THE ROMANCE OF WAR, VOLUME 3

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THE ROMANCE OF WAR:

OR,

THE HIGHLANDERS IN SPAIN

BY

JAMES GRANT, ESQ.

Late 62nd Regiment.

"In the garb of old Gaul, with the fire of old Rome,
From the heath-covered mountains of Scotia we come;
Our loud-sounding pipe breathes the true martial strain,
And our hearts still the old Scottish valour retain."

Lt.-Gen. Erskine.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

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THE ROMANCE OF WAR.

CHAPTER I.

HOSTILITIES—A LOVE LETTER.

"Were not my right hand fetter'd by the thought,
That slaying thee were but a double guilt
In which to steep my soul, no bridegroom ever
Stepp'd forth to trip a measure with his bride
More joyfully than I, young man, would rush
To meet thy challenge."
Macduff's Cross, p. 26.

Boiling with rage at Louis's insulting defiance, Ronald returned to his quarters in the Alcanzar, determined at day-break to summon him forth, to fight or apologize. He often repeated the words, "Her heart has never wandered from you." Ah! if this should indeed be the case, and that Alice loved him after all! But from Louis,

his honour demanded a full explanation and ample apology, either of which he feared the proud spirit of the other would never stoop to grant. Yet, to level a deadly weapon against the brother of Alice,—against him to whom he had been a constant friend and companion in childhood and maturer youth, and perhaps by a single shot to destroy him, the hopes and the peace of his amiable father and sister, he felt that should this happen, he never could forgive himself. But there was no alternative: it was death or dishonour.

Two ways lay before him,—to fight or not to fight; and his sense of injured honour made him, without hesitation, choose the first, and he waited in no ordinary anxiety for the dawn, when Alister Macdonald, who was absent on duty, would return to the quarters of the regiment.

Next morning, when the grey daylight was beginning faintly to show the dark courts and gloomy arcades of the Alcanzar, he sprung from his couch, which had been nothing else than his cloak laid on the polished floor tiles; and undergoing a hasty toilette, he was about to set forth in search of Macdonald, when Lieutenant Chisholm, one of the officers, entered.

"What! up already, Stuart?" said he; "I hope you are not on any duty?"

"No. Why?"

"Because Lisle has asked me to wait upon you."

"Upon *me*?" asked Ronald, with a frown of surprise. "Upon me, Chisholm?"

"Yes: of course you will remember what occurred in the cathedral last night?"

"How could I ever forget? Mr. Lisle, under its roof, insulted me most grossly," replied Ronald, his lips growing white with anger. "I was just about to seek Macdonald to give him a message, but Mr. Lisle has anticipated me."

"For Heaven's sake, Stuart, let us endeavour to settle this matter amicably! Think of the remorse which an honourable survivor must always feel. A hundred men slain in action are nothing to one life lost in a duel."

"Address these words to your principal,—they are lost on me; but you are an excellent fellow, Chisholm!"

"It is long since we have had an affair of this sort among us, and Cameron is quite averse to this mode of settling disputes."

"I shall not consult his opinion, or that of any other man, in defence of my own honour," said Ronald haughtily.

"As you please," replied the other, with an air of pique. "Lisle and you have long been on very distant terms, and the officers have always predicted that the matter would terminate in this way."

"Curse their impertinent curiosity! And so Lisle calls me out in consequence of the high words we exchanged in the cathedral last night?"

"That is one reason—the least one, I believe. He mentioned that his sister,

Miss Lisle—"

"Stay, Chisholm! I will hear no more of this," cried Stuart; then suddenly changing his mind added, "Ah! well; his sister—Miss Alice Lisle. Go on."

"Faith, Stuart, you seem confoundedly confused. Do settle this matter in peace. Lisle has told me the story, in confidence, and I think you have been to blame,—indeed you have. Send Lisle an apology, for I assure you he is boiling with passion, and will not yield a hair's breadth."

"Chisholm, then how in the devil's name can you suppose that I will?" exclaimed Ronald, his anger getting the better of his confusion. "Never, by Heaven! never will I apologize when I have suffered the indignity. He has challenged me, and fate must now decide. I will meet him."

"Well, then, time presses; we march at sunrise. Who is your friend?"

"Alister Macdonald, if he has returned; if not, I shall have Logan."

"Macdonald returned about midnight with some stragglers from Torrijos, and will not relish being disturbed so early."

"Never mind that; an hour's sleep less or more is scarcely to be considered when lives are in jeopardy. Where is the meeting place?"

"The bridge of Toledo. You will barely be in time. Six is the hour; it wants fifteen minutes of it by my watch."

"Well, you may leave me now."

Knowing it was needless to say any more about a reconciliation Chisholm departed; and Ronald, after buckling on his sword and dirk, stood for a few minutes holding his bonnet in his hand irresolutely, while he sunk into a reverie of deep and bitter reflections, of what his affectionate old sire and faithful dependants at Lochisla would feel should he die by the hand of Lisle, whose very name they regarded with so much jealousy and distrust. He also thought of Alice and Lord Lisle, what their sentiments would be if the reverse was the case, and the one lost a dear brother—the other a beloved son, who was the only heir and hope of an ancient house, and the successor to its title. He remembered also the words of Louis. Could it be that Alice might yet love him? But no; that was impossible! He threw his cloak around him, and rushed from the chamber to seek that of Macdonald, who was ready to attend him in a moment. Suddenly remembering that he had no pistols, he urned into an apartment occupied by Major Campbell, to request the loan of his.

It was a spacious and splendid room, with a ceiling twenty feet in height. A colonnade supported the roof, the carved beams of which stretched across from the gilded cornices on each side. The ceiling and walls were covered with frescoes, but the plaster and the once bright and gorgeous gilding were miserably faded and dilapidated by time and neglect. Rolled in his cloak, and coiled up in a corner of this vast and empty hall, the bulky frame of Campbell lay on the

tessellated pavement, and no doubt he found it a bed somewhat cold and hard. His pillow was formed by his long Andrea and favourite *rung*, with a plaid rolled round them. His dirk and steel Highland pistols lay on one side of him, and an empty pigskin on the other. Very desolate indeed he appeared, lying in a corner of that huge apartment, which was totally destitute of furniture. Ronald shook him by the shoulder.

"If that is you, Serjeant Macildhui," said he, speaking very crossly beneath the cape of his cloak, "I must beg leave to inform you, that I have nothing to do now with No. 1 company. I am done with all that sort of dirty work, as you will see by the last Gazette. Apply to Mr. Kennedy, and take yourself off till the drum beats. I wish the infernal Horse Guards would order six halting days every week, instead of only Sunday and Thursday."

"Look up, major! 'Tis I—Stuart."

"What is the matter?" cried the other, bolting up, and showing that the contents of the borachio skin were operating still on his brain; "what is the matter now? It is very hard that a field-officer, and one too that has seen the fields of Alexandria, Egmont-op-Zee, and the onslaught of Copenhagen, should be so pestered by subalterns. How this hard bed makes my bones ache! I have slept softer on the hot yellow sand in Egypt. They tell me this was the bed-room of Don Alfonso the First, king of Castile. Devil mend him! I suppose he did not sleep on the pavement with a claymore for a pillow, like Colin Campbell of Craigfianteoch, in Lorne, a better man—for what is any Castilian don when compared to a duine-wassal of Argyle?" The major snapped his fingers, and it was evident he was very tipsy. "But what do you want, Ronald, my boy?" he added.

"The loan of your pistols, major, for ten minutes only. I have a very disagreeable affair to adjust this morning."

"I regret to hear it; but it is with none of ours, I hope, my knight of Santiago?"

"This is no time for jesting. 'Tis with a Portuguese of Colonel Campbell's brigade," said Ronald, colouring at the necessary falsehood.

"Pah! only a Portuguese,—a dirty garlic-eating devil. There are the pistols; and remember, always level low, and fire the instant the word is given. I hope your arm is steady. A little hartshorn-water or Eau de Cologne are excellent things to rub it with. I am sorry I never keep any of these things about me: Egypt cured me of them. Take Stewart the assistant-surgeon with you, and come back when the tulzie is over, and give me an account of it."

"You forget, major. I may never come back."

"And your opponent a Portuguese! Who is your second?"

"Macdonald,—Macdonald of Inchkenneth. These pistols are very handsome," observed Ronald, with affected carelessness, as he examined the stones

with which they were studded, and surveyed the flints and locks.

"Ah! they are indeed handsome. My grandfather took them out of the Duke of Douglas's belt, after he had unhorsed him at Shirramuir. They did some execution at Culloden, too."

"On the right side, of course?"

"Yes; in the army of the Prince. Use this one, with the cairn-gorum on the butt. The other throws high, and you would need to level to the boot to hit the belt. It happened so with me at Grand Cairo, when firing at a Turkish thief. I aimed at his sash, and the ball knocked off his turban. I would tell you all the story, but there is no time. I have no fear of you; so be off, my lad. God bless you! and steady your hand. Do not let it be said that a Portuguese gained and kept the ground before a Scotsman, and one of the Gordon Highlanders."

At the gate of the Alcanzar he met Macdonald, and wrapping themselves up in their cloaks, as the morning air was cold and chilly, they hurried towards the bridge of Toledo. The streets appeared gloomy and dull in the grey light of the morning; and save their own foot-falls, no other sound broke the silence. The most public places were absolutely deserted. The shops under the piazzas of the Plaza, the stalls in the market-place, the *cafés* and *tabernas* were still all closed. Two or three halberdiers stood at the gate of El Medico's residence, and these were all they met, save a cloaked cavalier, who by a ladder of ropes suddenly descended from the window into the street, and disappeared.

