole possession of his kingdom. Notwithstanding the success his various schemes of improvement had met with, the national pride of the young Czar was hurt by the recollection that he had been obliged to trust to foreigners for the building of his ships, the training of his troops, &c. He not only, therefore, sent many of the young Russians, sons of Bayards, or gentlemen of distinction, to different lands to obtain instruction ; but, resolving to benefit his country by his own observation and practice, he set out on a visit to Denmark, Vienna, and Rome.

While Peter thus entirely devoted himself to the improvement of his country, there were many who

looked with discontent and jealousy on every scheme laid for their advancement. The sending their sons to foreign lands was felt a weighty grievance; and the building of ships, which had never, they said, been found necessary in Russia before, would but impose on them a heavy tax.

While feelings of dissatisfaction were thus spreading on every side, the friends of the Princess Sophia, eager to replace her on the throne, encouraged the mutiny of the people; and, seizing upon a moment so favourable for effecting their wishes, they laid a scheme for the destruction of the Czar. His death was determined upon; and it was to be effected by the following means:—When a fire occurred, as it did very frequently, from the houses in Moscow being built almost entirely of wood, it was well known that the Czar, throwing aside his state, hurried to the assistance and rescue of his subjects. At such a time the assassins of their sovereign might pass undiscovered; and a fire was therefore to be purposely raised, which might afford them an opportunity of accomplishing their crime. This deep-laid scheme could not have failed of success; but, on the evening previous to that fixed for his destruction, two of the leaders of the party, seized with remorse, entered the room where he sat, threw themselves at his feet, informed him of the plot against his life, and confessed the part they had themselves taken in the conspiracy.

Peter appeared little moved by the recital, or the thought of the danger he had so narrowly escaped.

In company with only one or two, on whose faith he could depend, he proceeded, without delay, to the house of the chief conspirator, who, little suspecting the discovery of the plot, obeyed the summons sent in, was seized, and carried to prison. Several who were leaders of the malcontents were taken in like manner, condemned, and executed ; but many, well known to have taken part in the conspiracy, were pardoned by the clemency of him whose life they in a few hours would have attempted.

The discovery of the conspiracy, with the trial, condemnation, and death of the conspirators, had delayed for some time the intended travels of the Czar ; but he now recommenced the necessary preparations for making the proposed tour in disguise. He was going, he said, to improve and instruct himself, and should have no time for all the ceremonies and state attending the visit of one great king to another. He set out, therefore, in the train of his ambassadors, who were to proceed to the different countries he wished to visit.

It was on this journey, during his stay, I think, in Germany, that Peter, giving way to a sudden fit of passion, drew his sword against his friend and favourite, Le Forte : the next moment he expressed the greatest regret for what he had done, and entreated the pardon of his servant,—lamenting that, while he wanted to reform a whole nation, he had not yet learned to command :

When the Czar, in the retinue, as I have told you,

of his ambassadors, reached Holland, he adopted the dress of a Dutch skipper; enlisted among the ship-carpenters under the name of Peter Michaeloff, and worked, lived, and dressed in the same way as they did. But, though thus casting aside all the usual magnificence and splendour of his high station, Peter the Great did not disguise his rank; so that, seeing the king of a great nation working in the forges, in the rope-walks, sawing timber, and using the axe, caused at first great wonder to his fellow-labourers; but they soon became accustomed to the sight, and the Czar continued to perfect himself in every different branch of ship-building. His attendants, meantime, were not allowed to be idle: some he kept to work with himself, some were sent to learn different trades, and others *went to school*. These were intended to become, in their turn, the instructors of their countrymen: and you may imagine that, to instruct a whole nation, many masters were required.

While he was thus employed at a distance from home, the Czar heard with delight that his army had obtained a great victory over the Turks and Crim Tartars; besides other tidings that proved his country, during his absence, to have been left in good and able hands.

When Peter had obtained all the information he wished for in Holland, he continued his route to England, where, as I think I have already told you, he became convinced of her great superiority in ship-building; and where, therefore, he recommenced his

course of study, regretting only the precious time he had lost in Holland.

· I do not at all wonder at his giving the preference to our English ships. I dare say, my dear little boy, in some of your travels—for you have visited nearly as many countries as Peter the Great—you have met with some Dutch ships: you may always know them by their heavy, clumsy form; very different from those, so beautifully proportioned, that ride our seas, and claim their birth from England.

In the delicate art of watchmaking, I have told you, the Czar of Russia became a proficient. In astronomy and mathematics he also perfected himself; and, still further to transplant the arts and manufactures of various countries to his own, he here, as in Holland, prevailed on many, skilful in different branches of knowledge, to precede him to Russia, and devote themselves to his service.

Peter the Great next visited Vienna; but here he was met by news of a rebellion having arisen in Russia; and he was thus obliged to leave his intended tour uncompleted, and return, without loss of time, to his own country.

The cause of this insurrection was still the dissatisfaction felt by the people at the introduction of what they called novelties. The arrival of the various strangers, who were to be the means of raising the arts of Russia on a par with those of other countries, was looked upon as an invasion; and some proposed alterations in the Church, crowned, in their eyes, the faults

and follies of the Czar. To dethrone him, therefore, and elect the Princess Sophia Empress of Russia, appeared to them the only means left of rescuing their country from destruction.

With the exception of a few priests, the discontents consisted of the Strelitzes, a military body of the people, too long accustomed to their own free will to brook patiently the stricter government of the Czar. Various attempts had been made by former sovereigns to subdue their power; but the success of the scheme, together with their final extirpation, was left to grace with additional honour the name of Peter the Great.

On the rising of the insurrection, General Gordon, who commanded part of the Russian forces, marched an army against the body of the Strelitzes; but, anxious to bring them to reason without the loss of life, he tried to prevail on their return to the allegiance they had so long rebelled against. Finding them immovable, he desired that some cannon might be fired above their heads,—for he hoped thus to terrify them into submission. It had, however, a contrary effect; for the priests, grasping at this pretence to rouse the enthusiasm of the people, called aloud—“A miracle, a miracle: see, the shot have no power to hurt you!” Thus encouraged, they fell upon the troops of General Gordon, and, after an engagement of much slaughter, were defeated.

Between two and three hundred of their body were slain, others surrendered themselves prisoners, and, confessing their crimes and the particulars of the plot

against the government, they were carried to Moscow. The Czar had already hastened thither, too late to assist in quelling the insurrection, but in time to pronounce sentence on those who, ever since his accession to the throne, had been plotting his destruction. Their crimes, and the dissatisfaction they had delighted to create in the kingdom, had been great, but their punishment was terrible.

This numerous and powerful body, whose will his predecessors had scarcely dared to combat, Peter the Great, in the course of a few days, swept entirely from his kingdom; their houses were levelled to the dust, and their very name became extinct. No less than two thousand had been executed,—broken on the wheel, or, horrible to tell, burned alive; while those considered less guilty, were banished to Siberia, Astracan, or other waste tracts on the frontier of the empire.

Such were the decisive dealings of the Czar Peter. The blood curdles now at the idea of thousands slain, to raise on their ruin the advancement of a nation; and it is when we cannot condemn, and will not approve, actions like the above, that history, with all its delights, appears to us more a study for the head than the heart:—do you understand that, my little boy? I fear not, so I shall return again to my recital of facts.

The vast projects of the Czar now began to display themselves,—a new nation was gradually rising before him. He had not had to reform, to improve, but to create—alone, unassisted, with much to combat against

—to create a new and a vast empire. The narrow prejudices of those he had succeeded, had led them to refuse all commerce, to shut themselves out entirely from the rest of the world. Peter, on the contrary, opened every port that might facilitate trade. They had avoided all intercourse with strangers ; he courted and encouraged their visiting his kingdom : they forbade, on a heavy penalty, their subjects to quit their homes ; but Peter commanded them to seek knowledge in different lands. Smaller matters had also their weight with the Czar ; he determined on a general reform in dress,—“and the ladies of the court,” says an old book I have read, “were directed, instead of the long sleeves, which they twirled out across a room whenever anyone came to visit them, to wear, in the English manner, such as were short and decent.” The men, of all ranks, were commanded to cut their beards, and to let the hair of their heads grow to a reasonable length. This appears to have been, in their eyes, the greatest act of the Czar’s tyranny ; and this reform they struggled more and longer against than any other.

The death of his friend Le Forte had now deprived the emperor of an able assistant. But though he mourned his loss, and expressed the respect in which he had held him, by paying the same funeral honours that are bestowed on the greatest sovereigns, his death in no way retarded his designs for the advancement of his country ; and shortly after this, in the year 1700, commenced that bloody war with Sweden, which, for the twenty succeeding years, knew little or no cessation.

Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, the formidable opponent of the Czar, was at this time but eighteen years of age. The almost over-excess of his daring courage, the delight he took in running into danger, the violent fatigue he could undergo, all made him a serious rival in the pursuit of glory, to which they had both devoted themselves. For some time the contest was very unequal ; the Swedes had been trained to the field, and disciplined under a long line of warlike kings. The Russians, on the contrary, were, as you have seen, a newly-raised body of soldiers, unaccustomed to fatigue, scarcely submitting to the necessary discipline, and without any recollection of past victory to inspire them with courage. One defeat quickly followed another ; “ but,” says the same old book I have already quoted from, “ the young Czar armed himself with a patience more heroic than even valour itself.” “ I know very well,” he said, “ that my troops will be beat for a time ; but this will teach them to conquer at last.”

This was said, I think, when, meeting with a party of his own horse flying from the enemy, he was told that his entire army had been routed before the walls of Narva. That town was then in the possession of the Swedes ; but having formerly belonged to Russia, the Czar, with a body of one hundred thousand men, marched against it, laid siege to its walls for ten whole weeks ; and at the end of that time, being still unsuccessful, they were obliged to withdraw.

Charles of Sweden, elated by the success of his army, victorious both in Poland and Denmark, had learned

this invasion of his rights, and hastened with a body of only eight thousand men to the town of Narva, where the immense army of the Czar waited his approach.

A strange scene, one almost unheard-of in the annals of history, followed the meeting of the two forces. You must recollect that the army of the Czar consisted of no less than one hundred thousand men—sufficient, you would imagine, to crush without an effort the little body of Swedes.

The Russian forces were disposed of in this manner : three different outposts, for the protection of the main body, were stationed at short distances from each other. The first was of five thousand, the second of twenty, the third of thirty thousand men. On the approach of the Swedes, exceeding the first outpost by only two thousand men, the Russians, not venturing to strike one blow, fell back for safety to the twenty thousand, when a very slight show of resistance was followed by flight ; they in their turn retreated to the third outpost ; and, carrying with them dismay and consternation, a few minutes saw fifty thousand Russians, horse and foot, flying before eight thousand of the warlike Swedes.

The contempt in which the Swedes must have held their feeble and cowardly foe, and the consciousness of their own superiority, was sufficiently proved by the resolution with which, drawing up their little body, which seemed but a speck on the field when compared with the immense space covered by the enemy, they

boldly advanced to the charge, opposing themselves without hesitation to the collected force of the Russians. The unequal contest then commenced ; but it ended as it had begun, in the flight and dismay of the Czar's army.

Peter, it is said, showed no indignation at the conduct of his officers ; did not even express surprise at their defeat ; but quietly re-commenced operations for securing the discipline and strengthening the faint hearts of his warriors. No wonder then his historian speaks of his having worn the armour of patience. It won him success at last ; for, little more than twelve months after this memorable battle of Narva, his troops had made such rapid progress in the art of war, as to defeat one of the best generals of the Swedish army ; and this, their first victory, was rightly hailed as a good omen, by troops shortly destined to prove themselves invincible. Armies which had once, almost without an effort, swept the Russian forces from before them, were in their turn mowed down. And towns and garrisons that had laughed at the feeble efforts of their besiegers, surrendered now to the disciplined approach and the resolute attack of the Russian soldiers.

I must not, in the greater conquests of the Czar, forget the destruction of the little town of Marienberg ; for among the prisoners who were there taken was the future Empress of Russia. Her history is too strange a one to be passed over ; and her character, in nobleness of disposition, in strength of mind, in resolution to surmount the greatest difficulties, seems to have been little inferior

to that of the Czar himself. Catherine, the Empress of Russia, was the daughter of a poor country woman, whose husband is said to have been a day-labourer or ditcher. Both died when she was very young; and the little girl was left to the charity of a clergyman, in whose house she lived till the destruction of the town by the Russians deprived her of his protection, and made her prisoner. From this time her fate was a very different one; she was carried captive to Moscow, where, soon afterwards becoming the wife of the Czar, she was crowned empress. And so well and so ably did the poor peasant-girl fill the high station she had been suddenly raised to, that, at his death, the Czar left her in possession of his throne. She encouraged him in all his great designs, forwarded and assisted every effort at benefitting his country, accompanied him through every danger and fatigue, and had such influence over him, that it is said with one word she could tame his fiercest passion; so as very often to be the means of saving the lives of those who, in a moment of rage he had condemned to instant death.

In addition to the constant warfare carried on between Russia and Sweden, the Czar gave his protection to the unhappy country of Poland, then devastated by the army of Charles the Twelfth; so that for many years he did not, even for a brief space, enjoy the blessing of peace. But his enemy felt still more the miseries of a long-protracted war; for the sufferings of the Swedes, so long exiled from their own country, daily increased. During one march, made in the depth of winter, it is

said that two thousand men perished of cold : the horsemen were without boots, the foot without shoes and almost clothes ; so that they were forced to make stockings of the skins of beasts in the best manner they could. They were, too, almost entirely without food. One day a soldier, in sight of the whole army, ventured to carry to the king a piece of bread grown black and moulded : he took it, and, having ate the whole, said, "*It is not good, but it may be eaten.*"

Notwithstanding the disadvantages under which he laboured, Charles, resolute to the last, did not despair of yet forcing his way to Moscow. To forward this design he laid siege to Pultowa, upon the river Warshlaw ; and here, between two of the most famous monarchs of the world, "Charles the Invincible of Sweden," and "Peter the Great of Russia," that battle was fought which was to decide the fate of Sweden, Poland, and Russia.

The first attack seemed to be in favour of the Swedes ; but the fortune of the day quickly changed : the Russians were victorious, the entire army of the enemy routed, and Charles compelled to fly for safety to Turkey.

Thus ended a war that for nine years had continued without intermission ; and on the first of January, 1710, the Czar returned to the ancient capital of Moscow, making his entry into that city with a magnificence unheard of since the triumphant processions used by the Romans. Sixteen thousand two hundred and eighty-seven prisoners of all ranks, bearing with them the badges of their captivity, swelled the train of the victorious monarch ; while standards, colours, and other

trophies taken in the fight, were waved exultingly over the heads of their conquerors.

This destruction of his army was not likely to soften the feelings of Charles towards his great rival. He was still a fugitive in Turkey, and, to revenge himself for a defeat his warlike spirit could ill brook, he employed all his influence with the Sultan Achmet to prevail on him to break the treaty of peace entered into between him and the Czar. His efforts were successful ; and, after some remonstrance at the unexpected rupture of so solemn a treaty, Peter the Great found himself forced into a re-commencement of hostilities with Turkey.

Leaving his affairs at home to be governed by a body of men appointed for the purpose, the Czar led his army to meet the Turks on the borders of Moldavia ; which place, at the distance of two thousand miles, he reached in an incredible short time.

Catherine, the empress of Peter the Great, I have told you, accompanied her husband through all his campaigns. The present expedition, however, promising to be more hazardous than any he had yet undertaken, he entreated that she would not expose herself to such dangers, but to remain where, whatever might befall him, he should know her to be in safety. She would not listen to the proposal ; and entreated with such earnestness his permission to accompany him that he was forced to consent : and at the head of his army, and accompanying him on horseback, (for she would seldom make use of a carriage,) Catherine underwent the same fatigue as the meanest soldier of the army.

The expedition proved fully as unfortunate as the Czar had foreseen ; and by the treachery of the Prince of Wallachia, who had promised him support, but who, on the contrary, went over to the Turks, the whole Russian army found themselves without provisions in the middle of a hostile country. It was here that Peter, conscious of his own perilous situation, remarked, "I am now in as bad a situation as my brother Charles was at Pultowa." Some slight success he met with at first : and the Turks, who were three times as numerous as the Russians, were received with so strong and regular a fire, that, after an action of four hours, they were towards evening obliged to retreat.

The next day brought another bloody engagement ; the loss of life was great on both sides, particularly on that of the Turks ; for fortune still seemed in favour the Czar. Almost he hoped, notwithstanding the vast difference in numbers, he might still be victorious ; but the whole Turkish army coming up, his little band was so completely surrounded, that his destruction, that of the whole army, and of his noble-minded Catherine, appeared certain.

To attack the forces of the enemy, situated as he then was, would have been madness. His generals, losing all presence of mind, were incapable of considering any plan for their safety ; while Peter himself, overpowered by the danger not only menacing his army, but the kingdom he had so long laboured to advance, shut himself up in his tent ; and, that no one might witness his state of mind, gave orders that,

under pain of death, none should enter. In the midst of this consternation Catherine alone thought of an expedient which, if it succeeded, would rescue all from their perilous situation. She held a private council with the general-officers of the army, and proposed sending a letter into the Turkish camp to sue for peace. It was agreed upon ; the letter was written ; and Catherine, notwithstanding the order issued by the Czar, and his well known violence of passion at any contradiction of his will, boldly entering the tent, with some difficulty persuaded him to sign the paper.

Schaffirof, the ambassador for this treaty, was admitted into the presence of the Turkish vizier, when the first demand made upon the Czar was, that he should yield himself and his whole army prisoners. "My master intends to give you battle in a quarter of an hour," said the other ; "and all his men will sooner be cut to pieces, than submit to dishonourable conditions." So bold an answer perhaps blinded the Turks to the deplorable state of the Czar's army, for they granted a six-hours' truce ; and during that time a treaty was concluded. The Czar agreed to surrender certain territories and districts, to interfere no longer in the affairs of Poland, to allow Charles a free and safe passage into Sweden, and to release all Turkish prisoners. On these conditions he was at liberty to withdraw his whole army ; and, without further interruption from the Turks, he returned to his own country.

I have made no mention yet, I think, of the Czari-

witz or prince, Alexis Petrowitz, the eldest son of Peter the Great. His history will soon be told : he was in all things most unlike his father ; indolent, heartless, selfish, and incapable of one great or noble feeling. Had he succeeded to the throne, the glory of Russia, so lately won for it by the exertions of the Czar, would have quickly faded, and the country have sunk into a worse than its former state. But even had he lived, the precaution of the Czar would have rescued his kingdom from the misery of such a ruler. " I would rather choose," he said, " to transmit my sceptre into the hands of a worthy stranger, than give it to an unworthy son." He was not, at this time, reduced to such painful necessity ; for, at the very time that Prince Alexis was publicly acknowledged by his own crimes to have forfeited all right to the succession, the birth of another son enabled him to claim an oath of fealty from his subjects ; and they looked on the infant Peter Petrowitz as their future king.

Shortly after this, the Prince Alexis was discovered to have entered into a conspiracy against his country ; and, being tried for the offence, was, by the law of the nation, condemned to suffer death.

The horrors of the sentence, and now, at length, an awakened conscience, threw the prince into a dangerous illness, from which he never recovered. He sent earnestly to entreat that his father would visit him on his death bed ; before whom he burst into tears, confessing with what unwearied perseverance he had tried to win him from his evil course, how frequently he

had sinned, and how justly the sentence of death had been laid upon him.

The death of Prince Alexis was shortly followed by that of his infant brother ; so that the Czar feared a disputed succession. He knew of none so worthy of the confidence it would imply, or so capable of forwarding his schemes for the good of his country, as she who, for so many years, had assisted him in their advancement ; and he caused the Empress Catherine to be publicly acknowledged his successor.

Several disputes between the Russians, Swedes, and Persians, which were terminated only by bloody conflicts both by sea and land, with many treaties of peace signed, broken, and again entered into, followed the last battle I have tried to describe. But I pass them over ; having wished rather to give you an idea of the character of the Czar, than a list of his conquests.