On reaching the bridge which spans the Tagus, immediately beneath the cannon and battlements of the city, they found Lisle and Chisholm awaiting them. A pistol-case lay on the parapet over which they were leaning, watching the smooth waters of the river as they hurried on between rocky ledges, banks overhung with foliage, and willow trees that flourished amidst the stream. A thick white mist was beginning to curl up from the bed of the river, exhaled by the increasing heat of the morning sun, whose rays were tinging the east with red, and the cross on the beautiful spire of the cathedral, from one of the towers of which waved a broad and crimson banner, bearing the arms of Toledo—the imperial crown of Spain.

"A very disagreeable business this, Macdonald," whispered Chisholm, as he took the arm of the other, and led him aside to the parapet of the bridge, where they communed for a few seconds, leaving the principals, awkwardly enough, to stare at each other or admire the scenery, which ever they chose.

Another attempt at an amicable arrangement was made, but without success; both parties were too much exasperated to yield in the least degree. "Once more I ask you, Stuart," said Chisholm, coming forward, "cannot this unhappy affair be adjusted without recourse to arms?"

"You are a good-hearted fellow, Chisholm, and I fully appreciate your good

intentions, but your words are lost upon me; I refer you to Mr. Lisle for an answer. Mine was the insult, and any apology should therefore come from him."

"It shall not!" exclaimed Lisle bitterly; "I will rather die than apologize. Stuart, you *shall* fight me; and if not—"

"Lisle,—Lisle! your behaviour is very violent and most unjustifiable."

"I am the best judge, Mr. Macdonald. I fight in the cause of another, and not for myself," said Louis; and he turned haughtily on his heel, and again walked to the parapet.

"I am perfectly disposed to accept of an apology," observed Ronald to the seconds in a subdued voice; "but as one will not be given, on Lisle's own head will rest the guilt of the blood shed this morning. This quarrel has been of his own seeking, not mine. Heaven knows how loath I am to fight with him, but there is no alternative now. Measure the ground, and give us our weapons."

"Then, Macdonald," said Chisholm, "all hopes of an accommodation are at an end?"

"Quite: your principal is much to blame. But we must be expeditious,—see how red the horizon is; the drums will beat in ten minutes."

During the measuring of the ground and the loading of the pistols, Ronald fixed his eyes on the saffron east, where the sun was about to rise in all its splendour above the mountains of Castile. Appearing black between him and the glowing sky rose the grassy height, crowned by the black old ruins of the castle of San Servan, that fortress so famous in romance, where "Ruy, the Cid Campeador," was wont to spend the night in prayer and vigil. The sky was seen through its embrasured towers and empty windows, brightening in a blaze of glory all around, and giving promise of another day. Ronald gazed eastward wistfully. In ten minutes more the sun would be up, but by that time the eyes of either Lisle or himself might be sealed for ever. Ronald pictured what would be the emotions of Alice if her brother was slain, because she loved him well. He thought of his father, too; and remembered painfully that he would almost exult, if young Lisle was slain in this contest.

His reverie was interrupted by Alister.

"All is ready,—Lisle has taken his ground," said he, putting into Ronald's hand the cold steel butt of the Highland pistol. "For Heaven's sake, or rather for your own, appear a little more collected. Lisle seems determined to shoot you, in revenge for your neglect of his sister."

"You have mentioned the only thing which can unnerve and unman me. Chisholm has told you, I suppose?"

"Yes. An explanation might yet clear up this business."

"I scorn to ask it now!"

"Are you ready?" cried Chisholm, who had posted Lisle fourteen paces off.

"All ready."

"Stand aside, Macdonald. I believe that I must give the word."

"As you please." Alister retired, but, like Chisholm's, his heart was filled with a painful feeling of suspense and dread.

The fatal word was given, and the report of both pistols instantaneously followed. Ronald fired into the air, but reeled backwards a few paces, and sunk on the road-way. Louis's stern look immediately relaxed, and he rushed towards him, tossing wildly away the other pistol.

"Heaven be merciful and look down on me, I have killed him! O Stuart, Ronald Stuart! speak to me," and he knelt over him with all the remorse that a brave and generous heart is capable of feeling, after the gust of passion has passed away.

"The ball has passed through his breast," whispered Macdonald in an agitated tone. "Unclasp the plaid, and open his coat. There is no blood; it must be flowing internally."

These observations, though made unintentionally, added greatly to the distress of Louis Lisle; but the unclasping of the shoulder-belt, the undoing of the sash, the plaid, and yellow riband of his gorget, aroused Ronald, who, to their great surprise, rose slowly to his feet.

"Why, what are you all about, unharnessing me thus? I am not wounded, but I have received a devil of a shock. By a perfect miracle I have been saved."

"One I shall ever bless!" said Lisle, pressing his hand.

"How is this?" exclaimed Chisholm in astonishment; "the ball has glanced off and torn your coat, as if you wore a corslet under it."

"By Jove! the miniature has saved him. He wears one: I used to quiz him about it at Merida," said Macdonald, as he pulled open the yellow lapel of the regimental coat, and displayed the little portrait hung around his neck by a chain. "You perceive that the silver case has turned the ball, which has become flattened against the parapet yonder. Such a very narrow escape!"

"The miniature! how comes this to pass?" asked Lisle. "Have you still preserved and worn it thus, notwithstanding your change of sentiments?"

"Listen to me, Lisle. I vow to you by Heaven and my honour, that my sentiments are yet unchanged: they are the same as in that hour when I first received this miniature from your own hand; and from that time until this I have continually worn it near my heart, preserving it carefully and preciously as any monk does here the piece of wood which he considers a part of the true cross. Never yet have I parted with this relic for a moment, although I own that I was on the point of destroying it when I first received intimation of the intended alliance between the Earl of Hyndford and your sister, Miss Lisle,—an alliance probably formed by this time."

"The Earl of Hyndford!" exclaimed Louis, in a tone of astonishment. "Has that accursed and silly report been the cause of our long alienation and quarrelling? Hyndford,—I had forgotten that affair altogether, or never supposed it could have reached you here in Spain. We have both been cruelly mistaken, but all will be happiness again. Give me your hand, Stuart, and we will be friends and brothers as of yore. Your heart is still unchanged, and I pledge you my honour that the affections of Alice are yours as much as ever. But this hostile meeting must be concealed from her, otherwise we should never be forgiven. Our seconds will never speak of the matter; their honour is a sufficient warrant for their secrecy."

Further conversation, and the congratulations of Chisholm and Macdonald, were cut short by the drums beating, and they were all compelled to hurry off. Lisle took the arm of Ronald, and they went towards the muster-place by a different route from that pursued by their seconds, so that they might freely converse and give scope to their thoughts. A most agreeable revulsion of feeling had taken place in their minds.

"O Ronald Stuart! I have been much to blame in this business," said Lisle, "much to blame indeed. And can you forgive me?"

"Freely, Louis," replied the other, pressing his hand. "I admire the spirit with which you have perilled life and limb for the cause of Alice. And so the dear girl is yet true?"

"True as the sun! But I was infuriated,—almost maddened by your seeming indifference. It now flashes upon my mind that you mentioned Lord Hyndford in our unlucky quarrel at La Nava. Until this hour I had forgotten that; and probably but for our mountain pride and Scottish stubbornness, we might have come to a satisfactory explanation twelve months ago. What a deal of bitter feeling the paragraph of that wretched newspaper has occasioned! But that is all at an end, and now, thank Heaven! we will no longer greet each other like hostile clansmen, with gloomy and averted eyes, as our sires did of yore. In all her letters to me Alice has deplored that for twelve months past you have broken off all correspondence with her,—indeed never having written once since you left Lochisla; and my excuses appear to have been very unsatisfactory to her."

"I feared that my letters might fall into Sir Allan's hands, and excite his displeasure. And afterwards our quarrel at La Nava appeared to confirm my suspicions—"

"Say no more of them. I have in my possession a letter from her to you. I was intrusted with it on leaving home; but so great was the irritation I felt from our meeting at La Nava, that instead of delivering it, it has lain in my baggage until this hour,—nearly a whole year."

"Cruel and foolish! Ah, Lisle! how could you be so vindictive? Doubtless

it would have unravelled this matter."

"You know not by what indignant sentiments I was prompted. Pride hardened my heart, for I loved Alice dearly; but, Stuart, I have heard some strange stories whispered at our mess-table, in which your name was entwined with that of a certain Donna Catalina. You change countenance."

"Poor Villa Franca; she was indeed a very beautiful woman, and I will acknowledge that, jealous and irritated as I was at Alice's supposed desertion, I yielded greatly to the charms of the noble Spanish lady; but I swear to you, Louis, that Alice—Alice alone, is the only being, the only woman I have ever truly loved! How much I long to behold this letter, and read the words her white hand has traced, although so many months ago!"

"Gentlemen, the regiment has fallen in," said the serjeant-major, breathlessly overtaking the loiterers. "The adjutant sent me to look for you, Mr. Lisle. You are to carry the king's colour to-day, sir." They hurried off.

Ronald derived the most exquisite pleasure from this reconciliation with his old friend; and it was alone equalled by the delightful idea that Alice yet loved him, and was the same gentle, winning, and blooming creature as ever,—and would yet be his, when all the perils of campaigning were past. Eagerly he longed for an opportunity to write: and what a deal he had to tell her,—of love and war, of future happiness, and mutual tenderness!

The long-detained letter of Alice could not be procured from the depths of Lisle's baggage-trunks, until the halt at the ruinous little town of Villa Mayor. Although the march was only twelve miles, and lay along the left bank of the Tagus, among the most beautiful scenery,—wood and water, rocks and ruins, fields and vineyards,—it appeared to Ronald the longest and most wearisome he had ever performed. As soon as he received the letter from Louis, he rushed away to a secluded nook or bower of orange-trees, by the river side, and prepared to con it over in secret. He hastily kissed and broke the seal, which bore the crest of the Monteiths of Cairntowis, with the motto *Keepe tryste*. Ronald knew the signet ring of his mother, which he had given to Alice when he bade her adieu in the lawn before Inchavonhouse.

"**Inchavon, Perthshire**, 10th December, 1811.

"MY DEAREST RONALD,

"Louis has already sent you no less than three letters, addressed to the regiment via Edinburgh and Lisbon, but, alas! we have never yet received any answer, and I fear that none of them have reached you. I know not how the posts are arranged

in Spain, but I am afraid that all our letters have miscarried, as you must have written Louis and me many by this time. This one I send in the care of my dear brother, who leaves us to-morrow to join your regiment. Ah! I shall be very lonely without him, and shall weep long and bitterly when he is gone. I shall have no one then to whom I can impart my thoughts, or speak of you; and my tears and anxiety will be redoubled, when you are both exposed to the dangers of war. Since you left Perthshire I have never heard of a victory without weeping, and I dare not read the lists of 'killed, wounded, and missing,' lest the name of one should be there,—one on whom my thoughts ever dwell as their dearest treasure. I cannot look at the paper, which a servant brings every morning from Perth on horseback, but I sit breathlessly, in fear and trembling watching the face of papa, as he reads them over at breakfast. O goodness guide me, Ronald! my anxiety and pain, lest his features should change, are indeed beyond description. How drearily the days have passed since you left us; and I generally spend them in wandering among the places you and Louis loved best. And—but enough of this: I must not make my letter a dismal one. Louis some time ago appeared at the Perth ball in the uniform of the Gordon Highlanders; and I assure you that all the young ladies were quite in love with him, fairly touched with the scarlet fever. He outshone the militia, yeomanry, and even the gay tartans of Highland gentlemen from the hills. How well a gay uniform looks in a ball-room! and such a flutter it creates in the hearts of the young ladies! I believe you soldiers would be very arrogant fellows, if you really knew what we think you. But, as Mrs. Centlivre says, 'There's something so jaunty in a soldier,—a kind of *je ne sais quoi* air, that makes them more agreeable than all the rest of mankind.' If this is the case, we are to be excused for being subdued by the gay epaulet.

"Lord Hyndford has been down here residing with us for some time past, enjoying the grouse-shooting with papa. He is a very nice old gentleman, with white hair and a purple face,—the last occasioned, I suppose, by his drinking so much of port; for every day after dinner he takes for his share a bottle of papa's own 'particular.' He has become very peculiar and marked in his attentions to me of late, (the idea of the thing!) and, dear Ronald, it would almost make you jealous, could you but see him hanging over me with a sentimental expression on his droll old face, when I am playing on the harp or piano. But I love to tease him, and always sing,

"He's coming frae the north that's to marry me,
He's coming frae the north that's to marry me;
A feather in his bonnet, and the kilt aboon his knee:
He's a bonnie Highland laddie,—but you are no he."

”Indeed he annoys me very much, as I cannot be troubled with his attentions,

and you know I never flirt. In this affair, that which annoyed me most was a notice which appeared in a newspaper about his proposals to me. Such horrid prying creatures those news-people are! But the editor came here to Inchavon, and made so many apologies, that he got off free, although papa had threatened to horsewhip him. But I shall soon be rid of Hyndford, as the grouse-shooting ends to-day; and he must soon go to Edinburgh, to attend a meeting of Scots peers at Holyrood.

”Your father, poor man, must feel very lonely now without you, especially as he lives so far up the glen, in that dreary old tower, surrounded by heather hills, water, and rocks. I wish greatly that papa and he were good friends; but he is so very proud, and so very distant, that I see no chance of its ever coming about. Attended by my servant, Jessie Cavers, I rode up the glen one Sunday, and went to the old kirk of Lochisla to see him; and I declare that I could with pleasure have given him a kiss for your sake, Ronald, such a noble-looking old gentleman he is! He sat in his dark old oaken pew, with his white hairs glistening in the sun, which shone through the western window, and he often bowed down his head on his huge clasped bible. It was to pray for you he did so—I am sure it was, because I saw his lips move and his eyes brighten. He never looked once towards the pew of the Corrie-oich family, with whom I sat, and so I never encountered his glance; but his fierce-looking old piper, who stood behind him, accoutred with dirk and claymore, stared at me fixedly during the whole service.

”When the aged and venerable-looking old minister prayed, first in Gaelic and then in English, for the success and safety of the British army, my heart beat earnestly and responsive to the words which fell from his withered lips. Indeed you may be sure it did.

”Whether or not papa favours the attentions of the Earl of Hyndford I do not know; but he often speaks kindly of you, and I love to listen to him when he does so. He has not forgotten that dangerous ducking at Corrie-avon. Ah! what a day of terror that one was!

”I am very busy just now, working a pair of colours for the Greek Light Infantry, the regiment of my uncle Ludovick. They are of white silk, quite covered with embroidery and needle-work. I am heartily tired of them: but Louis’s old flames, the Graemes of Corrie-oich, are living with us just now, and we ply our needles from day-dawn till sun-set like so many Penelopes, and the standards will soon be dancing in the breezes of the Ionian isles. When the Gordon Highlanders want a new pair of colours, you will know where to apply. With a thousand prayers for your safety, and a thousand more for your return, I must now conclude, as papa and Hyndford have just come from the moors, with six

men laden with grouse-bags, and I must hurry down to the drawing-room. So believe me to be, my own dearest Ronald, yours ever,

ALICE LISLE."

"P.S. Do endeavour to send your next letters by some other way, as they must all have mis-carried. Try Cadiz, or Gibraltar,—but perhaps it is impossible. Jessie Cavers, my foster-sister, (who is at my side while I am writing,) begs you will remind her to her 'Jo and dearie O,' a young man named Evan Iverach, who belongs to your company; and tell him, that he is not forgotten by *the* heart he has left at *hame*." A.L.

"Alice, my own beloved Alice! and you are yet true!" exclaimed Stuart aloud, pressing the letter to his lips. "What a wretch and madman I have been to doubt you for a moment! How unworthy I am that you should condescend to write to me! Alas! oh, Alice, how much I have wronged you by my false and wicked suspicions of your truth and constancy. Ah! my own dear girl, my repentant heart turns to you more fondly by a thousand degrees than of yore." He drew forth her miniature to gaze upon it, and while doing so, let fall the letter.

"Upon my word, a most industrious creature!" said Louis Lisle, who had been standing by, as he picked it up. "She has given you no less than four closely written pages, of a very pretty lady-like and current little hand. I have been sitting beside you for this hour past, skimming stones along the surface of the Tagus,—not a very intellectual amusement. I did not wish to interrupt you, but I thought you would never come to a halt. How often have you read this letter over?"

"Three times."

"Thrice? See what it is to be in love!"

"O Louis! how humbled and mortified I am. What shall I say to Alice when I write to her? I dare not tell the truth,—and yet, by heavens! I cannot deceive her. Is there no alternative, but to wound her feelings by a whisper of my cursed suspicions?"

"Come, my old friend, I will endeavour to make your peace; and Alice, I believe, will not be very inexorable. I am billeted on the house of the *Escrivan*, or town-clerk of this place, Villa Mayor, and there we shall have writing materials in abundance. Let us set about our correspondence, and have our letters ready

for Lisbon, to be despatched by the first orderly dragoon who rides to the rear."

CHAPTER II.

THE BALL.—THE BELL-FIGHT.—AN ADVENTURE.

"For she laid adown
——the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,
And Benedictine gown."
Marmion.

With every demonstration of joy Sir Rowland's division of the army were received by the good people of Aranjuez,[*] a very interesting town, which stands near the Tagus and Garama, about twenty-seven miles from Madrid, and twenty-one from Toledo. Aranjuez is surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills and green forests, and contains the celebrated summer residence of the kings of Spain; around which spread the royal gardens, justly considered the most beautiful and elegant in Europe. The town contains a Prado, or public promenade, four miles in length, which crosses the Tagus twice, by gaily-painted wooden bridges, before it loses itself among the orchards and fragrant orange thickets.

[*] Pronounced by the Spaniards *Arunwhais.*

The streets of the town are perfectly regular, even monotonously so, but richly ornamented on the outside with projecting cornices, pilasters, and balconies. There is a quietness, and an air of dignity and "calm repose," about Aranjuez, which is not often met with in Spain, but which marks it as being strictly the residence of people of rank and fortune. The town contains three churches, and an area for bull-fights. The Highlanders halted in the large square, which is paved with marble, and contains the splendid brass statue of Charles the Fifth. The Emperor is represented armed cap-a-pie, trampling down heresy in the form of four arch-heretics. The statue and pedestal were decorated with flowers—indeed all

the streets were strewed with them—in honour of the occasion.

Wellington, who by this time had been created a Marquess, lay before Burgos, besieging the castle, and the surrender of its garrison was looked for daily.