His anxiety to proclaim Catherine his successor, had been heightened by the conviction that his own life was drawing to a close. His illness increased very rapidly ; and he is said to have endured, with perfect calmness, the most excruciating pain. One day, when suffering great agony, "convinced," as he said, "what a miserable creature mortal man must be," he desired that pardon and freedom might be granted to all prisoners in his dominions, not even excepting those under sentence of death for high-treason. Soon after this act of mercy, his sufferings were so great that he fainted from pain.

The Empress Catherine had never left his side, day

or night, since the commencement of his illness ; and now, she, with his other attendants, believed him dead ! The alarm was immediately given ; and crowds of people, the senators and great officers of his court, no longer to be restrained by the respect and ceremony used to their beloved monarch, rushed into the room. Some expressed their devotion by deep and earnest lamentation ; while others seizing his hands in theirs, shed tears over the supposed remains of the best, the greatest, the most devoted governor a people had ever known. In the midst of this scene, he recovered from the fit into which he had fallen ; and looking round, he must then, I think, have been repaid for every exertion in behalf of his subjects : for he must then have read gratitude and devotion in the many brave hearts that had only ventured to express their feelings when they believed him to have passed away, never again to be conscious of their estimation of his character. His restoration was but for a little time : his sufferings returned with great force ; and Peter the Great, Father of his country and Emperor of all the Russias, died when only fifty-two years, seven months, and eight days old : “ A very short time,” says one of the old books I have so often quoted from, “ for the many great things he performed.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

I AM now, my dearest little boy, going to write for you the life of Washington—the great, the good, the noble-minded—the devoted Washington. He who, from so many, has won the glorious title of “Father of his country ;” who by others has been called “the first man in war—the first in peace—and the first in the hearts of his fellow-citizens.” He who rescued his country from thralldom, and raised her to the independence of a free state. You must not, however, expect his victories to dazzle and astonish. Washington did not, like Napoleon and other heroes you have read of, spread terror and dismay over numerous nations. He did not, by one bold stroke, master an immense army, and make the world ring with his feats in arms, or the glories of his victories. No : he worked gradually but surely on, till he had gained the wished-for end—the end to which his whole soul was devoted—the freedom of his country.

His great strength of mind, his steady purpose, was never to be shaken. Through difficulties such as no commander-in-chief, no leader of an army, has ever had to encounter, before or since, the noble Washington

pursued his unpretending path of glory ; and, at the end of an eight-years' struggle, hailed his country free from the yoke which England's king and England's ministers had tried to impose on her.

The family of Washington had been originally English ; but the great-grandfather of our hero having emigrated to America, his descendants became men of property and influence in that country.

George Washington, our hero, was born on the twenty-second of February, 1732. He was only eleven years old when his father died ; but his mother, who devoted her whole life to the education of her children, and to instilling such principles, habits, and noble sentiments as governed the whole of their after-life, lived to a great age ; and lived to trace, step by step, the noble career of her eldest son, till she saw him, at length, placed at the head of his country ; and, by her grateful people, and by the whole world, honoured, respected, and revered, for his worth, his unsullied honour, and his immoveable constancy in the one great cause to which he had devoted himself.

Washington, like Napoleon, showed early his inclination for the life of a soldier ; and, like Napoleon, he would form his brothers and sisters, his schoolmates and companions, into different companies, which, under his direction, marched up and down to the sound of the warlike music produced by sixpenny drums and little wooden trumpets. Now they would go through the different forms of parade, and now fight mimic battles ; when the side commanded by George Washington was

always the one to be crowned with victory. It is said, too, that the high sense of honour, the soundness of judgment for which he was afterwards so remarkable, won for him, while still a boy, the respect and admiration of his companions ; so that they would come to him with the history of their disputes, and, begging he would pronounce on which side lay the blame, they were always content to abide by his decision.

Though his inclination for a military life had been so early proved, George Washington was not at first destined for the army. At the age of sixteen he became a surveyor of lands, and continued in that profession for the three following years. At the end of that time the French, who had settled in different parts of America, began to encroach on the possessions of the English ; while the Indians, frequently forming themselves into bands, attacked and plundered such parts as were unprepared for defence.

To repress these disturbances large bands of militia were raised in various parts of the country. In the time of peace they were allowed to carry on their own occupations ; but might be called upon, at a moment's notice, to act the part of soldiers, and fight in defence of their homes. Of one of these bands Washington was appointed leader ; and this was the commencement of his military career.

The French and English had each of them taken possession of different parts of America ; and constant disputes as to the rights of either party rose between them. Two years after Washington's appointment, the

French prepared openly to carry war into the English settlements ; while those Indians who had hitherto been friendly to the English, fearful for their own safety, and encouraged by the French, showed symptoms of dissatisfaction, and threatened even to rise in arms against their former allies.

The great cause of dispute was a part of the country to which the French and English equally laid claim ; while its true possessors, the poor Indians, looked on with astonishment, and wondered how it was, that strangers from different nations should enter into a quarrel as to who had the best right to seize upon property which they and their ancestors had been possessed of for thousands of years.

Our countrymen, who were anxious to keep on friendly terms with the natives, and who were well pleased to possess themselves of the lands and riches of the country without having recourse to war, were received as friends by the trusting and confiding Indians. They believed that they entered America only for the purpose of establishing trade between that country and England ; and generally, therefore, sided with them against the French, who, declaring their intentions more openly, fought sword in hand for possessions they had wrongfully acquired.

At the time of war being proclaimed between the French and English settlers, it was agreed that Washington should be sent to solicit an interview with the French commander, and inquire from him the reason of his invading the property of the English king.

In this expedition, which was one of some danger and great fatigue, for it was a journey of five hundred and sixty miles through a barren wilderness and high rugged mountains, he was accompanied by one of the friendly chiefs of the name of Tanacharison, or the half king. As they journeyed together, this chief told Washington that he had already visited the French commander, and had made a speech to him, which he repeated. I am going to copy some of it here, to give you a little insight into the brave proud spirit of the simple-minded, uncivilized Indians; who, above all guile and deception themselves, dreamed not that their pretended friends and declared enemies were equally bent on disturbing their rights, and the rights of their people in their own land.

"Fathers," he said, "I am come to tell you your own speeches; what your own mouths have declared. Fathers, you in former days set a silver basin before us, wherein there was a leg of a beaver, and desired all the nations to come and eat of it—to eat in peace and plenty, and not to be churlish one to another: for you said, I here lay down by the edge of the dish a rod, that if anyone be found to be a disturber, you may scourge him; and if I, your father, should get foolish in my old days, I desire you may use it upon me, as well as upon others.

"Fathers, it is you who are the disturbers in this land, by coming and building your towns, and taking it away unknown to us, and by force. Fathers, we kindled a fire a long time ago at a place called

Montreal, where we desired you to stay, and not to come and intrude upon our lands. I now desire you to despatch to that place; for, be it known to you, Fathers, that this is our land and not yours.

“If you had come in a peaceable manner, like our brothers the English, we would not have been against your trading with us as they do. Fathers, both you and the English are white. We live in a country between, therefore the land belongs to neither the one nor the other; but the Great Being above allowed it to be a place of residence for us. Fathers, I desire you to withdraw, as I have done our brothers, the English; for I will keep you at arms’ length.

“I lay this down for a trial of both, to see which will have the greatest regard to it; and that side will we stand by and make equal sharers with us.

“Our brothers, the English, have heard this; and I come now to tell it to you, for I am not afraid to discharge you off this land.”

The expedition undertaken by Washington and the half king was followed by no satisfactory explanation on the part of the French. They were still determined to hold the contested land as their own; and Washington returned to urge the necessity of immediate preparation for marching against the French.

A body of four hundred men was consequently raised; and our hero, whose fame was already beginning to spread, was appointed their leader. I intend, however, to pass over the five following years :

for it was not till after that period that the injustice and tyranny of the English government roused Washington to assert the rights of America, and declare himself her champion. He had, during these five years, conducted various campaigns, where the sufferings endured, and the difficulties his perseverance alone had enabled him to surmount, served as a school in which to gain experience, and to perfect him for the great work he was soon to undertake.

I must try to explain to you, my dear little boy, the reason of America rebelling against her mother-country, and against the government to which she had once sworn loyalty and devotion. The English ministry wished to impose upon America taxes which she considered unlawful, and also to deprive her of privileges granted to their English subjects, but to which they said the colonies of America could lay no claim: These, with many other hardships, roused the Americans to resistance; but they had recourse to arms only when they found the many petitions addressed to England and her sovereign were disregarded, and that their own situation daily became more painful. Long lists of their grievances had been forwarded to Great Britain; and the fear, that from English freemen they were suddenly to be degraded into slaves, was openly expressed. They asked, they said, but for peace, liberty, and safety: they wished for no new grant in their favour: they desired but the freedom they had hitherto enjoyed; and they, in their turn, would repay the care and

protection of their sovereign with a loyalty they had ever been proud to own.

These petitions were unheeded ; and discontent spread rapidly through all the provinces in America ; till at last her people, roused beyond endurance, determined to cast off the English yoke, to proclaim themselves a free nation, and to assert their independence with the sword. A large army for this purpose was speedily formed ; and bodies of men, offering their services, crowded round the standard of American liberty. There was some difficulty in appointing a commander-in-chief to this newly raised force. It was therefore decided he should be elected by ballot ; and on drawing the votes, it was found that one and all had been given in favour of Washington. Now, then, begins the career of this great man — the deliverer of his country—the upholder and defender of her rights.

The American army, so hastily raised, was not, you may believe, a well disciplined or able body of men. They could not either thus, on a moment's warning, be supplied with necessary stores ; and they commenced a lengthened war, ill-provided with tents, clothing, and worst of all, with powder.

They were, too, you will recollect, fighting for the freedom of their country. They were to be a free and independent nation. I do not mean that they disdained, as all brave people must do, wearing the chains, and being the slaves of England, but they refused even to be governed by her king. They would have no

king, no rulers, no masters ; they were all to be equal—all to be free. With these feelings they, of course, yielded obedience to their leaders only when it suited their inclination to do so : and from this, principally arose those difficulties with which Washington had to contend.

It was only by patient argument, by pointing out the difficulties brought upon themselves by one line of conduct, and the certain good that must follow another,—by yielding much to them, and by appearing to govern more at their desire than his own, that he could gain such influence over them, as to prevent their undoing rather than forwarding the work to which they had pledged themselves.

Washington's first care, after acquainting himself with the state of the whole country, was to set about increasing the army to the number calculated as necessary for the defence of the different posts ; and endeavour, by new regulations, to enforce necessary discipline. All the prudence, however, all the steady perseverance with which Washington laboured to perfect his plans, could only lessen, not do away with, the difficulties that surrounded him. A commander-in-chief, however worthy of the high situation he held, could do little with an army whose soldiers only enlisted for the space of one year ; and who considered themselves bound to fulfil the engagement they had entered into, but by no means pledged to obedience. Each considered himself a party concerned in the issue of the struggle ; and, therefore, equally capable with

his commander of judging how it might be brought to a favourable conclusion.

I must tell you of an engagement that took place between the Americans and the English, after Washington's appointment as commander-in-chief, but before he had time to join the army. A high piece of ground which is called Bunker's Hill, overlooks and commands the city of Boston. During the night, the Americans took possession of this place; and the English, whose ships surrounded them on every side, were astonished on the following morning not only to see a fortification raised, but a strong intrenchment that reached nearly half a mile towards the river Mystic. It was not completed when the return of daylight betrayed the band of eager workmen to their enemies; but they continued and finished their labour amid the incessant fire poured in among them from the English ships. A large body of our infantry, under the command of Generals Howe and Pigot, were then landed to commence an attack; but the sweeping volleys of the Americans, who had the advantage of the high ground, dealt such destruction among the ranks, that General Howe was at one time left almost entirely alone: all his officers being either killed or wounded. General Pigot also nearly met with a defeat, and his troops were thrown into such disorder, that he was obliged to abandon the town. On being joined, however, by a new force sent to his relief, he renewed the attack with great energy; and the hitherto victorious Americans were compelled to yield. The British

troops had set fire to Charlestown, a village which is separated from Boston by a narrow sheet of water, and they were thus deprived of their intended place of shelter.

The Americans admitted themselves to have been conquered ; but they considered that they had gained more by their defeat than the English had done by the victory : the loss of the latter being so great, that for some time they would not be equal to another engagement. One thousand of our troops were killed or wounded ; while the list of the Americans amounted only to five hundred.

It was reported to Washington, that the prisoners, who fell on that occasion into the hands of the English, were treated with great severity ; and he wrote, accordingly, a remonstrance to General Gage, under whose care they were. He returned for answer a denial of the charge ; and hinted that, on the contrary, too much clemency had been shown to those taken in the act of open rebellion to their lawful sovereign.

Irritated by this reply, and by the continued rumours of the sufferings his countrymen were exposed to, Washington gave orders that all English prisoners should be treated with an equal degree of severity. This was done in the heat of the moment ; when again cool, the American leader recoiled from inflicting punishment on innocent men, for the fault of one heartless commander. He countermanded the order ; and one of his aide-de-camps, at his desire, writing to those in charge of the prisoners, informed them it was Washing-

ton's wish, that their conduct towards the captives should be such as to compel their grateful acknowledgements, that "Americans are as merciful as they are brave."

Washington now put into execution a plan he had formed, of sending a body of men, under the command of Colonel Arnold, to take possession of different posts of great consequence in Canada. The instructions received by this officer from the commander-in-chief, were as follows. He was desired to attack the British forces on every occasion ; but on no pretence whatever, to disturb the quiet, or injure the interest of the Canadians : he was to pay them liberally for all stores provided by them for the army, and was to punish severely any unfair dealing on the part of the soldiers : he was, in short, to guard them, as far as lay in his power, from those evils always attendant on war. When such were the feelings that occupied his heart, it is not to be wondered that he became the idol of the American people ; and that even those once his enemies, looked with veneration on the character of Washington.

This expedition into Canada was in some degree successful ; though not followed by all the advantages Washington had looked for. The force of Colonel Arnold was too small to achieve all that had been hoped ; but his management of the expedition received the thanks and approval of the commander-in-chief and of his country. Meanwhile Washington was suffering extreme anxiety, from the consciousness of

the small quantity of gunpowder with which his troops were supplied ; and, so fearful was he of his want being discovered by the enemy, that he was obliged to conceal it even from his soldiers. He was thus compelled to ward off every engagement ; and much discontent, therefore, arose from the inactive state of the army. But this, and much more than this, Washington had to endure in the difficult situation in which he was placed.

Little had yet been done, and the time was already drawing near for the raising of a new army : the soldiers, as I have told you, having only been enlisted for one year. The number of men required would amount to twenty thousand, three hundred, and seventy-two ; and it was hoped that many of those, whose service was now concluded, would re-enlist ; but few consented to do so ; and those only on conditions that they should select the officers they were to serve under.

What an undertaking was this for Washington ! In the presence of the enemy to disband one army and raise another of such force as was required. In one month he had gained only five thousand recruits ; and the former army declared their intention of disbanding the moment their term of service should expire. In vain did Washington appeal to every feeling they should have held most dear—love for their country, pride, honour, patriotism : all he could obtain was a stay of ten days, that the militia might be called out to supply their place.

In a letter written by Washington at this period,

he says, "It is easier to conceive than to describe the situation of my mind for some time past, and my feelings under our present circumstances. Search the pages of history through, and I much question whether you will find a case similar to ours ; namely, to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together, without powder, and then—to have one army disbanded and another raised, within the same distance of a reinforced enemy." Well might Washington say that his situation and difficulties had no equal in the page of history.

An attack upon Boston, then in the hands of the English, had long been considered by Washington as the first effort that should be made. He marched against it ; and General Howe, not wishing at present to enter into an engagement, withdrew his troops : so, that without any bloodshed, it was entered by the Americans.

America had hitherto been struggling for liberty, but had not yet declared herself as no longer pertaining to England. A public proclamation to this effect had been long desired by Washington ; and now, at length, receiving the much wished-for Declaration of Independence, he assembled his troops and read it aloud. It was not only hailed with every mark of joy, by the people, but appeared, as Washington had hoped, to awaken warmth and interest in the hearts of the soldiers, to increase their efforts, and to bind them more closely together.

The English forces had, for some time, been nearly inactive, waiting the expected reinforcement from

England: but they had now arrived, and an attack upon New York was daily expected. Washington had not been idle. Forts had been erected, fortifications raised; and now, with renewed hope, he prepared to meet the formidable force with which Lord Howe was advancing on the Long Island.

This day was one of great disaster to the Americans. Never had they fought with greater bravery—never had obedience to their leader been so willingly yielded. They disputed every inch of land with the English; but all was in vain: and Washington, who could not send to the relief of his troops without endangering his own camp, saw, with dismay, their total slaughter and defeat.

A very heavy rain on the following day confined the English to their tents, and the Americans thus gained time for consideration; the result of which was that, on the following night, the whole army withdrew from the Long Island; and such was the order and secrecy with which this movement was conducted, that, with the exception of the last boat, all had safely landed in New York before the English army, stationed at the distance of six hundred yards, had detected their retreat.

Washington, at this time, avoided a general engagement; for, with his undisciplined and inexperienced troops, he felt certain that such must be followed by the total ruin of the American cause. He wished, by small skirmishes, to accustom his soldiers to the practice of war; and, by lengthening out the campaign, to

allow the country to gather more strength for a decisive effort on a future day.

This decision, the wisdom of which was proved by the result, was looked upon with much disapprobation. All longed to hear of battles fought, and victories won; yet forgot that such were not to be obtained by an army refusing all restraint, ignorant of discipline, and many of whom were even without arms. Washington might have entered into an immediate engagement, and thus have shielded himself from blame; but this would have injured the interest of his beloved country. He bore, therefore, all indignity, and worked calmly on to the glorious end he had pictured to himself.

Several skirmishes and battles had now followed each other, the English still always victorious; when Washington resolved, before the approach of winter should put a stop to the campaign, to make one bold effort and attack the enemy on their own ground. His troops crossed the river Delaware during the night; and, surrounding the town of Trenton, the soldiers stationed there, after a fruitless resistance, surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Another battle and another victory for the Americans at Princeton quickly followed that of Trenton. Many of our troops fell on this occasion, and a still greater number were taken prisoners.

In the three weeks that followed his first crossing the Delaware, Washington continued to dislodge, from one post after another, his hitherto victorious enemy. The glory of these achievements wrought a great change in

the spirits of his troops : they were no longer weighed down by a sense of their continual losses ; but, excited by victory, they gained confidence, and longed for future occasion of displaying their newly-acquired strength.

Charles Botta, an Italian, who writes an account of the American war, in speaking of this time, says : “ Achievements so astonishing, gained for the American commander a very great reputation, and were regarded with wonder by all nations as well as the Americans. Every one applauded the prudence, the firmness, the daring, of General Washington. All proclaimed him equal to the most renowned commander of Antiquity.”

I must not, however, dwell too long on every separate campaign, but tell you only a few of the leading features. Some years hence you will, I hope, be better acquainted with the American war than I can make you. If I succeed in interesting you now, and raise a wish to know more, it is all I desire for my dear little boy.

I believe I have not yet told you that the French nation had recognised the independence of America ; that is, they had admitted her right to declare herself a free state. A treaty of alliance with her had been signed in Paris ; and a fleet, consisting of twelve ships of the line and four frigates, was sent to her assistance, with the cheering intelligence that large forces, both for sea and land, would quickly follow.

From the part the French had formerly acted in America, it was feared by many that the two armies would not act together on a friendly footing ; and that

thus America would lose the advantage offered by her allies. But it was not so: the armies met, and continued, as long as they acted together, in the greatest harmony. The American officers, to show their sense of the obligation they owed, wearing cockades of black and white, the former their own colour, the latter that of the French.

It was about this time that the treason of General Arnold, whose name I have already mentioned, was discovered by the Americans; and it is now too, that a stain is said to rest on the name of Washington. I say *said*, because it does not seem very certain that he could have acted otherwise, or, at least, that others would have done differently; I mean his permitting the execution of Major André, of which I shall tell you by and by.