As the second division expected to remain some weeks at Aranjuez, they were billeted as usual on the inhabitants; and the long arrears of pay having been received, they were enabled to make themselves tolerably comfortable. The officers of the Highlanders having so much loose cash on their hands, determined to get rid of it as soon as possible, by giving a splendid ball to the ladies of Aranjuez and the officers of the division.

A committee was appointed to arrange matters, despatch the invitations, and get the palace, which had been procured for the purpose, duly fitted up and decorated. In this princely and spacious building the Supreme Junta of the Spanish government were installed, and held their first meeting in 1808. Joseph Buonaparte occupied it previously to his retreat to Valencia, and a great quantity of his household stuffs, crystal, &c. were found in it, very opportunely, and seized by the committee to equip the supper tables. From Madrid some thousand variegated lamps were procured to illuminate the gardens and avenues leading to the palace, and nearly twelve hundred oil paintings, many of them by the best ancient and modern masters, were collected from different parts of the building, and hung up in the suites of apartments appropriated to the festivities. The troops entered on the 1st of October,—the ball was to be on the night of the twentieth, and of course all the unmarried ladies of Aranjuez were in a flutter,—nay, in fact, in a state of extreme excitement about the affair. The ball, the ball to be given by the Scottish officers, was the only subject discussed at the *soirées*, *tertulias*, and parties at the houses of the citizens: at the Prado, and in the *cafés* and *tabernas* in the town. The committee, which consisted of Captain Seaton, Macdonald, and Ronald Stuart, usually met every evening in the palace, to send off the invitations and discuss some of King Joseph's wine.

"I must send one of these to the young ladies of my billet," said Alister on one occasion, as they sat writing, folding, and sealing the cards at an open window, where they were luxuriating in the fragrant perfume of the gardens, smoking cigars, and sipping Volnais. "They are both young and pretty," continued Alister, "but sadly curbed in by an old maiden aunt, who regards them as very dangerous rivals."

"They are likely to prove so," said Seaton, the captain of the light company; "the girls have superb eyes and teeth. In this capital Volnais I drink to their healths, and that of the ex-king of Spain, to whom we are so much indebted for assisting us with our entertainment, by leaving his 'gudes and gear' behind him."

"Here is the name of the Condé de Truxillo," observed Macdonald, consulting the invitation-list. "Seaton, no notice appears as yet to have been sent him."

"A general invitation has been sent to the officers of his regiment. I inclosed it myself, but I have sworn to touch these matters no more. This Volnais obscured my faculties so much yesterday, that I enclosed cards to dons which were written to donnas, to dukes that were written to plain senores, and *vice versa.* I will leave these matters to you Mac, and Stuart my subaltern; while, as president of the committee, I will smoke my cigar and drink with you, so long as the Volnais lasts. *A-propos,*—push the decanters this way!"

"So the condé has left the staff," observed Stuart.

"He belongs now to the 4th Spanish infantry; they are with De Costa's brigade."

"Here is a card for Senores the four most worshipful alcaldes of Aranjuez."

"What is the use of asking these people to a ball?" said Seaton. "Nothing more than mechanical citizens, whose blowsy wives and daughters will be intruding themselves, bedizened in the dresses of the last century."

"It is impossible to pass them over, and vulgarity may be excused in a magistrate. Here are invitations for the 10th Portuguese, for the Catalonian Caçadores, the 39th and 66th British, and all the cavalry brigades. Now, then, for the ladies."

"God bless them!"

"*Amen!* Seaton. Donna Isabel de Campo and her four daughters. These people live near this, do they not?"

"No; in the marble square, three doors from the palace D'Alarino. Two of the light dragoons are quartered there, and a pleasant time they seem to have of it, as the five donnas spend the day in flirting, waltzing, or twanging the guitar and piano. And then mamma, although a little old and stale, is of a very gay disposition."

"A comprehensive phrase in Spain. You are a most gossiping fellow, Seaton. It is a marvel to me how you learn the history of people as you do. Don Felix Joaquin, knight of Calatrava,"[*] continued Alister, reading from the list.

[*] This order still exists, and is possessed of fifty-six commanderies, and sixteen priories in Spain.

"A base rogue," was Seaton's comment, "and one who kissed King Joseph's hand, the day before he fled to Valencia. You, as a true knight of Santiago, should certainly break his head for him, Stuart."

"Thank you: I shall not take the trouble. Read on, Macdonald."

"The very noble cavalier,—what a most unpronouncible name,—Don Zunasbul Ascasibur de Yñürritegui."

"A fellow as mad as Cuesta himself! Invite him, by all means."

"He is my *patron*," said Ronald, "a fine old fellow,—a true Spaniard of the old school; and, like Cuesta, sticks to the plumed beaver and slashed doublet of his grandfather's days. Who comes next?"

"Micer Astuto Rubio, and his lady."

"Pshaw!" said Seaton, "an *abogado*; in other words, a rogue. *Astuto?* ah, he is well named; that is Spanish for craft or chicanery, of which he has as much, I believe, as any Edinburgh W.S."

"Donna Elvira Moro, *Calle Mayor*. Any scandal about her, Seaton?"

"Plenty, and to spare. The town is full of strange stories about her and her *escudero*, or gentleman-usher, an office to which she suddenly raised him from being a *moco de mulas*.[*] His goodly proportions pleased the eye of the widow."

[*] A mule-driver.

"Scandal again! The Duke of Alba de T—— and his two daughters,—Donna Olivia and Donna Virginia."

"Three separate cards must be sent to them," said Stuart, inditing them while he spoke.

"The duke is supposed to be a traitor, and in the French interest."

"I assure you, Seaton, his daughters are not," replied Ronald, writing the while. "They are very beautiful girls, and Lisle is a lucky dog to have his billet in the palace of De T——. He is continually with them, either among the gardens, riding on the Prado, or flirting at home, I believe. The young senoras are never to be seen, either at church or *la Posada de los Representes*, without their most faithful cavalier and *escudero*, the Honourable Louis Lisle."

"The mess get very little of his company just now. He never appears among us but at parade; and when the word "dismiss" is given, he vanishes like a ghost at cock-crow. I wonder what the Duke thinks of the matter?"

"I believe, Alister, he never thinks of it at all," replied Seaton. "He is too proud to hold communication with any one, and sits in his library smoking Guadalaxara cigars and drinking sherry from dawn till sunset, keeping every one at an awful distance."

"But his daughters—"

"Are strictly watched by an old duenna. I got a complete history of the family from my old gossiping patron. It appears that when old Mahoud takes the duke to himself, the two girls will be immensely rich. Donna Olivia, who is as gay a coquette as one can imagine, has a castle and estate of her own, lying by

the banks of the Nive, on the French side of the Pyrenees. Her sister, Virginia, who has lately obtained her liberty from a convent, by the Pope's dispensation dissolving her vows, has become the leading star of Madrid and Aranjuez. By the death of her cousin the Marquess of Montesa, who was killed near Albuera, you will remember, she has succeeded to large estates in Valencia,—Valencia *la hermosa*,[*] the land of wine and olives. The fair sisters are closely besieged by all the threadbare cavaliers in the province,—fellows who trace their pedigrees beyond King Bamba's days; so that Lisle has very little chance."

[*] The beautiful.

"He will forget them when the route comes," said Alister. "I have been desperately in love about eight times, since we landed at the Black Horse-square in Lisbon; and Louis will get over this affair, as I have done others. The flirts of one garrison-town efface the impressions made by those of the last."

"Now and then a raw sub is meshed and caged, though!"

"Or an old field-officer, in desperation of getting a wife at all; but generally we *rough* it too much at present to find time to fall in love."

On the evening of the Highlanders' ball all Aranjuez was in a state of commotion: myriads of lights were burning throughout the palace and royal gardens, where every thing bore evidence of the good taste and expedition of the committee.

For promenading there were set apart a long suite of rooms, extending from one wing to the other. Their floors were tessellated, and the ceilings gilded and painted in fresco, while the walls had been adorned by a thousand choice pictures, selected by the committee. These rooms had quite the appearance of an exhibition; but at intervals were hung wreaths of laurel, intermingled with festoons of tartan plaids, garlands of flowers, glittering stars of bayonets and claymores, pistols and musquets, which were reflected in many a polished mirror hung between the white marble pilasters which supported the ceilings of these splendid apartments. In every one of the long suite was a richly carved marble mantel-piece, and on each stood a magnificent alabaster French clock. Behind rose tall mirrors encircled by gorgeously gilt frames, all of Paris manufacture, part of King Joseph's household stuff, abandoned by him on his hasty flight.

The rooms were brilliantly lighted up, as indeed were the courts, arcades, and every part of the spacious palace. The large hall appropriated to the dancers was decorated like the promenade. The regimental band occupied the music-gallery, in front of which hung the yellow silk standards of the corps. The cur-

tains of the twelve lofty windows were hung in festoons, showing the open casements and steps of white marble leading to the illuminated gardens, in the bowers of which the refreshment-tables were laid, and attended by waiters.