General Arnold, you will remember, received the thanks of the commander-in-chief and of his country, at the time of his expedition into Canada; and no officer in the American army was more looked up to for military talent, activity, and courage. But as the wounds he had received in various engagements prevented his now continuing in active service, he was left in command of the city of Philadelphia; and here it was he determined to become a traitor to his country, and to go over to the side of the English. For eighteen months he dwelt over the means of executing his base and dishonourable purpose; and, during all that time, carried on a secret correspondence with the English, offering to deliver different posts into their hands, and

informing them, from time to time, of the movements and intentions of his countrymen.

This correspondence was carried on between General Arnold and Major André; the letters were signed by false names, and were so written that they appeared to allude only to some mercantile business.

To complete his dishonourable design, Arnold urged Major André to come in disguise, and with his assumed name of John Anderson, within the American lines: but this he refused to do. He was ready, for the sake of his country, to take advantage of Arnold's treason; but would not mingle, he said, with the American soldiers, and act the part of a friend when in reality their enemy. He agreed, however, to meet General Arnold, during the night, at a place called Dobbsferry. He did so; and their arrangements being uncompleted, he was, on the return of daylight, at last persuaded to conceal himself in the house of a man named Smith. It was still his wish to return to the ship he had left on the previous night; but this was, by some accident, prevented; and, at length, obliged to change his uniform for a disguise, he set out on horseback for New York. On his way to that city he was stopped by three armed men, who, having searched him and found papers concealed in his boots, concluded him to be a spy, and carried him prisoner to the nearest American post.

Those papers disclosed the treason of Arnold and endangered the life of André. The well-known fate of a spy taken in the time of war is immediate death; and Major André was condemned to die. In vain his

English friends represented that he was an officer and a gentleman—that he had been forced unwillingly within the American lines, and, consequently, had been compelled to assume the disguise in which he had been discovered. By the laws of the country he was condemned to death; and Washington approving the sentence, he was executed ten days after his having left the British lines.

The capture of André and the seizure of the papers, all of which were in the hand-writing of Arnold, was known in sufficient time to allow of the latter making his escape to the British fleet; and he was thus saved from the fate his baseness so fully merited. The evils arising from the treason of Arnold were numerous, and the success of the British force was spreading gloom over America, when, happily for Washington, the long experience the country had had of his wisdom and disinterestedness, induced them to adopt the plan he had so long advised; and the army was put on a new and far better footing. Among other changes, the men were enlisted for whatever period the war should continue, instead of, as formerly, for one year only. Thus Washington was, at length, secured from finding himself deserted by his soldiers and unable to raise others. The judiciousness of the change was soon evident in the superior discipline and arrangement of the army; and the affairs of America again took a favourable turn. New forces arrived from France; and a consultation was held, whether an attack should be made upon New York, or whether they should proceed to Virginia. The

latter was decided upon. Some skirmishes took place, and then followed the siege of Yorktown. It continued for seventeen days; for the English, who had raised strong works of defence, kept up an incessant fire from the battlements; while the Americans, in a spirited manner, continued the attack. At length a parley was beat from the walls, and Lord Cornwallis sent out a note asking a four-and-twenty hours' cessation of the fight, and offering to surrender the posts of Yorktown and Gloster on proposed terms. These were agreed to; and the troops, marching out of the garrison, resigned their arms to the victorious Americans.

The success of this engagement, with the capture of Lord Cornwallis and so great a portion of the British forces, caused great joy throughout America, and raised hopes of a speedy and favourable termination of the war. Nothing further was accomplished during this campaign; for the return of winter brought with it a truce between the contending parties.

I must tell you an anecdote which occurred about this time; for I think it may interest you. A Captain Huddy of the American army had been taken prisoner by a party of American loyalists in New York. He was thrown into close confinement, and a few days afterwards, under the charge of Captain Lippencot, was marched out of the town and hanged. This act of needless cruelty roused the indignation of the Americans. Washington was called upon to revenge the death of their countryman; and a council being held, it was determined to select one from among the British

prisoners who should meet the same fate. The lot fell upon a young officer of the name of Asgill ; he was only nineteen years old, and was the only son remaining to his widowed mother.

The English commanders, who were very far from having approved of the execution of Captain Huddy, had, in the meantime, summoned a court-martial to inquire into the affair, when the whole blame was discovered to lie with the American loyalists ; they, in their zeal to prove their allegiance to England, having condemned their countryman to death.

This fact was made known to Washington, and he wished immediately to have liberated the young prisoner ; but many delays occurred ; and he was only freed from prison, and from the anticipation of a violent death, when a letter from his nearly heart-broken mother was forwarded to America. It was accompanied by one from the King and Queen of France, whose interest in behalf of her son she had prayed for ; and whose exertions to save the life of a stranger, and an enemy, roused the Americans to a sense of their own injustice. They listened, at length to the arguments Washington had not failed to use from the commencement of his imprisonment, and Mr. Asgill was set at liberty.

Washington had now, with his usual activity in the cause of his country, recommenced eager preparations for a new campaign ; when a letter from Sir Guy Carleton informed him that negotiations for peace with America had already been begun between France and

England, and that the first step taken, would be to acknowledge the independence of the American States.

That peace was shortly afterwards concluded : and all hostilities ceasing between America and England, a proclamation to this effect was made to the American army, on the nineteenth of April, 1782, exactly eight years from the commencement of the war.

The ardour, the constancy, the endurance of Washington, now met its reward : he had surmounted all difficulties, accomplished the great-object to which he had devoted himself ; and, taking an affectionate and sorrowful farewell of the army that had served under him, he resigned his commission, and returned once more to his home and family.

Marshall, in his Life of Washington, when thus talking of his bidding adieu, for ever, to his brave companions in arms, says : “ This affecting interview took place on the fourth of December. At noon, the principal officers of the army assembled ; and soon after, their beloved commander entered the room. His emotions were too strong to be concealed. Filling a glass, he turned to them and said, ‘ With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honourable.’ Having drank, he added : ‘ I cannot come to each of you ; but will be obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand.’ General Knox, being nearest, turned to him ; and Washington, incapable of utterance, grasped his hand and embraced

him. In the same affectionate manner he took leave of each succeeding officer. The tear of manly sensibility was in every eye, and not a word was uttered to interrupt the silence of the scene."

Though Washington thus resigned the high command he had so long held, and retired to comparative seclusion, he continued devoted to the service of his country till his death.

When that death did occur, sixteen years after the termination of the war, it was felt as a calamity through the whole of America; and every honour, every mark of veneration, was paid to the memory of this great man. They recalled his exertions, his devotedness in their cause; and the whole of that country he had rescued from thralldom were mourning at his death. Nor was it in his own country alone that this mark of respect was shown. When the news reached France, Napoleon, who was then First Consul, ordered that black crape should be hung from all standards and flags in the army. In England, too, a feeling of respect was shown to his memory. I know not why, but it appears to me more beautiful than the tribute paid by Napoleon: Lord Bridport, who was then in command of the British fleet, lowered his flag half-mast; and the example was immediately followed by the whole fleet consisting of about sixty ships of the line.

CHAPTER X.

LIFE OF HENRI DE LAROCHEJAQUELEIN, AND OF THE
MARQUIS DE LESCURE.

THESE lives and this chapter, dearest Rawdon, will differ much from any you have hitherto read ; but will not I trust be less interesting. A strange species of warfare, you will find, the poor followers of your present heroes were compelled to. But first I must, though not entering more than is necessary into the horrors of the Revolution, explain to my little boy some of the events that preceded the rising in arms of La Vendée. You have often heard of the Revolution in France, and know what fearful scenes of murder, of cruelty, and bloodshed, debased the country at that time.

A desire for what they called liberty had roused the populace against their king and government. They rose in arms : the nobles were to be swept from their path, their religion to be trampled under foot ; and disturbances and insurrections, headed by those devoid of virtue or humanity, spread rapidly through the country.

The unhappy king, Louis the Sixteenth, after in his

own palace being subjected to the insult of the mob, was dragged before an unjust and iniquitous court. It was composed of his worst enemies. By them he was tried for pretended crimes, condemned, and in four-and-twenty hours led to the scaffold.

His death was shortly followed by that of his queen Marie-Antoinette, who was brought before the same tribunal, and accused of an attempt to rouse the troops for the defence of her husband.

A few days before this, when the royal family were obliged to leave their own palace and seek safety in concealment, the queen had been observed to seal up, and carefully secure a small packet. It was now brought into court. They hoped, from the care she had given it at such a moment, that it must bring forward proofs of her guilt; but, when opened before her, it was found to contain only some long, soft curls of various colours. "It is the hair of my different children," she said, meekly; "both the living and the dead."

Before such judges as were now raised against her, the poor queen had no chance of pleading her innocence: she was condemned to death, and suffered on the guillotine.

The state of France at that period is much beyond description—much beyond what I should wish to describe to my little boy. All who were in any degree suspected of favouring the royal party, or even those who ventured to whisper against the murderous proceedings of the "friends of liberty," were seized, and, without trial condemned to die. Every day hundreds

were arrested ; and no one who did not favour the republican party, could look for any safety in Paris ; yet orders were given that, under pain of death, none should be allowed to quit the town.

Among those who had clung to the falling cause of the unfortunate Louis, was M. de Lescure ; but now, when no further efforts in his own defence could avail, he was eager to secure his own safety and that of his wife by quitting Paris, for his house in La Vendée, or, as it was then called, the Bocage.

The difficulty of providing passports made this attempt very hazardous ; but with the assistance of M. Thomassin, it was happily accomplished. He had been the tutor of M. de Lescure, and was still his friend, though unfortunately for himself, now connected with the republican party.

Everything had been prepared for their departure on the following day, when the arrival of M. de Larochejaquelein made them anxious to secure his safety with their own. He had belonged to the body-guard of the king, and, with a friend who now accompanied him, had eluded, with difficulty, the pursuit of his murderers. It was very necessary that they should both quit Paris ; and, assisted by MM. de Lescure and Thomassin, they once more ventured to demand passports.

They were obliged to procure two witnesses ; and one of these becoming fearful of his own safety by thus assisting their escape, told a secretary, in a low voice, who M. de Lescure really was.

Fortunately for them, this man, though a republican, had not the thirst for bloodshed that so fearfully distinguished his party : and, drawing near to M. de Lescure, he whispered, " You are betrayed : make your escape ! " Then, assuming a very angry voice, he said aloud, " There is no time for signing your passports now : we have others to attend to. You must come again." You may believe they waited no second order, but hurried from the room. M. de Larochejaquelein and his friend were thus obliged to remain some time longer in Paris ; while the rest of the party set out on their journey, and, after narrowly escaping many and great dangers, reached their Chateau de Clessou.

I wish I could give you some idea of the simple manners and customs of La Vendée at that time. It seemed a little spot forgotten by the rest of the world : no pride of birth or riches was to be found there : no pomp—no luxury. The castle and the cottage shared in the produce of the country alike. The peasants were devoted to their employers ; and they, in their turn treated them almost like equals. The crimes of robbery and murder were unknown ; and long after the rest of France was bathed in the blood of its victims, La Vendée remained in peace, and almost in ignorance of the horrors that surrounded it.

You must recollect that the great desire of the republican party was to spread liberty and equality over the whole country. The upper class was to be abolished ; and " Death to the aristocrats ! down with the nobles ! " was the universal cry. Little did La

Vendée enter into such feelings. So far from believing that the overthrow of government and religion could benefit the country, or that the murder of those who were their superiors by birth and education would tend to their own good, they looked with horror on the proceedings of the republic ; and felt certain they must end, as they had begun, in misery and crime. Thus, when at last their quiet was disturbed by the storms around, the poor peasants of La Vendée hurried to their landlords, and, instead of trampling them under foot as their worst tyrants, entreated advice and assistance, allowing themselves to be guided entirely by them.

Among the first acts of injustice that roused the people of La Vendee was the removal of their priests, and the appointment of others who were strangers. They rebelled against the change ; and refusing to attend worship when directed by these servants of the republic, they armed themselves, with guns, sticks, forks, or whatever they could procure, and, collecting round their own pastor, held mass in the open fields.

I must not here forget an anecdote that I know will give pleasure to my little boy ; for it will tell him of good and generous, and noble and devoted feeling.

Those priests who consented to take an oath proposed to them by the republican government (and, therefore, you may suppose, little favourable to religion), were allowed to remain in their churches ; while such as refused to obey were pursued from spot to spot, and threatened with imprisonment and death.

In one of the small villages of La Vendée, where

the people were so poor, that their church was built, like the cottages, of clay or turf, there had lived, for fifty years, a good old priest. He was commanded by government to take the oath required, or leave the village ; but, though refusing to do the first, he never for a moment imagined, whatever the consequences might be, that he could leave his flock, and give up preaching the Word of God, at the very time when they most required his help. He, therefore, was one of those who continued to preach in the open air ; while his listeners came armed to secure his safety.

This resistance to their will enraged the republican party. A price was set on the head of the old man ; and a body of troops was sent to the village to bring him away prisoner.

It was the watchful care of his faithful people that, at this time, saved his life ; for, notwithstanding his entreaties, that they would not endanger their own safety by trying to secure his, they carried him into the hills, and there obliged him to lie concealed till the visit of the soldiers was past.

The fear of the old man, that his flock might suffer from the wrath of the soldiers, came too true ; for, indignant at not being able to discover his concealment, they set fire to the village.

A few hours afterwards the priest returned ; and when he saw old men, women, and children collected together, and looking in silent sorrow on the ruins of their home, and on the destruction of their flocks, and tools, and cattle, the old man wrung his hands in

agony. "I am old," he said, "and cannot have many years to live: why did you not give me up to my enemies, rather than allow this ruin? You and your children will starve."

The poor people gathered round him as he spoke; and, forgetting their sorrow in the delight of his safe return, they said that, as he was their father, they ought to save him at any price, and that they did not regret what they had done.

A few days after this, an old man appeared before the court who had offered a price for the head of the priest; and, saying he heard a large sum was to be given to whoever delivered him into their hands, promised to do so as soon as that sum should be secured to him.

Even the hardened heart of a republican officer was shocked by the proposal. "What!" he said, "will an old man, on the verge of the grave, sell the life of a brother? Wretched old man, what will riches avail you? You cannot have many days to live!"

The offer was not, however, withdrawn: the money was paid down; and then the old man said, calmly, "I am the priest whose life you seek. I yield myself your prisoner: but entreat of you to allow me time to revisit my parishioners, that, with this sum, I may repair some of their loss. I promise to be with you again in three days."

Happily this permission was granted; and, guarded by the same soldiers who had set fire to the village, he returned at the very moment when his faithful children

had collected together to consult about the sudden disappearance of their beloved pastor, and consider the best means of seeking him out.

In their joy at seeing him return so unexpectedly among them, they crowded round, and asked a thousand questions as to where he had been, and why he had left them. But he answered none ; and, telling them he was obliged to go back with the soldiers, assured them they should meet again : a happy meeting, he said.

The old man meant that he and the true-hearted, the good and faithful people he had so long loved, would meet in heaven. But they did not understand this ; and after he had placed the money for which he had given his life in the hands of one who was to keep it for the use of the homeless, houseless peasants, he returned to the soldiers, and was led prisoner away. Three months after this time the good old man died upon the scaffold.

I could not resist telling you this anecdote, my dear little boy ; but must now return to my story.

Shortly after M. and Madame de Lescure had returned to Clesson, they were joined by M. de Larochejaquelein ; and it was about this time the war broke out in La Vendée. The immediate cause was the conscription ; but I must explain to my little boy what this is. All who are above a certain age are called to appear on an appointed day : from among them a number are drawn ; and these, whatever their own inclinations may be, are obliged to serve in the army.

This, then, was ordered to be held in La Vendée ; and though the peasants obeyed so far as to collect in the appointed place, it was with the firm resolve that they would not serve in the republican army, or fight against their king and government.

The gendarmes and soldiers, finding that they were not disposed to submit, attempted to terrify them into compliance ; and a cannon was fired among them. Fortunately no one was killed ; but the horror and indignation of the peasants being now wholly roused, they rushed upon the soldiers, seized the cannon, and succeeded in dispersing the whole troop.

They had thus freed themselves from the immediate danger of being forced to fight in a cause they detested ; but knowing that they must speedily be visited by the vengeance of the republic, they resolved at once upon rising in arms, and by putting themselves under the command of Jacques Cathelineau, an inhabitant of their village, to be ready, at a moment's warning, for the protection of their homes.

Their first efforts were successful. The soldiers were defeated ; and, believing they must have struck terror into the hearts of the republicans, and that they would disturb them no more, the simple-minded peasants returned in quiet to their homes.

Little time, however, had elapsed, when the soldiers of the republic were again overrunning the country. New arrests and imprisonments were daily made ; and the inhabitants of the Chateau of Clesson expected every hour to share the fate of the neighbouring

families : be thrown into prison, and be dragged from thence to the guillotine.

Another conscription had been ordered in the country ; and among those summoned to appear was Henri de Larochejaquelein. Thus the fate of the whole party seemed decided ; for, though death must be the immediate consequence of a refusal, none would have purchased their safety by consenting that he should fight in the ranks of those who had murdered his king.

On the day preceding that appointed for the conscription—one of intense suffering to the inhabitants of Clesson—a young peasant arrived from the estates of M. de Larochejaquelein. He delivered the message with which he had been charged, and then, turning suddenly to Henri, “Is it possible,” he said, “that you are going to obey the order for to-morrow : will you join with those who wish only the destruction of your country ? Come with me rather, put yourself at our head ; we will obey you, we will follow you, and we will fight for our king, for you, and for ourselves.”

The fear of bringing immediate destruction on his friends, if he thus openly opposed the republican party, had alone withheld M. de Larochejaquelein from this step ; but now the danger of to-morrow left him no choice ; and, throwing himself into the arms of M. de Lescure, he exclaimed, “Whichever way I turn I bring destruction upon you ; but, at the head of my brave peasants, I will rescue you, or perish !”

He left them that night in disguise ; and the danger

he had so much dreaded for his friends was not long of being realized. At an early hour on the following morning, the loud cries used by the republican soldiers were heard. The court of the castle was filled with armed men; and seizing on some of the terrified servants, they inquired for M. de Lescure, whose whole family, they said, they had orders to arrest.

Any attempts at resistance would have been vain; and a few minutes saw them, under the guard of the soldiers, hurried to prison. Perhaps their submission had softened the hearts of their captors, for they gradually treated them with less cruelty, and, at last, even with kindness. On entering the little town, their carriage was surrounded by the people, and the usual cry of "Death to the aristocrats! down with the nobles!" echoed on every side. Many attempts were made to approach the prisoners; but the soldiers kept them off, and, as far as was in their power, protected them from the insults of the mob. It was through their interests also, that, instead of being thrown into a common prison, M. de Lescure and his family were placed in small, but comfortable rooms, where they were left under the charge of one who, though disposed to treat them with kindness, undertook to be their guard, and prevent their escape. Such instances of an attempt to alleviate the sufferings of their victims were very rare in the republican government; and but one or two, I fear, are to be found during the whole of that bloody war of which they were the instigators.

I may, though it does not properly belong to this

part of your story, give you another anecdote of mercy and good feeling in a republican. On the night of the tenth of August, when the palace of the unfortunate king was attacked, and when the infuriated mob murdered his guard, and declared vengeance against all who had befriended his cause, one gentleman was fortunate enough to make his escape from the palace; but being recognised on the street, he was pursued by four men. For some time he continued his flight, and then, as a last hope of safety, entered a shop. His pursuers immediately followed; but the man who stood behind the counter, guessing the truth, and willing to save one victim from murder, started forward, addressed him as his "dear cousin," and shook him warmly by the hand. He was too well known as a republican to be suspected of thus harbouring an aristocrat; so that the discomfited men withdrew; and then the stranger, thanking his deliverer for his quick and ready wit, as well as for the kindly feelings that prompted it, hurried to secure some place of shelter for the night.

I must now return to M. and Madame de Lescure, or rather to M. de Larochejaquelein. He had, during the meantime, reached his own estates; and scarcely was his arrival known, when the peasants, crowding round, entreated he would, by becoming their leader, form them into order and discipline. He had but to speak the word, they said, and, by the rising of to-morrow's sun, he would have ten thousand ready hearts and hands at his command. The word was spoken and

the promise was kept. Nearly ten thousand men assembled round their young leader ; but a body so armed never before, perhaps, had collected for the purpose of battle. Among the whole band they had scarcely two hundred guns ; the rest were armed with clubs, forks, and whatever they could seize on at the moment.

The hopes of M. de Larochejaquelein rose with the enthusiasm of his troops. "If my father were here," he said, addressing them on the first morning after his arrival, "you might indeed look to him with confidence and respect : for myself, I am but a boy ; yet, if courage can make me worthy of commanding I shall prove myself so. When I advance, follow me ; when I fly, do not spare the life of your coward leader ; but if I fall, my brave peasants, avenge me."

It was at this time that the strange species of warfare, of which I have told you, first began. The republican force was stationed in the town of Aubiers ; and the Vendéans, who marched with silent caution, concealing themselves behind trees and hedges, contrived to surround them. Then twelve of those who were the best marksmen were stationed where, unseen themselves, they could best take aim at the enemy ; their companions being close at hand, and continually supplying them with loaded guns.

The republican soldiers, seeing so many fall under the fire of their unseen foe, and wishing to force them to open combat, moved for a more favourable position ;

when M. de Larochejaquelein exclaimed : " See, my friends, they fly ; let us pursue them."

At that moment, as when at the shrill whistle of Roderick Dhu—

"On right, on left, aboye, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe."

But not like the warlike band of Roderick Dhu did the brave peasants as suddenly disappear. All doubt of success occasioned by their want of arms was forgotten in the excitement of the moment. With loud shouts of " Long live the king !" they threw themselves upon the soldiers, who, bewildered by the suddenness of the attack, fell into disorder, and fled in such haste as to leave their cannon in the hands of the fortunate Vendéans.

In this manner were all the first battles of La Vendée fought. The character of the country, which is divided into quantities of small fields surrounded by hedges, assisted them greatly. The peasants were, of course, totally ignorant of the art of war ; their officers were equally so ; and the whole of the insurrection of La Vendée was carried on in a way unlike any other war. Even the brief decided words of command given in the army were unknown to them ; and instead of " Rightabout," " march," &c., it was, " Look towards that tree ;" " go to that house."

When compelled to leave their sheltering hedges, and attack the enemy in the open field, the first rush

of the peasants was always on the cannon ; for, if they could prevent its sweeping death through their lines, they trusted the rest of their success to their own efforts. The moment the appearance of the match announced a new discharge, the band threw themselves on the ground, allowed the ball to pass over, and then, starting to their feet, made another rush forward.

They were very frequently successful ; and when they did fail, their perfect knowledge of the country prevented their sustaining any great loss. If the day appeared likely to go against them, they suddenly dispersed ; and, by jumping over hedges, and striking into by-roads, eluded the pursuit of the enemy, returned quietly to their own homes, and waited another opportunity for a new effort. They were never, either, greatly elated by success or dispirited by defeat. The only difference they seemed to make was, that the victorious shout of " God save the king " was, after any loss, spoken in a more subdued tone, or changed into " Well, well, God save the king, all the same."

The success of Henri de Larochejaquelein was known in the little village where M. and Madame de Lescure were still kept prisoners. The advance of what might now be called the royalist army was hourly expected, and every preparation for defence had been made.

I must tell you, that while every step of the citizens, as the republican party had termed themselves, was marked by cruelty and murder, the brave Vendéans, fighting for their king, their country, their lives, and the lives of their children, for long after the commence-

ment of the war, never sullied their victories by one act of needless bloodshed. In the latter part of the disturbances of that unhappy country, I fear they, in some instances, retaliated the wrongs and injuries they had received ; but it was not till their sufferings had roused them almost to madness.

On learning that M. de Larochejaquelein was marching against them with his peasant army, the republicans wished to reinforce theirs, and gave orders for conscriptions to be held in various villages ; but horror of the new government gained ground every day, and no one would obey the call.

Among other places, the little parish of Beaulieu received the order ; but when, on the appointed day, the soldiers went to superintend the ballot, they found the men had disappeared : in the whole village only women and children were now to be seen.

Enraged at the disappointment, the soldiers swore, that if on the morrow the men had not returned, they would set fire to the village, and burn their houses, wives, and children. But, when the soldiers came on the morrow, the women and children too were gone ; the village was deserted ; the faithful people having left their homes to the destruction of the incensed soldiers, and preferred their own ruin to being forced to fight against their king.

This failure in strengthening their forces, perhaps dispirited the republican army ; for instead of waiting the expected attack, they quitted the town in the greatest disorder. Many of the prisoners were put to

death ; and it is probable that M. and Madame de Lescure owed their safety to having been forgotten in the hurry and confusion of departure. In a few hours they were at liberty to return to Clesson ; and M. de Larochejaquelein had unknowingly fulfilled his promise ; for it was the fear of his approach that had rescued them from danger. He soon after joined them at Clesson ; and the account he gave of his success, the bravery of his band, and the number of royalists who had joined his standard, spread joy through the whole party.

The affairs of La Vendée had now risen to such a height, that there was no longer safety for those who remained inactive ; and M. de Lescure, who had long been desirous to join his friend, determined, by summoning the surrounding parishes ; and offering himself as their chief, to strengthen the army of the royalists.

His band was quickly raised ; his wife, whatever might be the hardships she would have to undergo, was resolved not to leave his side ; and once more they quitted Clesson for the little town of Bressuire. But it was now no longer occupied by the republican force. Twenty-thousand royalists were crowded on the streets ; cries of " Long live the king ! " rent the air, and rejoicing and mirth was heard throughout the whole day. But when night closed in, the peasants returned peaceably to the different rooms they occupied ; and, of their own accord, offered up thanksgiving for their late success, and prayers that their just cause might prosper.

Although in the army of La Vendée there were a great many officers and leaders, none took any superior

rank ; and when an officer was required, he was chosen by his talent and bravery ; so that, if a peasant, as was not seldom the case, held out promise of becoming an able leader, it caused no jealousy in those who, though born, perhaps, of a noble family, were content to serve under him. They had but one end in view the peace of their country and the restoration of their king ; for they already looked upon the Dauphin as Louis the Seventeenth.

There was no law, no order in the army ; each did his utmost, and each felt secure of his neighbour's exertions in the cause. When any particular division was going out, the officer in command could not, as in other armies select such and such regiments, and know that they must obey ; but he was equally secure of finding the force required. " I am going to march against such a post—who will follow me ? " was sufficient : the number was mentioned, and, forming themselves into a body, they followed their leader. There was no attempt at discipline in the whole of the peasant army ; yet the want of it was never felt : obedience was willingly given, and no laws were necessary to prevent crimes and excesses which they looked upon with horror. The greatest friendship, also, existed among the brave band, and even passing disputes were rarely heard among them. Upon one occasion when a peasant, in a fit of passion, had drawn his sword on his companion, an officer, who was passing at the time, stopped and said, mildly, " Jesus Christ pardoned his murderers : shall a soldier of the Catholic army take away the life of his com-

rade?" This rebuke, gentle as it was, had the effect he wished ; the peasants returned their swords to their scabbards, and, shaking each other by the hand, went away ashamed of their late passion, and in perfect good humour with each other.

There was another peculiarity in the army of La Vendée. The moment a battle was over, the whole band dispersed, each returning to his own family, and occupying himself in labour as if nothing had occurred. The country thus usually appeared undisturbed and in perfect quiet ; but at the first signal that another attack was to be made, they hurried to their posts. No pay was offered or asked for by these poor peasants : they fought for their king, their religion, and their homes, and wished for no reward but that of success.

The first fight in which Monsieur de Lescure was engaged, was an attack on the town of Thouars. It was occupied by General Quetineau and his republican troops ; but, not believing that the Vendéans would venture upon an attack, he had made no preparation for defence. The river Thoué surrounds the town on every side. It is not fordable : the attack, therefore, had to be made at four different parts, where bridges were thrown across. On the first appearance of the Vendéans, General Quetineau ordered troops to defend these different points ; and, for six hours, an obstinate fight was maintained, with little advantage to either side.

The long and continued fire had almost exhausted the supply of powder the Vendéans had brought with them ; and Henri, leaving Monsieur de Lescure to com-

mand alone, hurried in search of more. At that moment the republican party appeared to waver ; and seizing a musket with a bayonet, Monsieur de Lescure called on his soldiers to follow ; and, rushing down the height, amid a shower of balls, gained the middle of the bridge.

No single peasant had dared to follow his brave leader. He returned, and, with commands and entreaties, besought them to rush upon the enemy. Once more he gave them the example ; but again he was allowed to go alone. This time his clothes were pierced with several balls ; but he was unhurt. He made another effort ; and then Monsieur de Larochejaquelein, and another officer, who had returned from their expedition, flew to his assistance. They were followed by one peasant ; and all four crossing the bridge, the remainder gained courage,—with one accord rushed down the heights,—attacked the intrenchments,—and the passage was forced.

The republican soldiers now fled for shelter to the town, and reached it in time to close the gates on their victorious pursuers. But the brave peasants were not to be repulsed ; and though without the means, or even the knowledge of how to conduct a siege, they set to work. The men inspirited by their late success, attempted, with pikes to demolish the walls. But this proved too tedious an operation for the impatient spirit of their young leader ; and, mounting upon the shoulders of one of the peasants, Henri de Larochejaquelein first fired a few shots over the wall, and then

began breaking it down with his hands. Fortunately for the success of this very novel method of making a breach, the wall was old : it crumbled under the efforts of the young hero ; and an opening being at length accomplished, the troops entered the town at the moment that the republican leader proposed a surrender.

The inhabitants of Thouars, who had befriended the republican government, now gave themselves up for lost ; and some, clinging to the leaders of the royalists, entreated that their lives might be spared. Their fears were soon quieted—their lives and their properties were safe in the hands of the peasants ; for, so far from doing them any injury, they hastened, as was their custom, in large bodies to the different churches, and, desiring the bells to be rung, returned thanks to heaven for their success. Monsieur de Larochejaquelein had gained among the peasants the name of “ the intrepid ;” Monseieur de Lescure, that of the “ Saint of Poitou :” and both were equally expressive of their characters ; for the daring bravery of the former was not more conspicuous than the humanity and gentleness which the latter exercised on every occasion. No prisoner under his care suffered death or ill usage ; and innumerable were the lives which, even on the field of battle, he found means to preserve. At one time, when the dreadful massacres of the republicans were at their height, a prisoner, whose life he had preserved a few minutes before, fired close at his breast. The ball passed, happily, without injury ; and, pushing the gun aside, Monsieur de Lescure desired the man to be

removed. But the peasants were less forgiving than their leader ; and enraged at the risk he had run, they seized on the unhappy soldier, and cut him to pieces.

After the successful entrance of the Vendéans into the town of Thouars, General Quetineau was brought before Monsieur de Lescure. Though fighting in so bad a cause he was a brave and gallant soldier ; and he met from the Vendéan leaders all the respect and kindness that one brave heart yields to another.

The peasants, less scrupulous, could not understand their chief's living in apparent friendship with an enemy and a republican. They remonstrated upon their inhabiting the same house ; and when those who served under Monsieur de Bonchamp learned, that not only was he exposed to danger during the day, but that he was to sleep in the same room with General Quetineau, their fears could no longer be restrained ; and, coming in crowds, they besought their beloved leader not to expose his life to so great a risk. !

However grateful such a proof of their affection might be to Monsieur de Bonchamp, he indignantly answered, that a brave soldier could never act the part of a midnight assassin ; and the peasants were obliged to withdraw. But, still unsatisfied, they only waited till their leader had retired to bed ; and then, creeping stealthily back to the house, they continued the whole night to watch upon the stairs and round the door of his room. One, more bold than the rest, ventured softly to unclosethe door ; and, hearing all quiet, made his way in, seated himself at the foot of the bed, and

there held faithful, but unnecessary, watch over the safety of his master.

I have told you that very many who had succeeded in making their escape from Paris, and other disturbed parts of France, had joined the royalists of La Vendée. Two in particular I must mention : the young Chevalier de Mondyon and a M. de Langerie. The former, who was only fourteen years old, had run away from school in Paris ; and having contrived to draw out for himself a false passport, had come, he said, to fight for his king. The other M. de Langerie, was still younger—he was little more than twelve years old—so young, that they wished to prevent his joining the army. But he was not to be restrained ; and when, in the first engagement, his horse was killed under him, nothing daunted, the brave boy continued the fight on foot. After this, in the hope of keeping him out of danger, he was appointed to a post at some distance from the army ; but this he speedily deserted ; and once more the little volunteer joined the royalists.

On one occasion the Chevalier de Mondyon fought by the side of an officer, who was many years older than himself, but who, I suppose, had less enthusiasm in the cause ; for, being very slightly wounded, he declared he must necessarily leave the field. “ I do not see that at all,” said the little warrior ; “ and as your retiring will certainly discourage our men, if you do but move one step I will shoot you through the head.” The officer remained ; and, following the example of the courageous boy, fought bravely through the rest of the day.

The next attack of the Vendéans was on Fontenay. In this they were unsuccessful ; and the dispirited peasants found themselves routed, their cannon taken, and they without powder. Among their pieces of cannon, there was one that had been a great favourite. They had christened it Marie-Jeanne, and, in times of peace, used to decorate it with flowers ; this was now in the hands of the enemy.

The leaders of the poor peasants tried by every means to assure them that this reverse would be followed by victory ; and at last so far roused their courage, as to make them consent to another attack on Fontenay. " We have no powder," they said ; " we must seize the cannon with our clubs ; we must have back Marie-Jeanne : whoever runs best, will get it first." And so eager were they now to advance, that M. de Lescure could scarcely restrain their impatience.

This second attack was successful ; and the town was gained. But the exertions of La Vendée could do little in a country where they alone preserved feelings of loyalty for their king, or respect for their religion. In all of their first engagements they had been successful. But now, when what was called their rebellion began to be looked upon in a more serious light, and well disciplined armies were sent against them, though still frequently victorious, their utmost exertions could but lengthen out their struggle and delay a little longer the evil that, sooner or later, must befall them. The little spot of ground could not long offer resistance to a whole nation ; the bravery of a little band must

yield before the numbers that were poured upon them.

Their long resistance had already awakened the ferocious feelings of their implacable enemy ; and the order for fire, and bloodshed, and murder, had been issued. The horrors that ensued are beyond all that imagination can picture. Towns and villages were reduced to ashes ; and old men, women, and children, were massacred in thousands.

Hitherto none who could not bear arms had been allowed to follow the army ; but now when certain destruction awaited them in the villages, it was impossible to prevent it ; and the marched of the harassed Vendéans was encumbered by old age and more helpless infancy.

Many of the leaders had been wounded : among others, MM. de Lescure and Larochejaquelein ; but no thought could be given to their own safety ; and the former, who had received the greatest hurt, had more than once sprung from the bed where he had lain faint and suffering, and rushed to the battle-field.

The devotion of the peasants to their leaders continued unshaken. They looked upon the nobles and the gentlemen of their country as their best friends, and were guided entirely by them. On one occasion, when repeated disaster had damped their courage, and the usual exhortations of their officers could not persuade them to advance, M. de Lescure, springing from his horse, called aloud, " Are there four hundred men brave enough to come and die with me ? " The answer was

given in one long shout : "Yés, M. de Lescure, we will follow you where you will!" It is no wonder that such devotion frequently won them success, against even the able body with whom they had now to contend. But a time of total disaster was fast approaching. Some of the chiefs had eagerly desired to leave La Vendée, and cross the Loire into Brittany ; but this had been discouraged by others, till, when driven from post to post, it had become their only resource.

In the last effort made by the hapless army in La Vendée, M. de Lescure, with one of the very young officers I have told you of, had been riding in advance of his troops. He had climbed a small height to have a better view of the position of the army ; and fancying he could discover some appearance of disorder, had exclaimed, "Forward, my brave friends !" when a ball struck him in the temple. He fell ; and the poor boy, throwing his sword from him and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "He is dead, he is dead !"

This, at such a moment, was a dreadful blow to the courage of the peasants ; but M. de Lescure was not dead—he still breathed ; and, while the balls still flew around them, his attendants raised him from the ground, bound his wound to prevent loss of blood, and then carried him from the field.

Madame de Lescure had generally accompanied her husband in every march ; but now, for greater security, she had been left in a village at some distance. None had ventured to tell her of her husband's wound ; but her anxiety to join him had led her to set out on

horseback ; and, carrying her little girl of a year old on the saddle before her, she reached the army immediately before their attempting the passage of the Loire.

It was from this period, and from this fatal step, that the trials, dangers, and miseries of the Vendéans surpassed anything they had yet known : and the scene that now awaited M. and Madame de Lescure, with the rest of the army, may well baffle description. Eighty thousand houseless, homeless beings were gathered in the little valley by the side of the Loire. The cries and groans of the wounded were heard on all sides. The smoke and flames of the villages given to destruction by the republicans rose everywhere around ; despair had seized upon the whole band ; and the enemy were known to be even now rapidly approaching.

The banks on the other side of the river were lined with those who, expecting every moment to witness the massacre of the unfortunate people, attempted, by signs and extended arms, to invite them to safety. All that they could do had been eagerly adopted. Twenty frail and wretched boats had been sent across to assist the passage ; and those who brought them exclaimed, as they came near, " Come to us—we will save you ; trust to us—you will want nothing : we are all aristocrats—all royalists."

The length of time it took to convey them across left little hope but that the greater part must fall into the hands of the enemy. Among the great crowd

collected were five thousand prisoners. They had been brought bound to the banks of the river,—but to carry them further was impossible; and a council as to what should be done was held by some of the officers. If allowed to escape, they said, they would immediately return in arms against those who had no power of defence; and it was therefore proposed that the whole band should be destroyed. No one could propose any alternative; but, when the moment came for issuing the order, none would take upon himself to be its bearer. One declared it was impossible—that he could not utter the words; another, that he would rather perish himself than command such a massacre; and so the proposal fell to the ground. The unhappy prisoners were spared the fate they had inflicted on so many of the defenceless Vendéans; and were, as had been foretold, in the course of a few hours, in arms against their liberators.

When it was Monsieur and Madame de Lescure's turn to embark, the brave soldier was carried to the side of the water, and placed in the boat. They reached the other side in safety; and then, placing two pikes under the arms of the chair in which their leader was seated, his soldiers carried him along.

The little town of Varades, which they hoped to reach, was scarcely a mile distant; but the cold was so great, that those who were wounded suffered intense agony. As they drew near, the sound of musketry in the town seemed to warn them that it was already in possession of the enemy; and Madame de Lescure

hurried her disabled husband into a wood, where he could remain concealed. He had been nearly insensible; but the sound of the firing revived him; and, begging his wife to leave him, and secure her own safety and that of their child, he told her the swords of the enemy would cause him far less suffering than the cold and the wind. Happily it was a false alarm: everything was soon quiet in the town; and then, reassured, the unhappy Vendéans continued their route.

When the army of the unfortunate royalists had been formed into some order and discipline, M. de Lescure had been proclaimed its chief or general; but now, his wound having totally disabled him, he wished another appointment to be made, and proposed M. de Larochejaquelein. He was at this time very young—only one-and-twenty; and he shrank from the great responsibility of such a charge. But the whole army were unanimous for his election; and it was decided upon.

The passage of the Loire had, by this time, been completed; and the army pursued their march towards Rennes. It was proposed that M. de Lescure should avoid the pain and danger of moving, by accepting the offer of a place of concealment; but this he refused to do. He knew, he said, that his wound was mortal; but that, while he lived, he would never quit the army. No carriage could be found, and a sort of litter was formed for the wounded man. Over the arm-chair on which he was carried large wooden hoops were placed,

and sheets hung round, to protect him from the cold air ; but still his sufferings were so great, that at times he could not repress groans and even cries of agony.