A Highland guard of honour, consisting of a hundred grenadiers, were drawn up in the portico to receive, with the usual compliments, the magistrates and persons of rank; and the members of the committee might be seen hurrying through the lighted rooms in full puff,[*] dressed in their gayest uniform, ordering here and there and every where the servants and attendants, and getting every thing in due order before the company began to arrive. About nine o'clock came the four pompous alcaldes, clad in gowns of red scarlet. Three brought their wives with them,—swarthy old ladies, wearing their hair twisted in two gigantic tails, reaching far below their waists. Each came in an old-fashioned carriage, attended behind by a couple of strapping alguazils, armed with halberts or blunderbusses. The guard of honour presented arms, the drum beat a march, and the four senores, doffing their sombreros, were ushered into an outer apartment, where Fassifern stayed to receive the company. He was dressed in full uniform, and wore his kilt and purse, instead of the *truis* and spurs of a field-officer, and his plaid of dark green tartan was fastened to his left shoulder by a splendid silver brooch, which flashed and sparkled in the light of the lustres. After the arrival of the unfashionable alcaldes, the company continued to pour in without intermission, until the rooms were crowded. All the staff arrived about twelve o'clock; but the general himself, for some reason, was unable to attend.

[*] A military cant word for full dress.

The interior of the stately palace presented a scene of no ordinary splendour on that evening. Hundreds of uniforms of cavalry and infantry officers—British, Spanish, Portuguese, and German, were glittering every where. The ladies were attired in all the colours of the rainbow, and their light floating dresses were seen mingling among smart light dragoons, Scottish Highlanders, green-clad caçadores, and clumsy German riflemen, and, I must remark, that the latter were perhaps the most vulgar and ungainly fellows that ever appeared in a ballroom. There were numbers of cavaliers attired in the Spanish doublet, a close-fitting vest with sleeves. A smart mantle dangled from their left shoulder, and nearly all wore knee-breeches and broad white collars around their necks—a costume at once smart and picturesque. Many wore the garbs and badges of their national military orders: there were knights of Calatrava and Alcantara, wearing,—the former red crosses, the latter green, upon black velvet tunics; and knights of "the

Band," wearing the scarlet scarf of their ancient order. But the most picturesque costumes were those of four knights of the religious order of Redemption, who appeared clad completely in white, with a large black cross on the breast of the silk tunic, which reached to the knees. A white velvet mantle flowed behind, and each wore three white feathers in a small round cap of a flat shape, like the bonnet of a Lowlander.

These singular garbs added greatly to the gaiety of the scene; but if the interior of the palace presented a blaze of splendour, the illuminated gardens were a realization of fairy land. Two channels having been given to the Tagus, the grounds of the palace were enclosed as an island, being completely surrounded by the stream, amid which many a stately swan was swimming about, or slowly sailing as they spread their snowy plumage to the breeze. The trees were thickly planted on each side of the walks, and their boughs, which were beginning to wear the brown tints of autumn, embraced each other, and being carefully pruned below, formed long and beautiful sylvan arcades, such as are not to be found in any other garden in Europe. A thousand variegated lamps, clustering like enchanted fruit, were hung upon their boughs, or stretched from tree to tree in festoons, illuminating with a blaze of light the deepest recesses, where even the meridian sun could not penetrate.

White marble statues were gleaming, and the rushing waters of the famous *jets d'eau* were sparkling like showers of diamonds in the artificial light, which likewise revealed the glories of the rich parterres, where flowers of every tint, crimson and gold, purple and blue, orange and red, were yet budding and blooming in spite of the advanced time of the year. The strains of music were wafted divinely through the open casements of the hall, where the dancers were wreathed in the quadrille, or wheeled round in the giddy waltz,—the light feet of the Spanish girls gliding like those of sylphs or fairies, while their airy drapery, floating about over the marble floors, seemed like the garments of the same imaginary beings. What a strong contrast all this scene formed, when compared with the misery and discomfort which the troops had endured so long, and that which they were soon again doomed to suffer!

Like the other officers of the Highlanders, Ronald was accurately attired in full uniform, wearing his cross on his breast. His kilt, which contained ten yards of the Gordon tartan, reached to within three inches of his knee; from this the leg was bare to the swell of the calf, where his silk hose of red and white dice, were gartered with knots of red ribbons. A handsome brooch confined the folds of his plaid above the left epaulet, and a tasselled sporan, the mouth of which was hidden by a fox's head, dangled from his waist. His patron, Don Ascasibur Yñürritegui, who was attired in the dress and armed with a long Toledo of Charles the Fifth's days, had introduced him to several pretty girls, with all of whom

he had danced and flirted, promenaded, handed scarfs, bouquets, and ices, and acquitted himself as a very accomplished caballero. For Louis Lisle he looked every where in vain: he was the only one absent.

"Where is Lisle, Alister?" asked he of Macdonald, who moved slowly past, with a fat old lady leaning on his arm. Although richly jewelled and robed, she was confoundedly ugly, and wore a white veil hanging down her broad back from a comb at least one foot six inches high. "It is very odd," continued Ronald, "that he should absent himself on this occasion."

"The Duke of Alba de T—— and his two charming daughters have not arrived yet. Louis will come with them."

"Ah! I had forgotten. I long to see those beauties of whom I have heard so much. But how is it that I have not seen you dancing to-night?"

"Tush!" whispered the other ruefully in English. "Campbell, designedly I think, introduced me to this old woman, his *patrona*,—wife of the *Contador*, or Steward of the palace. She sticks to me like a burr, and I am compelled to waste the night as her *escudero*, when so many delightful girls are present."

"The flower of Madrid and Aranjuez."

"I will revenge myself on Campbell for this trick of his."

"Try if Blacier, of the 60th, will relieve you of her. Germans are not very fastidious in their tastes. He is standing among the dancers, alike regardless of place or persons, smoking his long German pipe as coolly as he would do in a guard-room."

Alister led the unconscious lady off, and succeeded "in turning her over to Blacier's command," as he said when he rejoined Ronald.

"There is Seaton," said he, "striving to make himself agreeable to the gay widow of the Calle Mayor, Donna Elvira Moro."

"Seaton can easily do that; he is a very handsome fellow. Who is the young lady to whom Bevan has attached himself so closely?"

"One of rank, I believe, and a widow too,—the Condessa Estremera."

"How gaily she flirts."

"Poor Bevan! he is a simple fellow, and I believe she is making a sad fool of him. Last night I saw her amusing herself thus with one of the 34th, and—— Hah! here comes Lisle, with the duke and the young ladies. Beautiful girls!"

"Beautiful indeed!" echoed Stuart, as the tall and portly duke, attired in an old-fashioned dress, with his broad beaver under his left arm, and, encased in a white glove, the little hand of Donna Olivia drooping on his right, entered the dancing-rooms, followed by Lisle leading Donna Virginia. Both the sisters were tall, and of queen-like figures. Their dresses of white satin were richly trimmed with fine lace, and lofty ostrich-feathers nodded above their glossy ringlets, amid which many a diamond and other gem sparkled and blazed when they moved.

Long white Spanish veils, descending from the head, hung down behind them, giving to their figures still greater grace and dignity.

"They are lovely creatures!" said Macdonald. "But Virginia moves like an empress among all the plumed and jewelled beauties around her."

"What a thrice enviable sub is Master Louis, to be their cavalier! All eyes are turned upon them."

"And a knight of Alcantara, yonder, leaning against the mantel-piece, seems to eye Lisle with a very unfriendly look. In truth, Donna Olivia appears like some being of another world. Her features are Grecian rather than Spanish; and her eyes—by Jove! they are brighter than diamonds, and flash like lightning when she smiles.

"You seem quite enraptured with her."

"I am a connoisseur; but fair as she is, there is one bonnie lass in the Western Isles, who to me seems fairer still. Olivia is a bold and beautiful girl, but there is something softer, yet not less pleasing, in the hazel eyes of Virginia."

"Virginia! By heavens, I should know her face! Where can I have seen it before?"

"Hush! they are moving this way, smiling and coquetting as if they meant to be the death of us all."

"Faith! Alister, I hope Lisle will have the charity to introduce us."

"Tush! A Spanish officer has carried off Olivia. He has engaged her for the next dance. He is bowing to you, Stuart."

Ronald's eyes at that moment encountered those of the Condé de Truxillo. Both bowed, and the condé placing his arm around Olivia, wheeled her into the circle of the waltzers, where they were seen only for a moment now and then. Fassifern led away the duke to one of the refreshment-tables in the garden; while Lisle, followed by the sharp eyes of many a jealous cavalier, advanced towards Stuart and Macdonald, with Virginia leaning on his arm.

"I wish one of you would find a partner," said he; "we want a *vis-a-vis* for the next quadrille."

"With pleasure."

"I am engaged to dance with Donna Isabel de Campo," said Alister; "but pray introduce me, Louis."

"And me," added Ronald. "A most lucky dog you are!" These observations passed in English; but the formal introduction was gone through in choice Castilian. "I have surely had the happiness of seeing Donna Virginia before," said Ronald. "It is impossible I could ever forget."

"Holy Mother! *Senor Officiale*," exclaimed the young lady with an air of pretty surprise, as she raised her fine eye-brows; "is it possible that you recognise me, arrayed as I now am in a garb so different from that which I wore in the

convent of Santa Cruz?"

"Do I behold the Madre Santa Martha of Jarciejo in Donna Virginia? What riddle is this, senora?"

"A strange one truly, senor, and a very agreeable transformation," replied the lady, blushing and smiling as she glanced at her figure, which was fully reflected in an opposite mirror.

"What is all this?" asked Lisle in surprise. "Then you are acquainted with each other, it seems?"

"O yes, Don Louis; quite old friends indeed," replied the lady, with a vivacity which piqued Don Louis a little. "We met on a sad occasion—a very sad one, truly,—of which I will give you the history when we are at leisure. 'Tis quite a romance, and Cervantes of Esquivas,[*] or Juan de Valencia,[**] have never written any thing like it."

[*] Cervantes is said to have been born at Esquivas, near Toledo.

[**] Author of *El Patranuelo*, and other old-fashioned works.

"Allow me to lead you, Donna Virginia; the dancers are arranging themselves. Had we not better take our places?"

"Certainly, senor; but our *vis-a-vis*, remember. Shall I introduce your friend to the Condessa Estremera.—she waltzes beautifully."

"The Condessa is engaged; she appears resolved to make quite a conquest of Bevan of ours."

"Are we to look all night for a *vis-a-vis*? Oh! here comes my sister Olivia; she is beautiful enough to make him die of love, and I shall introduce him, if it was only to make Truxillo jealous."

Truxillo regarded Stuart with no pleasant eye as he carried off his donna. However, he endeavoured to dissemble, and said with a smile, "I congratulate you, senor, on obtaining the highest order of knighthood that a Spanish king can confer. You will find it easy work to protect the pilgrims who visit Compostella from the insults of the Moors in the nineteenth century. I am myself a commander of the order," he added, displaying a richer cross, around which was the motto,—*Sanguine Arabum*.

"I am again to be the rival of this fiery condé. I am always in some confounded scrape," thought Ronald, as he led his partner to her place.

"*Santa Anna*, senor! these rooms are suffocating," said the lady.

"As soon as the dance is ended, permit me to have the honour of leading

you to the garden."

"Pray relieve me of my scarf." The thin gauze screen was transferred from the white shoulders of Olivia to Ronald's arm.

"See, senor,—the Condessa; how well she is looking. Ah! had she only worn her tiara on her black curls, she would have been matchless."

"Impossible, while Donna Olivia is present."

"Look at that officer of Villamur's regiment,—a handsome cavalier; he bows. How do you do, Pedro? What can that old knight of Calatrava be whispering to the rich widow of the Calle Mayor. Ah, I would give the world to know! How they smile at each other. Love must be very agreeable. *Santos*! I have dropped my fan. Quick, senor; pick it up, before the feet of the dancers—— A thousand thanks," she added, as Ronald restored it to her. "I would not have it destroyed for the universe,—'tis a present from Don Carlos Avallo: he, too, is looking this way. How d'ye do, Carlos?" and thus did Olivia run on during all the intervals between the figures of the dance.

No sooner was the quadrille over, than the galopade was proposed.

"*Viva la galopade!* cavaliers," cried Cameron, striking his hands together. Lisle still kept Virginia, and Ronald her gay sister, and all the cavaliers of Old and New Castile grew hot with indignation and jealousy. Away flew the dancers to the crash of music from the orchestra. The scene was indeed glorious. A hundred couples went round hand in hand, plumes waving, ear-rings trembling, jewels and epaulets, stars and medals flashing and glittering, spurs and poniards clanking, the light feet and muslin drapery of the graceful Spanish girls flying about and mingling with the buckled shoes and dark green tartans of the Highlanders. Bravo! It was beautiful.

The dance was over, and the ladies, breathless and overcome, with bosoms panting, cheeks blushing, and eyes sparkling, clung to the arms of their cavaliers, who led them through the open casements to promenade in the cool gardens, where the female waiters, little sylph-like girls about twelve or fifteen years old, clad in white, with their black curls streaming about, glided through the illuminated arbours and walks, handing ices to the ladies, and cool and sparkling champagne or Malaga to the gentlemen. When promenading with Olivia through one of the beautiful walks, from each side of which he was constantly culling fresh flowers for her bouquet, Ronald heard familiar voices conversing in an orange-bower, the interior of which was brilliantly illuminated with parti-coloured lamps.

"Yes, sir; we turned their flank, and fell upon them with the bayonet, and with God's help cut to pieces every mother's son of them in five minutes," said Campbell within the bower, striking his heavy hand emphatically on the seat; adding afterwards in another tone, "Most excellent champagne this, Don Asca-

sibur, and much obliged we are to the ex-king of Spain for leaving it here to be drunk by better men."

"*Satanas* take the ex-king!" replied Yñürritegui. "And so it was as you tell, that this very noble old cavalier was slain?"

"Ay, sir; the shot struck him *here*, and he fell sword in hand from his saddle. A gallant fellow was Sir Ralph, and under his command I was initiated into all the sublime mysteries of soldiery."

"Campbell has been fighting Egypt over again to my *patron*," thought Stuart. "Major," said he, looking in, "how can you and Don Ascasibur be so ungallant as to forsake the ladies for champagne flasks? Fie upon you! senores."

"The ladies will not break their hearts: such a fright old Yñürritegui is!" whispered Olivia behind her fan.

"Campbell, do you mean to sit here all night?" said Chisholm, looking in on the other side as he passed with a lady. "They are arranging themselves for the galope again."

"It is fit only for subs," replied the major testily. "The idea of a field-officer galloping any way but on horseback!"

"It seems quite the rage here at Aranjuez," said Stuart, as Chisholm moved off. "But then the girls here galope so beautifully, they are in the right to have it so. So, major, you do not mean to join the dancers to-night?"

"Yes," answered the other, shaking the flasks, which all proved empty; "but neither at waltz, quadrille, or galope. I have no idea of flying round a room at the rate of ten miles an hour, in mortal terror the while of crushing the ladies dear little feet and white satin shoes with my heavy brogues. Besides, the dance is too intricate for me—'chassez to the right and left, turn your partner, balancez, turn again, galopade à la chassez to places!' Pooh! I would rather dance Tullochgorm or the *Ruighle Thulaichean*, or any other decent fling; but I have no love for your Spanish dances and galopade quadrilles. They ill become the *sporran* and *breacan-anfeile* of the Highlandman, and are no more to be compared to a strathspey than a Toledo is to a real-fluted Andrea Ferrara." The major snapt his fingers, and chanted with a loud voice a verse of the Grant's reel:

"There needs na be sae great a phrase,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,
I wadna gie our ain strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' em.

They're douff an' dowie at the best,
Douff and dowie, douff and dowie,
They're douff an' dowie at the best,

Wi 'a' their variorum.

They're douff and dowie at the best,
Their allegros and a' the rest,
They canna please a Highland taste,
Compared wi' Tullochgorm."

Stuart was leading away Donna Olivia, who laughed excessively at the major's song, which sounded wondrously uncouth to her ears, when Campbell called to him. "I say, Stuart," said he, "I am going to show the ladies here a new fling. I have sent for Ranald Dhu and the six pipers. Fassifern, Ronald Macdonuil, and myself, are about to perform the sword dance. We astonished old Mohammed Djedda with it in Egypt. You must join us."

"I should be most happy, but I am the honoured cavalier of one of the prettiest girls in Aranjuez, and it is impossible I can join you; but we will witness it in the hall."

A few minutes afterwards the pipers arrived, and preparations were made for the Highland dance. Claymores were taken from the wall, and laid across each other on the floor. The colonel, Campbell, and two other officers took their places, while seven pipers stood at the end of the hall, and on a given signal struck up an appropriate air.

"*Santa Maria!*" screamed the senoras, and "*Morte de Dios!*" growled the senores, while they covered their ears with their hands to protect them from "so dangerous an invasion." Many an English and Irish officer did so likewise, for the sound of the pipes in the vaulted hall was tremendous. Away went the dancers to the sound of the first note, and continued to leap, skip, and "hooch and hoo!" while they flung about with true Scottish spirit and agility, moving with miraculous precision among the bare blades of the claymores, while applauses loud and long rewarded them. 'Twas a new sight indeed to the Spaniards, and the eyes of every Scotsman present lighted up with enthusiasm, although many of them had never witnessed the martial dance before. Long after the others had resumed their seats, the gigantic Campbell, strong, active, and filled with perfect delight, continued to dance, wave his arms and the folds of his enormous kilt and plaid, until at last compelled to sink into a seat, amid loud huzzas and astounding vivas.

Quadrilles, galopades, and waltzes again followed, and before the ball broke up the light of the morning sun had replaced the illuminations of the palace and its gardens. Then came the gallant farewells, and shawls, mantillas, and furred shoes were in requisition, the gentlemen making themselves as busy as possible

in wrapping up the ladies to protect them from the chill morning air; and then, muffling themselves in their cloaks, many an officer and cavalier strode away behind the lumbering carriage or sedan, which conveyed to her home some lady to whom they had been particularly attentive during the night, and whom, as in duty bound, they wished to squire to the door of her own residence,—the streets of continental cities not being very safe at these hours, when *picaros* and *valientes*[*] of every kind are on the watch, to exercise their talents on the unsuspecting or unprotected.

[*] Rogues and ruffians, or bravos.

On the following evening a grand bull-fight was to be held in the marble square, for the entertainment of the British. The splendid mansion of the Duke of Alba de T—— formed nearly a whole side of this elegant Plaza, and from its windows an excellent view could be obtained. The Condé de Truxillo, Fassifern, Seaton, Lisle, and Stuart, and many other officers, dined with the duke that day. The ladies were all smiles and beauty, although a little pale with the fatigues of the preceding evening; but Olivia, and her cousin the bright-eyed condessa, were as gay and vivacious as ever. The dinner, which consisted of a variety of stews, cutlets, and light confectionary, began by a course of fruit, just as ours ends. Afterwards came chocolate, and cigars for those gentlemen who chose to lounge on the balconies, and plenty of flirting, waltzing, singing and music at the piano and guitar, for those who remained with the ladies.

During the whole day preparations had been making for the approaching display. All the streets leading to the Plaza were strongly barricadoed with bullock-cars, mule-carts, and every thing that could serve to enclose the arena, and prevent the escape of the bulls.