The march of the poor Vendéans was a strange and mournful scene : a troop of soldiers moved in advance as a sort of guard, though, in their present state, they could have offered no resistance had an attack been made. Then came the vast multitude who had fled for safety ; the women hurried along carrying their children in their arms ; young men assisted the frail steps of the very old, and dragged them along ; while many a wounded soldier was carried in the arms of his companions. Yet, notwithstanding the deplorable position in which they appeared, so many of the people of Brittany joined them in arms, that their force was greatly strengthened ; and, for a brief space, success once more raised the hopes of the Vendéans.

Some days' rest had appeared to restore in a degree the health of M. de Lescure ; but in an engagement that took place in the town, he was not to be withheld from his open window, where he continued to give directions to his troops, and with a keen eye to overlook the whole battle. From this time he grew rapidly worse ; and on the morning that the army was again to set forward on its march, their brave and beloved leader was dying.

When the soldiers, after preparing everything that might give him comfort, told Madame de Lescure it was time to go, she entreated they might not disturb

the last moments of her husband. She would stay, she said, to perish with him ; but the idea that he might yet fall alive into the hands of the republicans, led her to consent ; and now, speechless and nearly insensible, M. de Lescure was placed in a carriage provided for his removal. In another hour he was beyond the reach of all suffering ; and Madame de Lescure was left alone in that wide scene of dreadful misery.

It was soon found that the poor peasants who had fought with so much devotion in their own provinces, had, when removed from them, lost half their energies. They called eagerly to be led back to La Vendée ; and at length refused to proceed. Entreaty and remonstrance were alike vain : they were not to be moved. To return was the only choice left to the officers of the army. They yielded to necessity ; and the enthusiasm of the troops returning, they declared that no force should stay their progress, or arrest their victorious march into their own country.

Some few skirmishes, in which the Vendéans were successful, was the only interruption they met with, till reaching the town of Dol ; when, towards night, the cry of "To arms ! the enemy are upon us !" was heard ; and the patrol, who had been sent out to reconnoitre, galloping into the street, gave notice that a large force was advancing upon the village.

Should that force be successful, the destruction of the whole of the Vendéans, as they were then situated, seemed certain ; and as they could see but little chance of victory, every precaution was taken that might offer

escape, at least, to the wounded, the women, and children. One officer, believing the day to be lost, rushed from the field ; and making his way through the crowd to the hospital where his younger brother lay wounded, he raised him in his arms, placed him on horseback behind one prepared for flight, and then returned to the field. Nearly an hour of dreadful suspense was passed, and then the cry of "Long live the king !" proclaimed the success of the Vendéans. The shout was re-echoed through the long street ; and the thousands who, a few minutes before, were prepared for flight, returned to their houses with a feeling of safety for at least one night more.

The enemy had met with a repulse ; but the sound of the cannon continuing, told that the battle had not yet ceased ; and at an early hour on the following day, a messenger, hurrying into the village, proclaimed the defeat of the royalists. Fearful was the scene of terror and confusion that followed. The soldiers were panic-struck ; and, refusing to obey the orders given, fled with the women and children. In vain the leaders assured them that the rumour had been false ; that the day was in their favour ; that they had only to return to complete the conquest already more than half their own : terror had taken entire possession of their minds, and they were no longer masters of themselves.

Madame de Lescure had, in the hope of securing her safety, been placed on horseback ; but the crowd was such that she had no power to advance. At one

time she was surrounded by a body of terrified peasants whom a boy of sixteen was attempting to recall to their duty. Menace and entreaty were equally vain ; and turning suddenly to Madame de Lescure, whom he did not recognise in the disguise of a peasant's dress, he exclaimed : " Let the women show an example ; let them prevent the men from flying." The entreaty of the young officer was not without avail. One lady, putting herself at the head of the regiment that, till his death, had always been commanded by her husband, succeeded in rallying it. Others called aloud, " Your brave general is in the midst of the enemy ; he still fights for you and for your children : will you abandon your general ? " " No, no ! " exclaimed many ; and with shouts of " Long live the king, and M. de Larochejaquelein ! " they returned to the fight.

For six long hours the unhappy Vendéans remained in dreadful suspense : from time to time messengers brought tidings that the royalists were still successful. At length the hard-fought victory was complete ; the republicans fled ; and with prayers and thanksgivings for their safety, the crowd returned to the village.

The miserable march of that devoted band was then continued ; death and misery surrounded them on every side. The march of the republican army had preceded theirs ; and the massacre of the defenceless women and children they had found in the villages, seemed to foretell the fate awaiting all those who had dared to rise in the defence of their religion and their king.

The republican army, after their defeat at Dol, had retired upon Angers. They were known to be in great force ; but the poor peasants, who had no other means of reaching La Vendée, did not hesitate ; till finding that the town was strongly fortified, and that they could not, as usual, fight hand to hand, their courage forsook them.

M. de Larochejaquelein commenced the attack with his artillery ; but except by it and by the officers of the army, he was unassisted. For thirty hours he continued in unceasing fight. A small breach was made, and he, with four officers, threw themselves upon it. None ventured to follow ; and they were left exposed to the fire of the enemy. Two of these brave men were killed, the others forced to retire. The siege of Angers was raised ; and this failure of the unhappy Vendéans crushing, almost entirely, their last hope of reaching the Loire, they seemed to resign themselves to their fate, and to have no longer spirit for resistance. Some movement was, however, necessary to avoid immediate massacre, and they marched to Mans ; but here the pursuit of their terrible enemy followed quickly. No exertion was wanting on the part of their brave young general ; but all was in vain : flight was the only resource ; and, amid shrieks and groans of agony, they attempted their escape.

Madame de Lescure had, through all these scenes of danger, been still accompanied by her little girl ; but now, believing her own fate to be decided, and anxious only for the life of her child, she entreated the lady of

the house in which she was, to take charge of it. The request of the unhappy mother was refused; and, hearing the increasing cries and shouts from without, scarcely conscious of what she did, and trusting that the helplessness of the child would secure its safety, she concealed it in the room, and rushed from the house.

She hoped thus to have rescued her child from the fate that seemed too certainly to await herself; but an old and faithful servant of M. de Lescure, not seeing the little girl with her mother, and believing she had been forgotten, had hurried back to the house, and returning with the poor baby raised triumphantly in his arms, he exclaimed, "I have saved my master's child!"

The flight of the unhappy royalists was continued during the whole of that fearful night, when no fewer than fifteen hundred perished by the way. Some were murdered by the enemy, others trampled under foot, and many, giving up in despair, had laid themselves down by the roadside to die. Miserable, most miserable, was the wreck that returned to the banks of the Loire; yet they looked forward to reaching their desolate home as if it had still been the little haven of peace they had once known; for their hearts were crushed, and they had but one hope left—it was to die in La Vendée.

M. de Larochejaquelein knowing that no means of passage would be found on the river, had provided two small boats. There was great risk that those who

should pass over the first, might, in that defenceless state, be attacked ; for the soldiers of the republic were scattered over the whole country ; so that, notwithstanding their desire to reach the other side, all were unwilling to make the attempt, till M. de Larochejaquelein, springing into the boat, called on some of his own soldiers, and one or two officers to follow.

On the safe return of these little boats hung the last hope of the unfortunate Vendéans. They watched their progress, therefore, with inexpressible anxiety ; and scarcely had they reached the opposite bank, when the loud shouts of the republican soldiers warned them of their danger.

Resistance was in vain ; even the brave Henri had no recourse but flight : the whole party disappeared suddenly from the eyes of their late companions, and thus closed for ever the hope of the unhappy band.

Without arms or provisions, and now separated from their leader, they could only in different divisions wander through the country in search of safety. Some sought it in disguise and concealment, and some even now preserved the hope of offering resistance to the enemy.

M. de Larochejaquelein had, in the meantime, by his knowledge of the country, avoided the pursuit of the republican soldiers ; and no sooner did the tidings of his return spread through La Vendée, than a small but brave band hurried to join him. Few, very few, who had remained behind had escaped the vengeance of the republic ; but they were eager to strike at least one blow in revenge for the sufferings of their people.

In various sallies they had been successful,—they had even succeeded in banishing the soldiers of the republic from many parts of the country ; but the unfortunate though brilliant career of their young general was near its close. Two soldiers of the enemy, who had lost their way, found themselves within a few yards of a party of the Vendéans. They would have fallen upon them and destroyed them ; but M. de Larochejaquelein, reminding them that such conduct was cowardly where the parties were so unequal, called to the men, “Yield your arms, and we will not harm you.” They allowed him to advance alone within a few yards of where they stood ; and then one raising his gun and firing deliberately at him, he fell dead.

The life of the republican soldiers paid immediately the forfeit of their baseness ; but this could not console the faithful Vendéans for the loss of their leader, or restore to La Vendée the heart most devoted to its defence.

Henri de Larochejaquelein was but twenty-two years old at the time of his death. He had been long the idol of the army ; and many, long after La Vendée was once more restored to quiet, recalled with pride the time when they served under M. Henri.

I think my dear little boy will like to know the fate of poor Madame de Lescure. Soon after the last fatal blow that had crushed for ever the hope of recrossing the Loire, the cry, that the enemy were upon them, roused the helpless, hopeless band to make one effort more for their safety. For that day they escaped the

danger ; but the certainty of an engagement on the morrow, left no hope but for the total destruction of the army. Madame de Lescure, worn out and exhausted, had thrown herself upon a bed ; but had scarcely fallen into a deep sleep, when she was roused by a friend of her husband. " It is all over," he said ; " we are lost ; the attack of to-morrow cannot be resisted—in twelve hours the army will be exterminated. I hope to die. Try to escape ; save yourself during the night." She prepared to obey him, but had so little strength that she could scarcely move. A young officer, who early in the war had been wounded, and whom she had watched over, attempted to carry her ; but he was so weak from hunger and long-suffering, that he was obliged to give up the attempt. She was then placed upon horseback ; and, accompanied by her mother, she set out in the middle of the night, to go she knew not where.

After wandering for some time they came to a little cottage, and stopping at the door, begged for shelter. It was well-known that those who harboured the Vendéans were fearfully visited by the vengeance of the republican soldiers ; they hesitated, therefore, to agree. Their cottage they said, was so near the high-road that it would certainly be searched ; but they offered (and the offer was gladly accepted) to lead them to a place of safety.

A peasant girl undertook the office of guide ; and leading them to another cottage door, she said, hastily, " Here are some *brigandes* who have escaped ; will you conceal them ?" The poor inmates, a farmer and his

wife, ran to the door : " We will give them everything we possess," they said ; and, leading them in, they used every effort to comfort and console them.

Next day it was known that the last effort of the Vendéan army had been repulsed, and the whole country was overrun by the victorious republicans ; so that the situation of those who had been fortunate enough to find a place of concealment became every hour more hazardous.

Madame de Lescure and her mother were already disguised as peasants ; but it was thought safer that they should separate ; and weak and disabled as they were, it was necessary, to prevent suspicion, that they should be constantly employed in some of the works of the country. Madame de Lescure, it was decided, should keep sheep. " I will die rather than abandon her," said the young peasant girl into whose charge her mother had given her : and it was true ; for the misfortunes of the poor Vendéans had created such an interest in the hearts of the peasants of Brittany, that there was not among them one who would not have died in their defence, rather than have betrayed them to their enemies.

There was scarcely a cottage that had not given shelter, and food, and clothing, to some unfortunate Vendéan ; yet not only did this brave and charitable people look for no reward, but they were well aware of the risk they ran. Every day the republican soldiers renewed their search, and new orders were published, that on pain of death none should conceal a Vendéan.

They were still unmoved ; and the more strict the search became, the more they struggled to secure places of safety and concealment.

One little deaf and dumb girl in particular devoted herself to their service ; and, like a little spirit of mercy, flew here and there, giving warning whenever danger was near. Many months the hapless Vendéans spent in this state of cruel suspense and danger ; and many times Madame de Lescure and her mother were forced to secure their safety by passing whole nights in the open air.

At length it was known that the republican party, weary of pursuing a fallen and defenceless foe, had promised safety and free passports to the unhappy Vendéans ; so that many returned to their own country ; while Madame de Lescure and others, preferred retiring to different parts of France ; and thus saved themselves from the pain of seeing the changed and desolate aspect of their once happy home.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LIFE OF WELLINGTON.

At length, my dearest little boy, I have come to the life which, ever since I began this volume, I have wished to write. You will perhaps ask, Why, then, has it been so long delayed? I shall tell you. It was from the same feeling that used to make us, when children, keep the best story to be told at the end of our list, the merriest game to be played when even our spirits had begun to flag, or the largest sugar-plum for what we used to call the *bonne-bouche*. I have kept the Life of the Great Duke of Wellington till the last, because, much as I delight in tracing out the lives of bygone heroes, I thought their feats of valour, their noble actions, even their exalted sentiments, might seem tame after dwelling upon those of a hero of our own day.

How gladly I should make this life for my little boy but half as interesting as all the volumes I have been reading lately have appeared to me,—large volumes that almost frightened me before I began, and yet seemed too short when coming near the end. I wonder if you will feel in this way when finishing the last line

of the Life of Wellington. To say true, unless I have grown very stupid, I think you must ; so I shall make haste and begin : then my last chapter will soon be written, you will soon have your book, and I shall soon know if it meets the approbation of the tiny being, whose dimpled hands and earnest eyes, though three hundred miles distant, seem still, as of old, raised in eager entreaty for "one story more."

The Duke of Wellington, who at this early period of his life, we must call by the name he then bore, Arthur Wellesley, was eighteen when he entered the army ; six years after he was Lieutenant-colonel in the 33rd Foot.

You have already read the Life of Napoleon, and know that your present hero was, for many years, the great adversary, the rival, and finally, the conqueror of that wonderful man.

At the time I write of, France had already, for three years, been suffering under the miseries of a misguided government. The murder of the French king, the increase of that republican feeling which had caused the evil, and the extraordinary success of their arms in other countries, roused England to a sense of her danger. She felt that her very existence depended on the overthrow of that power which was desolating the whole of Europe ; and, allying herself with those countries already suffering under the yoke of the conquering French, she prepared for their mutual defence.

Various regiments, among others that of Lieutenant-

colonel Wellesley, were ordered for active service on the Continent ; but this campaign, under the direction of the Duke of York, "is a history of disasters, a record of brave exertions struggling with ill fortune."

The success of the republicans was everywhere complete : step by step, the British and their allies were forced to retreat ; and Colonel Wellesley, on his return to England, had, in his first campaign, seen little to foretell his after-career of glory.

It was not over Europe alone that the influence of the French extended, they encouraged the native princes of India to revolt, and promised their assistance to cast off the yoke which, since the conquest of our British soldiers in that country, they had unwillingly borne.

To quell these disturbances, and secure their possessions in the East, the English government despatched forces from England ; and Colonel Wellesley, in the year 1796, being again called upon for foreign service, embarked with the 33rd regiment for India.

His eldest brother, the Earl of Mornington, was the Governor-general of that country ; the interests of the British were in able hands ; and never did a campaign open with more promise of success than did this one. The European regiments were in high health and spirits, and eager to prove, by their enthusiasm in the cause, their devotion to their king and country ; while the sepoys, or native troops, equalling ours in gallantry, sometimes surpassed them in patient suffering, fidelity, and obedience to their officers.

The movements of the army were first directed towards Mysore ; for the king of that country, Tippoo Sultaun, was the most inveterate and most powerful of their foes. He is described as a monster of cruelty ; he was cunning, revengeful, and treacherous ; a brand of misery to the country over which he ruled. Affection for his children, and great courage, are the only good points mentioned in his character. The latter quality could not save him from destruction, his army was routed : and he fled for protection to Seringapatam, the capital of his country.

The great strength of that fortress led him to believe that it must bid defiance to the enemy ; but the siege, under the direction of General Baird, was laid and carried ; and at the close of the fight, Tippoo's body, stripped of the jewelled turban and costly trappings he had taken such pride in adjusting, lay among a bloody heap of his followers.

Colonel Wellesley was appointed Commandant of Seringapatam, and the throne of the conquered country was restored to the rightful prince : for Tippoo had been a usurper as well as a tyrant. There was yet much to be done in India. Various states were sometimes at variance with each other, and sometimes leagued for the destruction of the English. Differences must be settled by the sword ; and Colonel Wellesley, now, in 1802, Major-General Wellesley, prepared, with many of our brave countrymen, for a campaign in the Mahratta country. An explanation of their rising was demanded of the Eastern princes, and proposals of peace

made ; but finding that, by various excuses, they only sought to gain time for further preparation, the English commander marched at once against the ancient city of Ahmednuggur.

Instead of a true and faithful account of this assault, for which I have not space, I shall quote the words of a Mahratta chief, who writing from the English camp, says, "These English are a strange people, and their general a wonderful man. They came here in the morning, looked at the wall, walked over it, killed all the garrison, and returned to breakfast : who can withstand them ?"

On hearing that Ahmednuggur had fallen, two of the allied chiefs, Scindiah, and the Rajah of Berar, prepared their immense armies for immediate action ; and General Wellesley, on advancing to meet them, found, that while his whole force scarcely exceeded eight thousand men, the enemy brought, of horse alone thirty thousand to the field. This was the glorious battle of Assaye. The front of the enemy was an almost unbroken line of cannon. "The fire was rapid, furious, and terrible in execution ; the British guns, few in number, opened as the line advanced, but were almost on the instant silenced. With the fierceness of the struggle, and the fearfulness of the hazard, the undaunted spirit of the general rose. He at once abandoned the guns, and directed an advance with the bayonet." * One regiment, the 74th, while with reckless bravery rushing along an open space, were by the

* Sherer.

cannon of the enemy, literally swept from the field. A few still remained ; but they had been thrown into disorder ; when a party of Mahratta horsemen, stealing round unnoticed, charged furiously into ranks already half destroyed. That moment must save or lose everything. "The Mussulman sabres were crossing the bayonets of the 74th ; and ' feeble and few, but fearless still,' that regiment was gallantly resisting. Colonel Maxwell, who had watched the progress of the fight, saw that the moment for action had arrived. The word was given : the British cavalry charged home : down went the Mahrattas in hundreds, beneath the fiery attack of the brave 19th, and their gallant supporters the sepoy ; while, unchecked by a tremendous storm of grape and musketry, Maxwell pressed his advantage, and cut through Scindiah's left." * The 74th and the light infantry rallied, re-formed, pushed boldly on ; and, completing the disorder of the enemy, prevented any attempt to renew the fight.

This well-directed charge had, in a few minutes, decided the fate of the battle ; but the brave sepoy had nearly ruined half the glory of that day, for, excited by victory, they rushed forward ; while a party of Mahratta horse, unobserved by them, were stationed on a hill, and ready to throw themselves on their disordered ranks. General Wellesley, who had foreseen and guarded against the danger, had held the 78th Highlanders, with a body of native horse, in reserve, and now led them to battle. Theirs was a brief, glorious, but bloody attack.

* Maxwell's Life of Wellington.

Our brave Highlanders fell in numbers round their leader ; but they fell shouting the word "victory !"

The rout of the enemy was complete. "Under more desperate circumstances a battle was never fought ; and, opposed by overwhelming masses, a victory was never more completely won."

Other engagements followed the battle of Assaye ; and in all the British were equally successful. At length, weary of a perpetual war in which there was little plunder and no glory, the allied chiefs agreed to the treaty proposed by the English ; and thus closed the campaign of General Wellesley. The power of the Mahratta country was overthrown, and a glorious peace was secured for India.

Lauded, revered, and admired by all who had served under him, the English general turned to pursue his career of glory nearer home. But I must not let my little boy leave India till I have taught him to do justice to those natives who, attaching themselves to our government, serve it with a devotion of which I fear they are too often ignorantly believed incapable. Many instances I could mention ; but I will content myself with one or two, given on the authority of others, and copy some passages from a book now before me. "Commanded entirely by British officers," says the writer, in talking of the battle of Assaye, "the Indian army was scarcely second to any. In the field, the sepoy[•] soldier equalled the European in gallantry and discipline ; and in the camp, far exceeded him in sobriety and good conduct. In danger he was calm

and resolved ; his fidelity was unbounded ; his loyalty not to be shaken. Want and suffering could never induce him to desert his officers ; and death alone detached him from those colours which, in victory or defeat, he looked upon with a devotion that was almost idolatry. Mild as a woman at home, in the field he had the courage of a hero."

Another writer, in talking of an Indian siege, where the want of provisions had almost obliged the English to surrender, says, "The Hindoo soldiers entreated their commander to allow them to boil their rice (the only food left). 'Your English soldiers,' said they, 'can eat from our hands, though we cannot from theirs ; we will allow them, for their share, every grain of the rice ; we can live upon the water in which it has been boiled.'"

During the first campaign in India, the army, under the command of General Wellesley, had also many proofs of the fidelity of the brave sepoys. The troops had suffered hardships to a great extent ; and Tippoo Suldaun, hoping to profit by their sufferings, tried to induce the Hindoo soldiers to desert their leaders ; but in vain : for not only did they remain true to their colours, but, during the night, they would swim the tanks and rivers that separated them from their officers, and carry with them all they could save of their little pittance. "The poor Indian," they said, "can live on anything ; but you have been accustomed to beef and mutton."

We must, however, leave our poor Hindoo friends,

and return to our hero. Little enough space is left for all I have to tell you, and you to hear.

What we have yet seen was but the opening promise of his after-life—his campaign in India but one gleam of glory when compared to that of the Peninsula. You know enough of geography, I suppose, by this time, dear Rawdon, to give the usual answer to, What is a peninsula? A tract of land almost surrounded by water.

The Peninsular war, of which the Duke of Wellington was the hero, was the war he carried on for so many years, in Spain, Portugal, and France, and of which I am now going to tell you.

I wish I could copy out for my little boy a sentence I have read again and again; but I fear there are too many words that he would stumble over. Shall I try and make them easier? I think I must. I may give the sense, though not exactly the words of the writer; so here it is.

The brilliancy of his course is well known. It was an unbroken line of triumph, from the victory of Vimiera to that of Toulouse. He drove the French army from the peninsula; he planted the British colours in the heart of France; he defeated warriors long accustomed to conquer in every country in Europe; he hurled Napoleon from his throne; and the field of Waterloo overthrew, in one day, the power that had been raised upon twenty years of victory.

But these results, great as they are, can give no idea either of the difficulties with which Wellington had to

contend, or of the merit due to his unequalled exertions. Ready when occasion required, or opportunity offered, he was yet cautious and wary in his general conduct. Careless of his own labour, indifferent to his own danger, he watched over the comfort and safety of his soldiers. Careful in forming every plan, he was prompt and decided in acting upon it. No general ever considered the probable dangers of an enterprise more anxiously before undertaking it; none possessed in a higher degree the eagle eye, the arm of power, necessary for carrying it into execution.

Before General Wellesley's return from India, the English government had resolved upon sending troops to the continent, for the assistance of those countries who were willing to resist the encroachments of the French; but it was not for three years after this time that General, now Sir Arthur Wellesley, was appointed to the command of a large force, ordered for service in the peninsula, in the spring of 1808.

Napoleon was, at this time, at the height of his career; the march of his troops was a march of continued victory, and Europe trembled at his name. Italy, Switzerland, Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Germany, were all under his yoke; some yielding to the force of his arms, others duped into submission by the false promises he made of protection.

Spain and her nobles, who had tamely yielded to a stranger being placed upon her throne, saw Joseph Buonaparte proclaimed king. But even there bursts of patriotism were occasionally known; many of the pro-

vinces hurried to arms ; and " War to the knife ! " " Death to the French ! " was the general cry of the peasantry.

Portugal had, from the first, looked upon the French with hatred and suspicion : nor was the treatment they met with likely to reconcile them. Acts of injustice and oppression drove them almost to madness ; and they resolved to free their country, or die in the field.

Such, then, was the state of the sister countries, Spain and Portugal, when they despatched commissioners to entreat assistance from England. They did not ask in vain ; all were eager to assist a distressed people. Large subscriptions were made ; and muskets, cannon-ball, and powder, with other stores, were sent over for their use. Every assistance they could require, or England give, was eagerly afforded ; and Sir Arthur Wellesley had, within a few days, set sail for the Peninsular.

The tidings of the British army landing in Portugal was unwelcome news to the French commander ; for he was already greatly troubled by what he called the rebellion of the conquered countries. He prepared, however, for a fearless resistance ; and, accustomed as they were to see every effort crowned with success, they felt no doubt of speedily re-establishing their power. They were mistaken : the campaign of General Wellesley opened as it closed, in victory.

To describe every engagement as they followed quickly on each other—to tell but one half the diffi-

culties the English general had to combat, would, my dear little boy, be impossible. I must pass over much ; skip over whole pages of interest, whole months of the vigorous struggle, of the noble endurance of our brave soldiers ; I must content myself with slight sketches of great things.

The first time the English troops were led against the well-tried warriors of France, was at the small but brilliant action of Rolica ; that of Vimiera quickly followed. In each our arms were successful ; and the French, after a brave and resolute resistance, were forced to retreat.

General Wellesley had left England, sole commander of the force in the Peninsula ; but unfortunately, soon after landing in Portugal, two officers of higher standing were placed over him.

Neither proved themselves fitted for the important station they held ; for neither were possessed of the vigour, promptness, and decision necessary to complete the great work so nobly begun.

Instead of pursuing the advantages gained by General Wellesley, and closely following the victory of Vimiera by an attack on Lisbon, the British army received orders to halt.

The remonstrance of General Wellesley was of no avail ; and the French, mortified by their defeat, and too short of ammunition to continue the fight with any hope of success, sent to the British camp demanding a truce. It was agreed to with some conditions ; one of which was, that the French troops should immediately

quit Portugal, yielding all places and forts then in their possession into the hands of the British.

On the eleventh and twelfth of September, the whole of the French army quitted Portugal. Lisbon was occupied by the British troops, and the country was declared free from her enemies. The joy of the Portuguese was excessive; the city was illuminated; the bells rang merrily; and, for many days and nights, no sound was heard but that of rejoicing. They once more felt themselves a free people; they were once more safe from the tyranny of the oppressors.

On the French army withdrawing from Portugal, as the English troops were not likely to be in immediate service, Sir Arthur Wellesley demanded permission to return to England. He was dissatisfied with the narrow views taken by his superiors in command. His eager glance discovered errors he had not the power to rectify; his situation was a very painful one, and he resolved to withdraw.

The success of the French in Spain continued, in the meantime, unabated. Commanded by Napoleon himself, nothing could withstand their arms. Madrid was in their power, and garrisoned by their troops. Saragossa's noble defence had been made in vain: inch by inch its walls were fought for and obtained by the resolute French; inch by inch they were defended by the brave inhabitants, who, by the death of thousands, purchased one day more of freedom. At the end of a fifty-two days' siege the French made good their entrance, and then were welcomed by a scene of horror,

and misery, and death, never perhaps equalled. Time had not been allowed for the burial of the dead, and fearful heaps of bloody corpses were scattered through every street.

Napoleon reaped victory after victory, and carried desolation wherever he moved. Portugal was again invaded, and destruction once more hung equally over both countries. English troops had still remained both in Spain and Portugal ; but not being under the command of General Wellesley, we pass over one year. At the end of that time, England, resolving on a further effort for the rescue of the ill-fated countries, Sir Arthur Wellesley again set sail for the Continent ; not now, as formerly, compelled to yield his judgment to others, but invested with the chief command in Portugal.

The joy with which the English forces hailed the return of their favourite leader, was only to be equalled by that of the Portuguese ; for to them victory and the name of Sir Arthur Wellesley appeared one. The whole army, Portuguese as well as British, was placed at his disposal ; and we shall now follow him and his brave band through their long years of noble suffering and of glorious victory.

Soult, Loison, and Victor, three of the French generals, were, with their different armies, stationed at a considerable distance from each other. Against Soult, then in possession of Oporto, the first efforts of the English general were to be made ; he marched his army in that direction ; but the river Douro, deep, rapid, and three hundred yards across, rolled its dark waters

between him and the enemy. It was a formidable barrier : no means had been provided for passing the river ; and on passing it more than success depended ; for, did they not succeed in routing the French army, they, in their turn, would attack, and, by overpowering numbers, necessarily destroy a party of English stationed on the other side of the town.

General Wellesley felt the necessity, and decided on crossing the Douro ; an attempt as hazardous as ever a brave leader was compelled to undertake.

The French, who were confident that the Douro was a barrier of sufficient force to secure their safety on that side, had turned their whole attention to the ocean ; not doubting that the approach of a fleet would give full warning of the advance of the enemy. This was so far fortunate for the design of the English general ; since Soult, stationed on a height commanding the sea, remained ignorant of the real movements of the British.

I must tell you how the means of passage was obtained ; for it was by the aid of a most unworklike assistant, that the great Wellington conquered an almost insurmountable difficulty. A barber, who had escaped the vigilance of the French, and come over on a secret visit to the prior of the convent, had moored a little skiff on the banks of the river. It was discovered by a Portuguese officer. With little entreaty he prevailed on its master to accompany him on a hazardous expedition. They crossed the river together ; and, while the French believed their barges secure on their own

side, they were borne off in triumph within gun-shot of their sentinels.

This successful adventure was no sooner made known than preparations were vigorously commenced. The men embarked, and cannon was placed in the convent garden to protect their passage, should the enemy unfortunately discover the daring attempt before it was completed.

Two boats had passed, and no alarm seemed yet given in the city ; the third, when scarcely more than half way, was discovered by the enemy ; and then the scene that followed you must try and imagine, my dear little boy, for it cannot be described. The French beat to arms ; but the drums, almost the roar of the cannon, was drowned by the shouts and cries of the people, when first they discovered the noble efforts of their brave deliverers. The cannon placed by the English thundered from the convent garden ; and the inhabitants, rushing to the boats, cutting the fastenings, and pushing them across, brought over numbers of our troops.

The small body of men that had crossed before the discovery of the attempt had been made, stood to arms ; the French poured out of the city in vast numbers, hoping to crush them by superior force ; but the fire kept up on the other side, so rapid, so fatal at every volley, prevented their advance. They abandoned the attack, and thrown into confusion, commenced a disorderly retreat. The city was evacuated ; and so complete, so sudden, had been the victory, that " Wel-

lington, at four o'clock, quietly sat down to the dinner and table-service which had been prepared for Marshal Soult."

The astonishment of the French at their sudden and unexpected disaster is not to be described. They had believed themselves safe from surprise, and more than equal to bid defiance to the English general. They found themselves defeated, obliged to abandon the town, and flying for safety. Their whole force had been completely routed. But theirs was a veteran army ; and even in the moment of defeat, proudly conscious of their own powers, they rallied their broken battalions, re-formed their lessened numbers, and made a masterly retreat. Their intention had been to fall back leisurely on Amarante, and joined the forces stationed there under the command of General Loison. Intelligence, however, reached the French Marshal that struck consternation into the hearts of his soldiers, and obliged him to alter his route. Loison had been attacked by a body of English, was defeated, and ignorant of the fall of Oporto, was hastening thither for safety.

Soult's position was thus rendered one of extreme danger. Already the British army had appeared in sight, and the roar of their artillery was heard at no great distance. Not a moment was to be lost ; and the French general, ordering the immediate destruction of his artillery, ammunition, and baggage, led his thus unencumbered army into Spain ; across mountains, and through passes that appeared almost impracticable.

So well and wisely had every plan been formed by

the English general, so rapidly had they been put into execution, and so successfully accomplished, that in twenty-eight days, he had not only provided a defence against one army, but had, after a march of two hundred miles, forced another, without artillery or baggage, to cross the frontier of Portugal.

Such was the brief and brilliant campaign upon the Douro—such the first noble achievements of our warlike countrymen. They were now to pursue their conquests in Spain : but here they did not meet even with the assistance and support given by the Portuguese. Eager to free themselves from the tyranny of the French, and conscious of their own inability to banish them their country, they were yet churlish, selfish, and dogged, when coming in contact with, or called on to lend assistance to their gallant deliverers. The Spanish army, in number and appearance, promised well ; but ill disciplined, and under the command of men ignorant and headstrong, they not unfrequently defeated, where they should ably have supported the projects of the English general.

On one occasion, when the English and Spanish leaders had agreed on attacking Talavera, then garrisoned by French troops under the command of Victor, Sir Arthur Wellesley rode on the preceding night to the Spanish camp. Some arrangements for the action of the next day had yet to be made ; but General Cuesta had retired to bed, and his aide-de-camp refused to awake him. The engagement, it had been decided, was to commence at a very early hour : the English

troops were, consequently under arms at three in the morning ; but they looked in vain for their Spanish supporters. At seven o'clock General Cuesta's staff were still asleep ; and when, at length, the old man was roused sufficiently to be informed that the British army had been for four hours in the field, he gave them to understand, that having changed his mind, he must decline fighting for that day.

Shortly after this, it was reported that Victor was retreating ; the brave Spaniard then became willing to fight ; but proposed that, in the first instance, he and Sir Arthur Wellesley should examine the position held by the French general. This was agreed upon. The ground was rugged and unequal ; but, to the surprise of the English commander, General Cuesta set out for this examination in a coach drawn by eight horses. Sometimes he was forced to leave his carriage ; and on these occasions, throwing himself under the shade of a tree, in a few minutes he was fast asleep. Such was the able assistant on whom Sir Arthur Wellesley had to depend. Without the aid of the Spanish he could not make the proposed attack ; thus the opportunity was suffered to escape, and Victor withdrew his troops uninjured.

Meanwhile the forces of Soult, and of Joseph Buonaparte, whom you may recollect his brother had made King of Spain, were hourly increasing ; they were hurrying on to an engagement, and Talavera was still to be the scene of action.

Every arrangement a keen foresight could suggest

had been made. The British line, when drawn out in order for the day, was about two miles in length. The numbers scarcely exceeded nineteen thousand ; while that with which Joseph was hastening to the attack was fifty thousand. At three o'clock the battle commenced. Never, in his most brilliant and important victories, had Sir Arthur Wellesley a more hard-fought field than that of Talavera ; never was he more perseveringly assailed, more vigorously pressed. The first onset of the French was victorious ; at one time the battle seemed already theirs. Victor had gained some advantage, and was following it up by a rapid and eager advance, while a body of cavalry were directed to attack the Spanish line. For a few minutes they returned the fire of the French ; but then, seized with panic, they turned and fled. Sir Arthur Wellesley saw the danger in which the cowardice of the faint-hearted troops had placed him ; and bringing up an English squadron, he forced the enemy to retire. The success of their first attack, and the confusion into which the Spaniards had been thrown, emboldened Victor to make a sudden assault, which, if successful, would secure the victory. Furious was the attack, and gallant the defence ; but, greatly inferior in number, our troops were giving way, when General Hill, with the 48th regiment, hastened to their assistance. Night was already falling ; and, unfortunately, in the indistinct light, mistaking the French for British troops, he pushed hastily into the ranks of the enemy. His brigade-major was shot dead, and his own horse seized

by a grenadier ; the general, however, shook him off, galloped down the hill, placed himself at the head of the 29th, led them up the height, and gallantly restored the battle. Much had been fought, and little gained on either side ; brave men had fallen, but not an inch of ground had been yielded ; and now, tired of slaughter, the contending parties agreed to take some hours of rest, and to renew the fight on the following morning.

Boldly was that fight commenced. The French, assured by their success of yesterday, advanced upon the British centre, resolved to sweep everything before them. They were met with loud shouts ; the English broke in upon their front, surrounded them with fire, gave them no respite, and at length forced them back with a fearful loss. An attack made on the left wing of our army appeared for a time, more successful ; but Sir Arthur Wellesley, seeing the danger, despatched immediate assistance. Horse and infantry were ordered up, and a close and well-directed volley arrested the progress of the victorious French ; while the disordered regiment to which aid had been sent, with the utmost coolness, retreating but a few yards, rallied, reformed, and again rushed to the conflict. An huzza, loud and long, rose from their ranks ; it was taken up, and answered and repeated by every regiment along the British line ; and that thrilling cheer told the enemy, that English soldiers were not to be vanquished : they turned, fell back, and the victory was ours. Not another shot was fired on either side.

To both armies it had been a bloody day ; the loss

on the English side was immense. During the two days the battle had continued, the list of killed, and wounded, and missing, amounted to the fearful number of five thousand four hundred and twenty-three. That of the French was still heavier. The day had been oppressively hot, but the night set in cold and damp ; and when our brave soldiers, literally starving, prepared to find their night's rest on the open field, with little food and no shelter, their most ignoble allies were still fresh and unbroken from their day of idleness.

The British troops gave their lives to protect the country of the Spaniards from tyranny ; but they met no kindness of feeling, no gratitude, in return. The sick and the wounded were left to perish on the streets ; and even those whom their own interest might have led them to support, since on them alone depended their safety, were refused the necessary food that the faithless Spaniard had promised to supply.

The conduct of the French after the battle of Talavera, when contrasted with that of the Spaniards, may prove to my little boy how closely bravery is united with every generous and honourable feeling. Cuesta, with his useless band of soldiers, had been left at Talavera for the protection of the sick and wounded. But no sooner had Sir Arthur Wellesley quitted the walls, than this headstrong, misjudging, heartless, old man, deserting those he had promised to defend, drew off his troops. The place was undefended ; and when Victor, undisputed, rode into the town, every street and alley was strewed with dead bodies ; while many a

brave soldier, perishing for want of assistance, had crawled out from his miserable shed, in the vain hope that some kind hand might ease his sufferings with a drop of water. Their gallant enemy, with whom, a few days before, they had been fighting hand to hand, was the first to assist them ; horrified by the sight of their sufferings, Victor told some of the English soldiers, "Bravely as your nation fights, honourably as she keeps all the laws and courtesies of war, she has yet to learn how to deal with a Spaniard." He desired the wounded to be raised from the streets, sought for in the miserable sheds where they had crawled for shelter ; and, dispersing his soldiers through the town, he commanded the inhabitants to receive one Englishman and one Frenchman into each of their houses ; and, on peril of their lives and properties, to treat them with equal kindness.

Such generous sympathy on the part of an enemy was not likely to place in a more favourable light the desertion of those who had called themselves their friends ; and Sir Arthur Wellesley declared his intention of leaving Spain to her fate, unless Cuesta was removed from his command, and the English provided with sufficient nourishment. The first was agreed to ; and many promises regarding the latter were made ; but made, as in the first instance, to be broken.

Scarcity of provision was not the only difficulty Sir Arthur Wellesley had to contend with. Greatly as his ranks had been thinned by war, he had still looked with dependence on the courage and exertions of his

remaining few ; but now, by sickness and fatigue, they were miserably reduced. Only a few weeks ago, they were capable of exertions such as had never been surpassed by any army ; and now, their strength scarcely served for an ordinary march. Every day numbers were added to the list of sick ; and while their general saw his own band thus hourly decreasing, he knew that a vigorous, almost countless, enemy was gathering round him. To return into Portugal, and there, in comfortable cantonments, to wait the recovery of his troops, was the only thing left to be done. The order was given, and the enfeebled army marched slowly into Portugal.

It was, I think, about this time that Sir Arthur Wellesley, receiving the thanks of his country for his unparalleled exertions, was raised to the peerage of England ; his titles being, Baron Douro of Wellesley, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera.

The affairs of Spain now appeared almost hopeless ; while the success of Napoleon in every part of the world seemed at its height. Russia, Prussia, and Austria, were humbled before him. In the Peninsula alone, he still met with resistance, and there it was daily becoming more feeble. Sickness increased among the British ; and even their hardy general was, for two days, subdued by the same malady that had swept off thousands of his men. To all it appeared inevitable that Portugal must be abandoned ; that the worn-out and disheartened troops must yield to a power no longer to be resisted ; and decline further contest with the

French nation, crowned as it was with eighteen years of victory. By one alone the subject was viewed differently. Wellington, so far from proposing to quit Portugal, made every preparation for defending that country to the last. He knew his force in its present state was not equal to the attempt; but since the removal of his troops to Mondego, they had been rapidly regaining health. He expected reinforcements from England; and "If I can bring thirty thousand British troops into the field," he said, "I will fight a good battle for the possession of Portugal, and see whether that country cannot be saved from the general wreck."