Four of them were imprisoned in a den at one end of the square, where they were undergoing a process of torture, being goaded by steel pikes through holes in the roof, to rouse them to the requisite pitch of madness and ferocity. It was a beautiful sunny evening, and about four o'clock the people began to collect; at six the Plaza was crowded to excess,—the balconies, roofs, and windows were all taken possession of, and hundreds of pennons, streamers, and garlands flaunted from the houses; while the bands of the 28th and the 6th Portuguese caçadores filled the air with strains of music, and delight shone in every Spanish eye at the amusement promised by their favourite national pastime.

The guests of the duke occupied the large balcony, which extended along the front of his house. It was covered with a piece of tapestry, and the ladies

were seated in front, while their cavaliers stood behind. Here Stuart missed the condé, who had been by Donna Olivia's side all day. He was about to inquire for him, when Balthazzar suddenly appeared in the arena, arrayed in a very singular garb. A small velvet cap was on his head, fully displaying his short curly hair and fine features. He wore a close-fitting doublet of black cloth, slashed with white; a mantle of a bright orange colour hung on his left arm, and in his right hand he carried a short pike about five feet long, the head of which was of sharp and bright steel. Three other cavaliers, similarly accoutered, made their appearance in the arena, and the people raised a cry of "*Viva Baltazar, el valiente soldado! Viva el gracios caballero Ascasibur Yñürritegui*! Here are the bulls! Here are the bulls!"

Balthazzar kissed his hand to Donna Olivia, who threw him a flower from her breast, and he placed it in his cap.

"Beware, my poor condé," said she, "and be not over rash. Remember that your foes are bulls from the Xamara."

"Are they different from any other bulls, Donna Virginia?" asked Louis.

"Oh! have you not heard? They are the very fiercest in Spain,—perhaps in the world. When once aroused, nothing tames them but being slain."

"And to these the condé is about to oppose himself. Are you not concerned for his safety, senoras?"

"Balthazzar has a sharp pike and a sure heel," answered Olivia, fanning herself, "and I have no fears for him."

"Have you ever seen any one killed in the arena?"

"Yes. A bull of Xamara tossed our poor cousin, the Condé Estremera, into the air, and he came down dead."

"And still you like this sport?" said Cameron, "sport which our Scottish ladies would shudder to look upon."

"Yes, senor. *O viva Santissima!*" answered all the ladies at once, clapping their white hands, "here come the bulls!"

A shout of delight from the multitude shook the Plaza. A sort of portcullis had been raised, and forth from his den rushed a bull into the arena, his eyes darting fire, with nostrils elated, and mouth covered with foam, the hair of his neck bristling up like the mane of a lion, and every muscle quivering with the torture he had undergone. He rolled his red eyes about, as if to select a convenient object to attack. The condé waved his orange mantle across the face of the bull, which, uttering a roar, plunged forward upon him. Closely pursued by his formidable adversary, Truxillo ran round the arena. This was the most dangerous part of the game, as a fall, or the least false step, would be certain death. At the moment when the bull was preparing for a grand plunge "with hoof and horn," the condé sprung over a barrier, dropping his mantle as he did so. It was instantly trans-

fixed and tossed into the air by the bull, which was now attacked in the rear by Don Ascasibur, who carried a red mantle and a pike, which he plunged into the brawny flank of the victim. With a roar of fury and agony the beast thundered over the marble pavement after his assailant, but was diverted from the pursuit, being pierced by the pikes of a third and fourth cavalier, who kept him galloping round the arena in every direction, dropping their mantles and leaping the barriers whenever the danger became too pressing, until he sunk exhausted and bloody at the base of the statue of Charles the Fifth, where the condé put an end to its agony by plunging his pike repeatedly into its body. Three others were slain in the same manner, and all the performers had narrow escapes for their lives at different times. The four bulls were sent away to the kitchen of the *Casa de los locos*[*] for the benefit of the patients and the poor people of the town. Extraordinary agility, skill, and courage were displayed by the four cavaliers in this daring Spanish game, which, though not less cruel, had in it, by the personal risk incurred, something infinitely nobler and more chivalric than the brutal custom of bull-baiting, which so long disgraced South Britain.

[*] Asylum for the insane.

In the course of an hour all the bulls had fallen in succession, and yielded the palm to their four tormentors, who were greeted with enthusiastic applause by the multitude, on whose shoulders they were lifted up, and carried by force triumphantly round the square.

When this display was over, the condé resumed the brown uniform and silver epaulets of the 4th Spanish infantry, and rejoined the duke's guests in the balcony, from which they were beholding other feats of dexterity. A tall and powerful Spaniard, Gaspar Alozegui, the strongest and most athletic man in the two Castiles, entered the arena, bearing a large cannon-shot, and a sledge-hammer. He waved his broad hat to the populace, who cheered their favourite, as no man yet had ever rivalled him in feats of strength and agility. Taking up the cannon-shot, the weight of which I have forgotten, he poised it for a moment in his hand, and then tossing it from him, sent it whizzing along the pavement, as a bowler does a cricket ball, from one end of the Plaza to the other, where it rebounded against the wall of a house and lay still. Alozegui arrogantly challenged any man among the thousands there assembled to throw it within ten feet of the spot where it then lay, offering in that case to forfeit a purse of ten *onzas* presented to the victor by the fair *patronas* of the day,—the daughters of the Duke of Alba de T——. Alozegui looked around him triumphantly; but no man answered the chal-

lenge, which was not delivered in very moderate language, and he now grasped the shaft of his ponderous hammer. Swinging it thrice round his head, he hurled it from his hand with the speed of a thunderbolt. The crowd for a moment held their breath, and the gaze of their eyes followed the semicircle which it described through the air. It alighted close by the shot, and again the cheers of the people broke forth; after which Gaspar repeated his challenge in the same arrogant terms.

"Such an insolent dog as this Alozegui deserves to be beaten," said the condé.

"He has thrown well," observed Stuart, as he leant over the balcony; "yet the sport loses its zest when there is no competitor."

"*Viva*, Alozegui," said Donna Olivia. "He deserves to kiss my hand, and should but for his bushy black beard."

"I am convinced that my servant, Dugald Mhor, old as he is, will throw these matters further," said Fassifern, who was indignant at Alozegui's challenge, and burned with eagerness to see him beaten. He spoke in English, "I suppose Dugald is below among the servants. He followed me here. As sure as my name is John Cameron, he will beat Alozegui."

"Let some one inquire if he is below?"

"I say, colonel," cried Seaton, who was seated at the other end of the balcony, with his glass at his eye; "surely, Campbell of ours is about to answer the challenge of the Spaniard. He has entered the arena."

"Now, by heavens! well done Colin, and Dugald Mhor too,—honest old Dugald! Look to yourself, Micer Alozegui; you will scarcely hold the prize against two such men," said Cameron in great glee. "Major, are you about to contend with this impudent loon?"

"We are indeed," replied Campbell, "and hard work the braggadocio will have to beat us. Dugald and I are comrades to-day, and mean to show these dons the mettle of Highlandmen, and what sort of muscle brose and brochan can produce. I have hurled a stone three times the size of that shot from Craigfianteach into Lochawe, and mean to strain every nerve to give the dons a surprise. I thought it a shame that so many British men should stand by quietly, and let a Spaniard boast thus. Throwing the hammer is a national amusement, and I hope that neither don or devil will beat a Scotsman at it. After we have conquered Senor Alozegui, Dugald and I will challenge the whole crowd to a game at quoits or shinty, whichever they like best."

Alozegui, on understanding that they had answered the challenges, laid the shot and hammer before them, carefully marking the places where they lay; a needless precaution, as he very soon learned.

"Dugald Cameron, my man, take you the shot," said the major, "and let them

see that you are 'steel to the bane.' Ye showed true mettle the day Alexandria was fought, and can do so here, lyart though your pow may be. I will take the fore hammer, and now, my lads! here are two decent Highlandmen against all the bearded braggarts on this side of the Pyrenees."

"I am auld enough to be his gutcher twice ower and mair, as my siller haffets and runkled cheeks may tell you; but I will never shrink frae the task when a Hieland gentleman like your honour commands me," said Dugald, as he cast down his bonnet, sword, and plaid; and taking up the ball as if it had been a walnut, without once looking at it, threw it over the houses at the end of the square by a single swing of his arm.

"The Cameron for ever! Well done, Dugald!" exclaimed the major. "A foot lower and the Emperor had lost his head, which would have spoiled all the sport."

Dugald laughed, stroked down his white hairs, and casting his plaid around him, withdrew under the balcony where the delighted Fassifern was standing. He received a cheer, though not a very cordial one, from the people; and Alozegui bestowed upon him a most formidable scowl of rage and hatred, to which he replied by a laugh, and a direction to "gie the gowd he had tint to the puirfolk." Now came the major's turn, and the Spaniard began to tremble for his fame. The former, after examining the ponderous hammer to assure himself that the handle was firmly fixed into it, swung it once around his head, and straining every muscle to conquer, cast it from his hand with a force and swiftness truly amazing. Describing a complete arch over the spacious Plaza, it whirled through the air, and passing over the houses of an adjacent street, lighted among the reeds on the banks of the Tagus, where it was discovered next day. However, it could not be found for that night, and the only reward Campbell received from the Spaniards for his prowess, was the half-muttered ejaculation of astonishment at the flight taken by the missile. The dons were very angry at their hero being beaten by a foreigner and heretic, and so astonished at his wonderful strength, that they readily adopted the opinion of some old Capuchine padres, "that he had been assisted by the devil."