To have returned to Spain, at this time, would have been giving his army to destruction. Nearly the whole of that country had yielded to the French; Cadiz, and some other strongholds, alone offering a resolute resistance. What appears so strange in the history of Spain, at that period, is, that while her army disgraced her name by constant breach of faith and cowardice, different cities maintained a defence, that for bravery and endurance has never, will never, probably, be surpassed. It would take more room than I can give, my dear little Rawdon, to tell of the memorable sieges of Saragossa and Gerona. Whole pages would not picture half the suffering, half the brave resistance, of their noble defenders. The recollections of these alone, must secure for their country a glorious name, that no cowardice, no unmanly bearing in the rest of her people, can ever deprive her of. Another day I shall give more time to a story of Gerona, that will, I am sure, interest

you ; but now I must pass on, and return to Wellington.

The forces of Napoleon were gathering fast. Conquest in other countries enabled him to withdraw troops to whom no further resistance was offered ; and collecting in one immense body, they crossed the Pyrenees, and pursued their conquests in Spain. Many towns that had talked loudly of resistance, yielded their walls without a blow struck in their defence. Jaen opened her gates on the first appearance of the French ; Granada submitted with equal tameness ; Cordova, while seven thousand troops were collected for her defence, was entered without an effort at resistance ; and Seville saw Joseph Buonaparte, the king imposed on them by Napoleon, enter their city without a struggle to retain their freedom.

One conquest alone remained to complete the subjection of Spain : Cadiz, though unprovided with means of resistance, still held out—the last, the only hope of her country. Albuquerque, who had succeeded Cuesta in the command of the Spanish forces, had, for some time, been kept inactive. The Spanish government, bewildered by the extent of misfortune that surrounded them, had issued and recalled their orders so frequently, that he knew not how to act ; till, convinced that the only chance for Spain lay in the preservation of Cadiz, he took upon himself the whole responsibility ; and, with eight thousand infantry and five hundred horse, marched immediately for that city.

The French were already on the route to Cadiz. Their long and rapid marches had gained them a repu-

tation not to be surpassed. In this solitary instance, however, the exertions of the Spaniards outdid those of the enemy ; and they reached Cadiz some hours before the columns of the French appeared in view. By this means the city was saved. The efforts of Albuquerque and his band awoke the dying spirit of many a Spaniard ; volunteers flocked in, and deserters hurried to rejoin their colours ; so that, in three days from the time of his arrival, the force of the Spanish commander exceeded thirteen thousand men.

Portugal, also, was busy for its defence ; every fortress was garrisoned, every preparation made for the looked-for advance of the French. It had been reported that Napoleon was to lead, in person, that portion of his army destined for the destruction of Portugal. This was incorrect ; but he appointed to that post one whose power of command seemed only second to his own. This was Massena, who, accustomed to see Napoleon distribute thrones and crowns among his favourites, looked forward to the conquest of Portugal as the certain forerunner to his being proclaimed its king.

Massena was quickly engaged in warfare ; but we pass over lesser battles to reach that of Busaco. On the Sierra de Busaco, a high ridge of mountains, Lord Wellington had stationed his troops. The French army lay immediately beneath ; so that our soldiers, from the height on which they stood, looked down upon the almost countless host of their enemies.

Towards morning, an alarm was given that the French

had, during the night scaled the mountain unperceived, —they were already upon them; and the English, starting to their arms, the action began.

The attack of the French was made in two different parts, the one headed by Reynier, the other by Ney. Part of that under the command of Reynier, pressing through the fire of the English line, forced back the right wing of the division, threw a Portuguese regiment into confusion, and, gaining the height, tried to force their way along the ridge of the hill. A volley of musketry checked, scarcely for a moment, their victorious career; but on the 88th charging with the bayonet, the French, so lately believing the battle to be already more than half decided in their favour, were forced down the steep face of the mountain, strewing in their headlong descent, the rugged paths with the dying and the dead.

The ground over which Ney's division had to pass, was so rough and uneven as greatly to retard their progress; and morning had dawned before a volley of musketry proclaimed the meeting of the two forces. The brigade of General Simon led the attack: and heedless of the British artillery, literally sweeping down whole lines of the advancing column, he boldly continued his advance. Never was the cool courage of the French soldier more conspicuous than in this attack. "The horse artillery, on whom they rushed worked their guns with such an amazing rapidity, and delivered round after round with such beautiful precision, that the wonder was, how any body of me:

could advance under so withering and incessant a cannonade. But nothing could surpass the gallantry of the assailants. On they came; and, in a few moments, their skirmishers, breathless and begrimed with powder, gained the ridge of the Sierra. The British guns were instantly retired; the French cheer arose; and, in another moment, the column topped the height.”*

General Crawford, who, with the troops under his command, had coolly watched the success of this attack, now called on two regiments, the 43rd and 52nd, to advance. A long, loud cheer answered the charge, and “eighteen hundred British bayonets went sparkling over the top of the hill.” In one moment the whole of the French line was overpowered. Surrounded nearly on every side by the English, volley after volley poured into their retreating ranks, and marked with fearful slaughter the rugged track of their descent.

Ney still, for a time, continued the hopeless struggle; but at last, giving up in despair, he drew off the remainder of his band, and left the well-chosen position of the British troops as secure as before the bloody conflict had begun.

- The whole face of the hill, I have told you, was covered with the dead and the dying of both sides; and now that the roar of battle had ceased, those who had so lately striven for the destruction of each other,

now, in perfect confidence, went side by side through that bloody scene, each seeking for those of their own side, but frequently offering and receiving the assistance of each other.

The advantage gained by Wellington at the battle of Busaco did not end with the victory he achieved. The Portuguese troops had, for the first time, been engaged in regular contest with the French. The success, therefore, of their first effort, was hailed with such enthusiasm, that, on the day following that of the battle, the Portuguese troops were doubled in number.

The increase of their force raised the spirits of the English. They no longer looked with suspicion on the promise of assistance from their allies; while, from the highest to the lowest of his band, the far-seeing sagacity of their noble leader was acknowledged, and the troops of every nation prepared to follow his standard with a devotion of purpose, and an undoubting confidence, that seemed already to secure their future triumph.

The French and English forces within sight of each other, had, for some time, continued unoccupied: both leaders wishing for a battle, but neither choosing to leave his own strong position to become the assailant. They were thus stationed, when orders from Napoleon reached Massena. The French armies were to be continued in Portugal, at all risks. Soult had been commanded to join Massena; and the united force of the two generals was expected to achieve the great

object of the emperor—the driving Lord Wellington to his ships.

Meantime the French army in Spain carried almost everything before them; the dastardly Spaniard offering no assistance to their gallant allies. Soult, in obedience to Napoleon, made a rapid and victorious march, intending to join Massena in Portugal; but hearing that the general was already retreating before Wellington, he hurried back to protect the conquests he had made in Spain, and still further to subdue that unhappy country.

The retreat of Massena into Spain was planned and executed with the usual skill of that general. The fearful barbarities practised; the scenes of bloodshed, of suffering and misery, we will pass over. They too frequently darken the name of the French nation at this period. I have told you of the kindness they showed to our troops upon one occasion; but the sufferings, the wanton cruelty practised both towards the Spaniards and Portuguese, has never, probably, in any country been surpassed.

Portugal, after four years of continued war, was once more declared free from the oppression of the enemy; and Wellington was enabled to turn his attention towards the affairs of Spain. Gradually, but surely, was he undermining the power of Napoleon; but many a bloody field had yet to be fought ere the conqueror of Europe was hurled from his height, and ere the noble Wellington reaped the glory of his long and masterly struggle.

Towards the city of Rodrigo Wellington turned his forces, for the possession of that town would have placed a valuable fortress at his command. The French, however, knew its value, and hastened, in overpowering numbers, for its protection. To continue the siege would have been fruitless. The English army withdrew to a strong position on the heights of Guinaldo, and there waited the wished-for attack of the French.

When morning rose, it displayed, on the plain beneath, the overwhelming forces of the enemy. Sixty thousand well-proved and veteran soldiers were ranged in mighty masses as far as the eye could reach ; but they struck no terror into the comparatively small body of the English troops. Calmly and fearlessly they waited the onset of the French. They were allowed to reach the ridge of the hill ; then the infantry formed line, the dragoons sprang to their saddles, and the artillery poured out a volley of grape-shot. For a moment the French seemed to waver under the deadly effect of the fire ; then, with a loud cheer, they charged up the height, and, forcing the English artillerymen to retire, gained possession of the cannon.

Their success was quickly followed by disaster. The 5th regiment came steadily forward, delivered one volley, and, lowering their bayonets, rushed to the charge. This was the first time that foot soldiers had ever fought hand to hand with the cavalry. The effort was successful—brilliantly successful. The French were hurried down the height, and the English cannon retaken.

The fortune of the day changed once again. A heavy column of French soldiers had crept, unperceived, on the rear of the right wing of the British, who, after a fruitless resistance, were driven from the position. The French, in all the pride and assurance of success, followed on their retreat; but they had yet to learn the devoted and unyielding nature of the British soldier. The 5th and 77th regiments formed square, and quietly waited the onset that, from power and numbers, seemed likely to annihilate them. The charge was made; the loud cheer of the French dragoons rose in the air; another moment, and their headlong speed must have brought them on the bayonets of the first rank, when a volley poured from the British square so certain and fatal, that, when the smoke cleared away, the dragoons were seen hastily retreating to reform and collect their broken ranks; while the ground, at the distance of a few yards, was literally strewed with men and horses rolling in the dust.

For a few days the armies remained within sight of each other. The French then withdrew their forces; and Wellington went into cantonments for the remainder of the wet and unhealthy season.

It was, I believe, at some one of the engagements at this period that I have heard an anecdote of a French officer, which I must not forget. It was told by a Mr. Harvey, who, at the time it happened, was aid-de-camp to Lord Wellington. He, Mr. Harvey, had, in a previous engagement, lost an arm; but the incapability of defending himself did not prevent his joining after-

wards in many a hard-fought field. On one occasion, in a cavalry charge, he was met by a French officer. With raised sword he galloped towards his enemy, but, when about to strike, the generous Frenchman, discovering him to be defenceless, dropped the weapon, turned the threatening gesture into a low, graceful salute, and, spurring on his horse, in the thickest of the combat he sought out a more able antagonist.

The possession of Ciudad Rodrigo was still ardently desired by Wellington. Preparations for a siege had long been carried on in secret; they were now completed; and the plan of assault determined by the powerful mind of the English leader. But eager, if possible, to prevent bloodshed, and the unavoidable massacre both of the besieged and the besiegers of so strong a fortress as that of Ciudad Rodrigo, he sent and demanded the governor to surrender. The answer of this brave and faithful servant of Napoleon was as follows:—"The emperor has entrusted me with the command of Ciudad Rodrigo. Without his command I cannot surrender it. I and my garrison will, on the contrary, bury ourselves in the ruins of its walls." The word was given: the almost perpendicular rocks on which the fortress stood were scaled in breathless silence by the resolute band chosen for the hazardous attempt; and not a sound was heard, till a loud cheer proclaimed their having reached the walls in safety.

That cheer was answered by a roar of cannon that told the garrison were prepared for the attack, and determined to repel it. Most gallantly was resistance

offered by the French ; but as gallantly did our soldiers push the advantage they had gained. Cheer after cheer told that the ramparts had been won. The fate of Ciudad Rodrigo was speedily decided, and a valuable victory had been achieved ; but the loss of brave men on both sides was fearfully great.

The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo was quickly followed by that of Badajoz. It was besieged, bravely defended, and compelled to yield. Another glorious victory was added to the long list of conquests already gracing the name of Wellington ; but it was purchased by a fearful sacrifice of life ; and it is said, that “ when the extent of the night’s havoc was made known to him, the firmness of his nature gave way for a moment, and the pride of conquest yielded to a passionate burst of grief for his gallant soldiers.”*

The army of Wellington was, at this period, in its most effective state ; victory had followed victory ; and the enthusiasm of his soldiers hourly increasing, they eagerly demanded fresh scenes of danger and of glory. The power of Napoleon in Spain seemed already tottering to its fall ; yet new numbers, flocking to his standard, increased his mighty host ; and, writhing under their recent failures, they burned to wipe away the disgrace, and regain the character so long held by them of being invincible.

The desire of the rival forces was speedily accomplished : an error of the French leader, Marmont, that proved fatal to his forces, hurried on the battle of

* Napier.

Salamanca. Wellington, who, from a height, had been watching the movements of the enemy, descried at once the mistake. "One eagle glance convinced him that the moment of attack was come. A few distinct but hurried orders were given; the doom of his rival's army was pronounced; and four columns of General Pakenham's division rushing down the hill, scattered those troops who would have intercepted their progress, and, pushing gallantly forward, gained the ridge of the height on which the French were posted."

The fire of five thousand muskets had had no power to arrest the advance of our brave soldiers. The enemy wavered, and became unsteady under the daring attack. All that brave men could do was done by the French officers, who tried, by example and entreaty, to recall the wonted courage of their troops. One, seizing the musket of a grenadier, rushed forward and mortally wounded Major Murphy of the 88th. Speedily was that death avenged: for the soldiers were driven to madness by the sight of the dead body of their favourite officer dragged along their front, as his horse galloped furiously past; and, eager for revenge, were scarcely to be held back. General Pakenham observed the feeling, and gave orders to "Let them loose!" A loud cheer mixed with the wild Irish hurrah; the bayonets advanced to the charge; and the French, unwilling to stand the shock of such an onset, fell into confusion and retreated.

Thus driven from their first position, the French reformed, and joined their reserve companies on the

face of a wooded hill at a little distance ; but again the English cheer of victory pealed along the mountains, and the left wing of the army was entirely routed.

In the centre of the two forces the battle still raged with undiminished violence ; and the fortune of the English troops seemed, for a time, to have deserted them. One assault failed ; the Portuguese regiments gave way, and the height was in possession of the enemy ; the French, with renewed courage, joining in the pursuit. At this eventful moment, when two of the English leaders were carried wounded from the field, Lord Wellington ordered General Clinton's division, of 6000 bayonets, to advance ; and they pushed forward, determined to cut short the victorious career of the enemy.

The French, however, received the onset without yielding an inch of the ground they had gained. Both sides fought with a determination and fury seldom equalled ; but at length the enemy fell into confusion retired in disorder, and left the field in undisputed possession of the English.

This, the battle of Salamanca, was, perhaps, the most important victory gained since the commencement of the Peninsular war ; and it removed, now and for ever, the conviction strongly impressed on the minds of the Spanish and Portuguese, if not on our own troops, that the French army was not to be conquered.

• The position of Lord Wellington was daily becoming one of greater promise to himself and his country. A

long list of brilliant victories was followed by a triumphant entry into Madrid. And never did a victorious chief and conquering army receive more enthusiastic welcome than was given by the unhappy Spaniards, who though rendering little or no assistance to their brave allies, hailed with delight the prospect opening before them of a regained freedom.

The siege of Burgos, in which Wellington was next engaged, was unsuccessful. A brave and skilful general, and a gallant body of soldiers defended it against unceasing attacks, from the twentieth of September to that of October ; and this repulse, from what they considered but a secondary fortress, caused great disappointment to the British army : for, accustomed as of late they had been, to victory, they could now ill endure the disgrace of failure and of retreat.

A retreat, however, was not to be avoided ; and if it caused dissatisfaction at the time both in the army and at home, it is long since it has been acknowledged, that “It was in those moments when difficulties crowded on him—when he had no choice of extremities—when he was overwhelmed by superior strength—when his last and only resource was retreat, that Wellington gave the proudest and most undoubted proof of his ability.”

The approach of winter allowed the English general to close the campaign of this year, and carry his soldiers into cantonments. The soldiers required rest ; for, during the preceding months, they had suffered in health and discipline ; and much depended on both

being restored before the next campaign, that was destined to fix the fate of France and close in victory the war of the Peninsula.

With unwearied perseverance and energy, Wellington continued his preparations for renewing the contest. England liberally supplied men, and arms, and money. Spain and Portugal added daily to the strength of their armies ; and all gave promise of the glorious conclusion of that memorable campaign.

Never, probably, had Britain collected a finer force than that now under the command of Wellington. Strong in health, high in spirit, and perfect in discipline, the Portuguese and British troops appeared likely to bid defiance to any enemy ; while the Spaniards, always daring and active, even when misled by their faint-hearted, ignoble leaders, were now, under the command of Wellington, a well-disciplined and effective body of men.

The affairs of Napoleon were, in the meantime, gradually darkening round him. His invasion of Russia closed, you already know, with the destruction of nearly the whole of his magnificent army. Joseph, incapable of filling the situation he held, of King of Spain, lent him no assistance in that country ; and even those forces which he had so justly considered the finest in the world, were now weakened by jealousies and discords among themselves.

At the commencement of the following campaign, the various divisions of the French army were situated at Valladolid, at Areval, Madrid, and other parts, in a

lengthened line of great force. The plan of attack prepared by Lord Wellington, was one of those masterly strokes that succeeded each other so rapidly during the latter part of the Peninsula war. Ninety thousand fighting men, British, Portuguese, and Spaniards, were suddenly to march abreast against the surprised and separated masses of the French army, and drive them to the Pyrenees. "A grand design, and grandly it was executed; for, high in heart and strong in hand, Wellington's veterans marched to the encounter—the glories of twelve victories playing about their bayonets; while their leader, proud and confident, in passing the stream that marks the frontier of Spain, rose in his stirrups, and, waving his hand, cried out, 'Farewell, Portugal!'"*

The French remained completely ignorant of Lord Wellington's intended movements. As he advanced, they fell leisurely back on the little town of Morales; where, in a brief but bloody skirmish, the enemy, totally overpowered, met with a great loss. The fighting had been carried on almost in the streets of the town; but so accustomed had the unhappy Spaniards become to the sight of bloodshed and of massacre, that, it is said, within ten minutes after the firing had ceased, the women were seated quietly at their doors to spin, and the children playing about the street as usual.

The advance of the allied army had scarcely yet met with any check. Troops, with their cannon and bag-

* Napier.

gage wagons, had passed through countries and over roads till now considered altogether impassable, and all was in readiness for the great attack.

For the first time since the commencement of the war, the force under Wellington greatly surpassed in numbers, strength, and discipline, that of the enemy, and Joseph Buonaparte, conscious of his own inability to withstand its force, quitted Madrid, never to return.

Seldom has a campaign opened with greater promise, and never did such uninterrupted success follow the march of any army, as that which now crowned the rapid and victorious advance of the allied troops.

Joseph Buonaparte, trusting to the assistance he had demanded from Generals Clausel and Foy, hoped to have made a stand at Burgos, and again at Miranda ; but in both of these, by the sudden resolve and speedy acting of the English general, he was defeated.

To gain the road from Burgos to Bilboa, was now Wellington's object ; but, to obtain this, the whole army had to pass through a country such as had never before been traversed. Mountains, steep and precipitous, roaring torrents and deep ravines, for six days' march surrounded them on every side. Now a single piece of artillery required the united strength of a hundred soldiers to move it forward ; and now it was lowered by ropes from the steep precipices over which the determined band were pushing their way.

Joseph Buonaparte, believing the rout the English leader had chosen to be altogether impassable, and seeing no sign of their approach from any other quarter,

continued his retreat, wondering at the slow movements of the enemy, and asking, contemptuously, some of the English prisoners whether Lord Wellington was asleep.

From this fancied security he was speedily roused ; and the astonishment and dismay of the French, on discovering the whole of the English army stationed on the left bank of the Ebro, thus cutting off their desired retreat, is not to be described. A council was held ; but the leaders, at variance with each other, could come to no decision ; and Joseph resolved upon retreating to Vittoria—a movement that proved fatal to his own cause.

An immediate battle with a force that exceeded his own, or a hurried retreat, were the only alternatives now left him ; and unwilling to lose sight of the immense quantity of baggage, valuables, and plunder with which he had quitted Madrid, he resolved on the former. Before day-break the French army was drawn out for battle,—and the British and their allies were marching to the attack.

Every effort of the enemy, through that eventful day, was gallantly repulsed. Our soldiers, notwithstanding the difficulty of the ground, advancing with a determination and ardour that nothing could withstand. Their victory was complete ; and Joseph, to whose obstinacy and ignorance the destruction of his whole army was principally owing, made a narrow escape. He fled on horseback ; and left behind, to the plunder of the enemy, the treasure he had risked so much to save. •

Never before had a campaign so brief and so brilliant

crowned the efforts of any army. In six weeks Wellington had marched six hundred miles ; and, driving one hundred and twenty thousand of the enemy from Spain, had gained the range of the Pyrenees, and overlooked the fields of France, the acknowledged conqueror of a mighty force.

Napoleon heard, with astonishment, tidings of the defeat of troops he had ever been accustomed to lead to victory. He looked with contempt upon the weak spirit of his brother ; and, eager to stay the progress of Wellington, and hoping still to regain his lost power in Spain and Portugal, he determined upon another bold effort, and called upon his troops to rouse the dormant spirit, and regain the honour they had lost.

To Marshal Soult, the Duc de Dalmatie, the command of the French army was, at this time, principally entrusted ; and Wellington well knew, from former experience, with how formidable a leader he should now have to contend.

Many glorious victories had been won by the English general—many a bloody field had been fought ; but as none surpassed in brilliancy those I have now to tell of—the battles of the Pyrenees—so did none equal them in lengthened struggle, in desperate resistance, and in fearful loss of life. The French fought with all the confidence of immense superiority in numbers ; while the allied army, strong in courage, fresh from repeated victory, and secure in the talent of their leader, acted with a stubborn gallantry which nothing could shake.

The loss of one pass in this mountain warfare would have been the loss of all ; and bravely and well were they defended. On the first day on which the enemy were engaged, the battle appeared to turn in favour of the French. But after a bloody conflict, in which brave men, fighting hand to hand, fell on either side, the English regained the advantage they had so nearly lost ; and night closing in with a heavy fog, both armies withdrew, waiting the return of light to recommence the bloody conflict. During the night the English leader withdrew his troops to a station of great force, and here he boldly offered battle ; while the French army, delayed in their march by the heavy mist still hanging over the mountains, were prevented from securing a suitable position. Already, it is said, the proud bearing of the French marshal was altered, and his certainty of success gone.

Four years ago, you will recollect, that when Wellington had persuaded General Cuesta to examine with him the ground intended to be the scene of action, that worthy leader had set out in a ponderous coach drawn by eight horses. Wellington was now engaged in the same service ; and many who had beheld with contempt the proceedings of the Spanish leader, now followed, with wonder and admiration, their noble general, as, mounted on an English hunter, he dashed from post to post, over rugged ground, and at a speed that outdistanced all his staff.

The fighting between the two forces had begun on the twenty-fifth of July ; and except one day, on which not

a shot was fired, it continued without interruption till the second of August ; when the last Frenchman was driven across the frontier, and Spain was free.

Never had any army come to the field with greater confidence of success than had that under the command of Soult. Their late defeats appeared forgotten ; and with all the confidences of former victories, they had looked upon their success as undoubted. But now defeat followed on defeat ; and even the dauntless courage of these brave soldiers seemed, for a time, extinguished in the fearful bloodshed of that brief campaign.

It was expected that Lord Wellington would now, without loss of time, invade France, and complete his conquests by subduing that country ; but some fortresses on the frontiers of Spain being still in the hands of the French, the English leader resolved to possess himself of them before leaving the country, and recommenced the siege of San Sebastian.

For the purpose of discovering to what extent the garrison was prepared for defence, a false attack was made on the night of the twenty-ninth. The order was suddenly given. No particular regiment was named, and no reward offered to those who ventured on the hazardous expedition ; but scarcely had the signal been made, when "seventeen men of the nearest regiment leaped forward, ready and willing to encounter what seemed certain death." They were led by a young officer ; and shouting and firing, in the hope of imposing on the French, they advanced to the breach. Their enemies were not to be deceived : they wasted no

ammunition on the mock attack ; but contented themselves with one volley of musketry : so fatal, that of the little band of brave hearts, but one returned to tell the failure of their attempt and the destruction of his companions.

On the thirtieth the attack commenced in earnest. The troops selected consisted of volunteers from various regiments. Fifty men only were required from each. "Men," it was said, "who could show others how to mount a breach." When the order was read to the fourth division, and "those who would volunteer were desired to step a few paces in front, *the whole division moved forward !*"

For some time the determined bravery of the garrison defied every effort made by the besiegers. Line after line were swept away by the destructive fire of the enemy ; but line after line filled the space left by their dead companions. For two hours the bloody conflict continued. At length the ridge was reached ; a narrow pass was gained ; and, in another hour, the long-contested fortress was in possession of the English.

Very shortly after the fall of San Sebastian, Wellington felt himself at liberty to pursue his conquest in France. During the time he had been engaged with his last siege in Spain, the French army had selected a position of great strength. Rugged mountains, and deep and rapid rivers, were, in themselves, a strong barrier between them and the English. But besides this, Soult had, for some time, been in busy preparation. Intrenchment after intrenchment was raised on the

steep sides of the almost perpendicular rocks : but rocks, torrents, ravines, and rivers were all despised by the British soldier. Wellington gave the command, and every difficulty was surmounted.

To dislodge Soult from his stronghold, the English army had to pass the Bidassoa ; a deep and rapid river, the tide of which rose sixteen feet. From a Spanish fisherman Wellington learned where, at low water, the river might be forded ; but immediately on the opposite rocks the whole force of the enemy was collected ; so that to cross unobserved appeared almost hopeless. Yet little time could be given for precaution ; since, in two hours, the return of the tide would prevent further passage.

It was the great difficulty, the seeming impossibility of the attempt that secured its success. The French neglected their watch ; and the brilliant design of the English leader was admirably executed.

Never did our brave soldiers fight more determinedly than in the engagements that followed ; and many a feat of valour was here performed.

On one occasion, when three hundred Frenchmen were retreating in confusion, they were observed by Colonel Colborne, who, with about twenty of the 95th, galloped to meet them. He desired them to surrender ; and the French, believing that so small a party must know of assistance near at hand, laid down their arms, and yielded themselves prisoners.

• At another time a very young officer, Mr. Havelock, of General Alten's staff, had been sent with some orders

to that part of the field where the Spaniards were stationed. They had fought bravely ; but at this moment they seemed wavering and yielding ground ; in another, the position would probably have been in possession of the enemy ; when the English officer, forgetting the lesser duty on which he had come, waved his hat in the air, put spurs to his horse, and, calling upon the Spaniards to follow, threw himself among the ranks of the enemy. With a loud shout for “ *El chico blanco !* ”—the fair boy—so they called him, because he had fair hair, the Spaniards renewed the fight, and, with one shock, broke through the line of the French.

Severe and rainy weather kept both armies for some time inactive. Soult had established his head-quarters at St. Jean de Luz, where on the tenth of November, he was attacked by Wellington. On that night he fell back on Bidart, and from that on Bayonne. The badness of the weather favoured the successive retreat of the French army ; for the rain that fell in torrents, swelled the rivers to an unusual size, and the enemy destroyed every bridge and ford as they passed along. But each succeeding difficulty seemed to rouse fresh ardour in the pursuit ; and never did the English general glory more than now in the matchless bravery and endurance of his troops. Men and leaders vied with each other ; and well might Wellington declare, as he afterwards did, that “ with the army which had crossed the Pyrenees, he could do anything, or go anywhere ! ”

The gallantry of each separate attack—the determined

courage with which every post was successively gained—it would take too much room to describe. Soult's hope of yet obtaining victory over the English was fast losing ground; and new honours were rapidly crowning our brave countrymen and their unequalled leader.

The incessant rain that had swelled the rivers, and rendered the roads impassable, had caused a longer cessation of hostilities than suited the views of either. But no sooner had it cleared in some degree, than rapid preparations were made for this, the last and decisive campaign of the Peninsula.

On the third of January, an attack was made by the enemy, in which they drove in our cavalry pickets; and forcing the brigade of Major-General Buchan to retire from La Coste, they stationed two divisions of their own infantry on that height.

Heavy rain again prevented a continuation of the fight; and it was not till the morning of the sixth, that, by an attack, in which he suffered no loss, Wellington dislodged the enemy, and replaced his own troops on the post they had held.

After this, another month of inaction passed; for the state of the roads made it impossible to move the troops. On the eighth of February frost set in, and in a few days all again was busy preparation. On the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth, notwithstanding the gallant resistance offered by their superior numbers, the French were forced to fall back from one post to another. On the fifteenth, they had been stationed in great force on

the front of a hill, when, towards evening, Lord Wellington coolly ordered the position to be carried before dark. He was obeyed : the 28th and 29th regiments, with a wild cheer of determined courage, rushed upon the height, formed rapidly into line, and prepared, with their comparatively small number, to sweep four thousand of the enemy from the hill.

The French, astonished at the boldness of the attempt, answered the charge by an advance with the bayonet. Twice they rushed upon the little band they hoped to exterminate, and twice they were compelled to retreat. They crossed the river, and the English were left in possession of the height.

Step by step, Wellington was forcing his way into the heart of France : the enemy retreating before him, though still taking advantage of every position that offered the hope of a successful defence.

Bayonne, with other places of consequence, had been gained by the English ; and Soult, now on the route to Bordeaux, was collecting the whole force of his army for the Battle of Orthez. His position was well chosen. It was one of great strength ; and the nature of the ground, while it protected them, was such as to expose the English to the whole force of their fire. Disordered and repulsed on every side, our brave soldiers in vain attempted to gain a more open space for continuing the fight. Everywhere the attack had failed ; and Soult, who had watched the fortune of the day from a height that enabled him to overlook the movements of the whole army, is said, as he observed the disordered ranks

of the English, to have exclaimed, with delight, "At last, then, I have him !"

But the Lion was still in the field—was still unconquered. Wellington galloped to the left wing, took the command, and, while the fire raged on every side, altered the whole plan of assault. In a moment "the face of the battle was changed." The furious attack bore down the resistance of the French ; and they who so lately had looked upon the day as already won, wavered and became discouraged. The fire of the British swept through the columns of the enemy ; and Soult, finding every desperate effort repulsed, gave orders for a retreat. It was conducted with the utmost order and steadiness. Step by step they yielded the ground to the victorious English : each division as it fell back protecting the retreat of the others ; but when pursued with an incessant and deafening fire of musketry, the men, at last breaking from their ranks, fled across the fields—and the victory of Orthez was added to those of the allied armies.

Notwithstanding the repeated reverses Soult had met with, Napoleon still urged him to continue hostilities. He retreated upon Tarbes ; and here another battle was fought and won.

The French had taken their position on a wooded height, commanding a view of the road ; but the smoke raised by the incessant fire of the skirmishers prevented Wellington from discovering the extent of their force.

• An English officer volunteered to bring the wished-for intelligence ; and spurring his horse, he rode for-

ward, as if intending to force his way through the skirmishers. They fired on him from every side ; and then, dropping his reins, he leaned back as if badly wounded, his horse cantering along the ranks of the enemy. The French supposed him mortally hurt, and took no further notice ; but when he reached the other side of the hill, he regained his seat, and then, once more pursued by the shot of the enemy, he dashed down the hill, reached Lord Wellington in safety, and told him there were but five battalions in the wood.

After a sharp contest, Soult again retreated. He fell back on Toulouse ; and here, from the bad state of the roads, Wellington was prevented following with his usual promptness of movement. The difficulties he had to encounter were great, and everything depended on the success of this last struggle between the two forces. Colonel Napier, in writing of this time, says,—“ He (Wellington) desired to pass the Garonne, and he did pass it ; he desired to win the position and works of Mont Rave, and he did win them ; he desired to enter Toulouse, and he did enter it, as a conqueror at the head of his troops.”

Soult quitted the city during the night. He was immediately succeeded by Wellington ; and a few hours afterwards, news was received that, even before this last decisive battle, Napoleon, conscious that his power was over, had resigned the throne, and quitted Paris.

If your memory, my dear little boy, does not serve to acquaint you with the fate of Napoleon, from this

time till that of his return to France, you must look back to chapter eight in the first series: for it is of Wellington, not of Napoleon, I must now write. His downfall wrought a change over the whole of Europe. Monarchs were restored to their kingdoms; usurpers and tyrants disappeared with their great leader; and peace once more visited the long-distracted countries.

Expressions of gratitude and esteem were poured on their brave deliverer, by the various kingdoms his arm had liberated; while England, and England's sovereign, felt that no honour conferred, however great, could equal the deserts of their matchless countryman.

After a brief stay in Paris, the now Duke of Wellington visited Madrid; then Bordeaux, where he bade adieu to his brave army; and lastly, after an absence of five years, his native country: the shout of thousands who had collected to be present at his landing, welcoming the hero as he set foot again on England.

Louis the Eighteenth, you will recollect, had been restored to the throne of France. He, the Emperors of Austria and Russia, with the King of Prussia, had all bound themselves to assist England in maintaining the hardly-earned peace; and it was not long before the fulfilment of their promise was required; for the escape of Napoleon from Elba soon spread consternation over the whole of Europe.

• The allied monarchs were not slow in acting; for, mindful of their late sufferings, all felt an equal in-

terest in the overthrow of one who, "as an enemy and disturber of the tranquillity of the world, had rendered himself liable to public vengeance." Napoleon was declared "a rebel and a traitor." But, as you know, thousands of his old army flocked to his standard; and he was once again at the head of a magnificent force, composed of soldiers as brave and as faithful as were ever led to battle.

On the twenty-third of June, 1814, the Duke of Wellington had returned to England, in the belief that his great rival, the most victorious general that had ever lived, would, by his ambitious projects, and daring exploits, disturb the world no further; and, on the twenty-eighth of March, 1815, he was once more at the head of an army, hurrying to an encounter with the French.

Finding that the emperor moved towards Belgium, the Duke of Wellington proceeded to Brussels, making that town his head-quarters. You will recollect that he, with many officers of the allied army, were at a ball at the Duchess of Richmond's, when an express from the Prussian general informed him of Napoleon being in the field. By eight o'clock on the following morning, the sixteenth of June, the streets of Brussels, lately the scene of busy tumult, were silent. No sound of the drum, the bugle, or the bagpipe, was to be heard: the hurry and commotion of departure was passed, and a breathless quiet seemed spread over the deserted town. •

The position of the Prussian army at Ligny, you-

already know, was attacked by that portion of the French army more immediately under the command of Napoleon; while Marshal Ney was left to encounter the English forces at Quatre Bras. His numbers far surpassed those of Wellington; and the attack was made with a determination and vigour that seemed likely to secure success. Many of the English troops had only that morning reached the scene of action. A long march in sultry weather was bad preparation for a day of battle; but scarcely had they appeared on the field, when Ney, hoping to crush them before they could arrange themselves in order, charged furiously forward with his cavalry. The efforts of the French were desperate. The storm of grape-shot poured from their ranks strewed the ground with countless numbers; "but nothing could daunt the lion-hearted English—nothing could shake their steadiness; the dead were coolly removed, and the living occupied their places."* One regiment, the 28th foot, was by the cavalry of the enemy, suddenly assailed on three sides at the same moment. They waited the overpowering onset in silence; and not a sound was heard but the one clear command of their colonel, "Be steady!" The very earth seemed to shake as the cavalry dashed along the ground. They were within a few paces of the little band; but still not a movement was made, till the word "Fire!" burst from the lips of their leader; and then they poured from their ranks so deadly a volley, that the whole leading lines of the French lay scattered

* Maxwell's Life of Wellington.

on the ground ; and the remainder, turning their horses' heads, galloped from their dangerous position.

The bloodshed of that day was never, I believe, surpassed. The overpouring numbers of the French, fighting with more than their usual determined courage, and the resolve of the English, to yield no step of the ground on which they stood, led to fearful slaughter ; but when night closed in, and the assailants ceased their attack, Wellington and his brave army were left in possession of the field.

That part of the French army engaged against Blucher and his gallant Prussians had been more successful. Napoleon had gained possession of Ligny, and Blucher had fallen back to join a part of his army stationed at some distance.

On the morning of the seventeenth, Wellington was stationed in front of the village of Waterloo—the scene of triumph—the scene of the last noble victory of our British hero ; but it was not till the morning of the eighteenth that that eventful fight began.

Two attacks of the French on the Chateau of Hougumont, one of the four posts selected by the English, had proved unsuccessful. Still the chances against the allied army seemed every moment to increase. “Its own glorious efforts exhausting its strength ;” and every attack so nobly repulsed, thinning its ranks, and rendering them hourly less equal for resisting the overpowering masses of the French. It is said that even Wellington, at this moment despaired of success. He knew his brave band would

never yield ; but he felt the destruction of his army to be almost certain. Blucher had not yet appeared, and ardently he was longed for. His army would render the numbers more equal ; but hour after hour passed on, and still the brave British continued the fight.

Napoleon felt secure of victory. I have read that, when he saw column after column of his men driven back in confusion—when he found that the head-long advance of his cavalry could make no impression on the squares formed by the English soldiers, and that, though the field was strewed by the deadly cannon of the enemy, the remaining few still resolutely held the ground—he expressed the greatest admiration of their bravery ; and turning to Soult, said, “How beautifully these English fight !” adding, “But they must give way !”

Hitherto the troops had been compelled to act only on the defensive. Hundreds of their brethren fell around them, and they burned to rush on the enemy, and avenge their death. The impatient question, “When shall we get at them ?” met always the same answer from their officers, “Be cool, boys ;” for the time had not yet come, though it was near at hand, when victory and vengeance was to be their own.

It was not till towards evening that the welcome sound of distant artillery was heard. It announced the approach of the Prussians. They were yet in time to save all ; and Wellington, relieved from a weight of anxiety, commenced active preparations for the last

desperate and victorious effort. The cheers of "Vive l'Empereur!" rose exultingly from the ranks of the French as they rushed to the contest; but the answer of the English was a roaring volley that carried destruction into their ranks, and threw the survivors into confusion. They refused further contest, and hurried down the hill in disorder.

The attacks of Napoleon's second column were not more fortunate. Undismayed by the repulse of their companions, they reached the height in perfect order: but a few minutes saw the ground covered with their dead and dying. The fire showered upon them rendered resistance hopeless: they turned, and sought for shelter in the protection of the low ground. Wellington, who had watched the onset through a telescope, exclaimed, "Now, the hour is come!" and gave command for the whole line to advance. Cheerfully was that order obeyed. The wounds, the fatigue, and suffering of that day were forgotten; a long, loud cheer pealed from their ranks, and they rushed to the conflict. The attack was headed by Wellington. Nothing could withstand their headlong course; and the bloody struggle closed in victory. Napoleon's splendid army of yesterday—that magnificent body of fearless warriors—that strong array of brave hearts—was now a wreck, panic-stricken and disorganized, flying from the field.

Napoleon's power was over. Tyranny, usurpation, and despotism were at an end: but freedom had been purchased at a fearful and a bloody price. Wellington

rode from the battle-ground a victor ; but no feeling of triumph or exultation could find place in the heart of the English leader at that moment ; for fifty thousand dead and disabled men lay on the little space of two square miles, where the battle had been fought.

The military career of Wellington, of Britain's greatest, bravest, noblest soldier, here closed. The last seven-and-thirty years of his life were employed chiefly in the civil service of his country. As statesman, he exhibited the same mental and moral qualities that had made him illustrious in war. He died after a few hours' illness, at Walmer Castle, on the 15th September, 1852, in the 84th year of his age ; and thus ended one of the wisest and most loyal subjects that ever served his country. And with a greater, nobler name than Arthur Duke of Wellington, I cannot close my little boy's volume.

THE END.

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