"Hoich, major! weel dune," shouted old Dugald, waving his bonnet. "Fair play a' the warld ower,—*Cothram na feine*,[*] as we say at hame in Lochiel. Ferntosh and barley-bannock are the stuff to mak' men o'; no accadenty and snail-broth,—deevil tak' them baith!"

[*] The equal battle of the Fingalians,—a Highland proverb.

"Long life to you, major!" cried many of the Highlanders; and hundreds of sol-

diers belonging to the 66th, 34th, and other corps of the division huzzaed him loudly. On receiving from the duke's *contador* (steward) the purse of thirty *onzas*, Campbell, knowing that Dugald was too proud to touch a maravedi of the money placed it in the hands of Alozegui, telling him not to be cast down, as Dugald and himself had beaten better men than ever trod the realm of Spain. This taunt only stung more deeply the fiery and enraged Spaniard, who scorned to receive the purse, which he tossed among the people, and leaping over the barriers, disappeared. Campbell waved his hummel-bonnet (a plain cap without feathers) to the assembled multitude, and withdrew to finish the night over a pigskin with Don Ascasibur, and tell endless narratives about Egypt and Sir Ralph.

During that evening, from a thousand little circumstances which it is needless to rehearse, it was evident to Ronald that Louis Lisle was deeply enamoured of the beautiful Virginia; and that she was not unfavourable to him was also manifest, although she took every means to conceal it: but Ronald had a sharp eye for these matters. What the opinion of the proud old duke might be on such a subject it was not difficult to say; and his conscience would not in the least have prevented him from employing the poniard of some matador to rid his family of such a suitor. However, his mind was at that moment too much taken up with political schemes to permit him to observe the growing passion between his daughter and the young Scottish subaltern, to whom twenty days' residence in his palace had given every opportunity to press his suit that a lover could desire.

The party at the De T—— palace broke up about eleven o'clock, and ruminating on the probabilities of Louis's winning the donna, should he really propose for her hand, Ronald passed slowly through the marble square, and down a street leading towards his billet, which was near the Calle Mayor. A gush of light, streaming into the darkness through the open portal and traceried windows of an illuminated chapel, invited him to enter, in expectation of beholding some solemn religious ceremony; but the building was entirely empty, and the blaze of light proceeded from some hundreds of tapers burning around the gilded shrine of the patron saint of Aranjuez. From this spot a strong flood of crimson light glared through the nave and chancel, tinging with the hue of blood the black marble pavement, the slender pillars, and the groined roof of fretted stone work. Many mouldy portraits of saints adorned the walls; around the lighted shrine were hung certain strange memorials, placed there by the piety of those whom the saint was supposed to have cured. Crutches, even wooden legs and many stucco casts of deformed limbs, were there displayed, all doubtless the work of cunning priests, to impose upon the credulity of the Spaniards. But what chiefly raised his wonder, was some hundred little images of children, with which the place was absolutely crowded.

His attention was next attracted by several standards, the trophies of war, which hung from the highest part of the chapel, where the roof rose somewhat in the form of a dome. These belonged to various nations; and one, by the crescents on it, he judged to be Moorish; but the other two he remarked more particularly. The one was the ensign of a British ship of war which had been wrecked on the coast of Spain; the other was an ancient Scottish standard of white silk, crossed with St. Andrew's blue cross, and splendidly embroidered with silver thistles. About the latter he could not obtain the least information, although he made every inquiry next day. But it was probably the regimental colour of some of the Scottish auxiliaries who served in the Low Countries against the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Ronald was revolving in his own mind the means of capturing or destroying both these standards, when the entrance of the Condé de Truxillo diverted him from his purpose, and saved to the Spaniards those trophies which most likely still adorn the chapel royal of Aranjuez.

"What adventure are you in search of now, senor, that you have not yet sought your billet in the Calle Mayor?"

"I understand," replied the condé, "that the Carbineros of Medina del Campo marched into Aranjuez about sun-set. I have a very dear brother, an officer in them, and I am searching for some one to direct me to his quarters, late as the hour is. Manuel and I were very dear friends in youth, being educated together at our old castle near Truxillo; but we have not seen each other for six years, as our regiments have always campaigned in different provinces. He was a slender youth, without a hair on his lip when I saw him last, but now he must be a stout and well-whiskered cavalier. Ah, how much I long to behold him!"

"I regret, condé, that I can give you no information as to where the quarters of the Carbineros are. Some of the quarter-guards may perhaps inform you."

"Ho! senor Stuart," exclaimed Truxillo, as his eye fell on the shrine with all its little images and blazing tapers. "Lo, you now! behold what rogues our padres are. Do you know the meaning of all these images?"

"No. I own I was somewhat puzzled to discover."

"Well, senor," answered Truxillo with a loud laugh, "all these are the images of children born unto ladies who had long pined for them before they had visited this miraculous shrine,—so the monks tell us."

"Strange, if true."

"Its reputed sanctity is truly amazing; and all the dames of old and new Castile, Leon, and Arragon consider a visit to this place a sovereign remedy. They are shown the tomb of the saint in the vaults below; and its influence, aided by the attentions of a few stout padres, certainly has brought about singular cures; and—— But here comes my servant; he has been searching for the quarters of the Carbineros, and will—— Hah!" exclaimed Truxillo, his countenance changing as

a servant belonging to the De T—— family entered the chapel, "do you seek me?"

The servant, who wore the orange-coloured livery of the duke, replied by whispering something into the ear of Don Balthazzar, whose "brow grew black as thunder."

"*Falsificador!* madman! what is this you have dared to tell me?" he exclaimed, furiously grasping the menial by the throat.

"The solemn truth, most noble condé. Release me! San Juan in the wilderness could not speak more truly. I am faithful to you,—I am, by the virgin!—Oh—" It is probable the fellow would never have spoken again, had not Ronald released his neck from the clutch of the condé.

"Cavalier!" exclaimed the latter, seizing Ronald's hand, "I know you to be brave and honourable as man can be. I have been basely betrayed this night. Will you follow me, that I may recover my lost honour, or perish? A deadly insult has been offered to me."

"I pledge you my word I will, Balthazzar. But what has this trembling blockhead told you?"

"Satanas! that Donna Olivia, to whom not an hour ago I plighted my love and troth, has even now a cavalier in her chamber."

"Impossible; he lies!"

"He does not—I know that he does not. I have bribed him to watch his mistress, and have long found him faithful. But Olivia, false and base Olivia! I have long suspected her falsehood and coquetry, and this night I will fearfully revenge them both upon herself. It must be Carlos Avallo. Malediction! I will slay him before her face. By our Lady of the Rock! my most sacred oath, I swear it!"

Balthazzar rushed away from the chapel, and Stuart followed to prevent him, if possible, from committing any outrage, and pursued him through the dark streets at his utmost speed. In a few seconds they stood before the mansion they had quitted but a short time ago. It was completely involved in darkness, save one room, from the windows of which a light straggled through the white curtains upon the balcony from which they had witnessed the bull-fight.

"The sisters sleep in separate apartments; that is Olivia's," whispered Truxillo, in a voice husky with the passions which possessed his heart. "Did you not see a tall shadow pass the window?"

"Let me entreat you, noble condé, to stay—to hold but for a single moment!"

"*Carajo!* may it be my last if I do!" replied the other fiercely, as he grasped a carved stone ornament projecting from the wall, and swung himself into the balcony, where he drew his sword, and applied his eye to the opening of the window curtains. Apprehensive that he might commit some rash deed, Ronald followed him, but with infinite trouble, rage having enabled the condé to climb

by means which the other could not find. He was not without some secret fears that this rival cavalier might be Louis Lisle, and grasping Truxillo by the arm, he detained him by main force; and had the parties within been less occupied with themselves than they were, they must undoubtedly have heard the half-muttered threats of Balthazzar, and the scuffling which ensued on the balcony.

Through the half-opened casement they surveyed the chamber and its occupants. The sleeping-place of the donna was certainly a splendid one; the hangings, the chairs, the bed, and covering of the estrado, raised at one end of the floor, were all of white or rose-coloured velvet, fringed and embroidered with gold, and every thing else was of corresponding richness. A lamp, the globe of which was of rose-coloured glass, shed a warm light through the apartment; and three large vases of fresh flowers, placed on the verge of the *estrado*, gave forth an agreeable perfume. In a splendid easy-chair, which glittered with gilding and gilt nails, the beautiful Olivia was seated near her toilet-table,—the looseness of her dress and the disorder of her ringlets showing that she had been preparing for repose before her visitor had entered by the window, a place of ingress used oftener than the door by Spanish lovers. An officer in a Spanish cavalry uniform was kneeling at her feet, and his cloak and helmet lay on the floor near him.

"Lo! holy Virgin, a pretty piece of daring," said the lady as they approached the window.

"Pardon me, beautiful one!" said the officer; "and remember, that if I had not visited you thus, I might never have seen you at all."

"And what then, senor?"

"Cruel Olivia! can you trifle with a passion so earnest as mine?"

"A pretty fellow, to visit me like a bravo by the window, with a sword in your hand. This will teach me to bolt my shutters more securely. Come now, senor, I have heard quite enough of this: you must retire. *O santos!* should you be seen!"

"Heartless Olivia! and you bid me leave you thus?"

"Heartless? You are mighty gallant, *mi amigo*!"

"Remember that we march to-morrow, and I may never see you again."

"Well, I suppose I shall not want for a husband. The Condé of Truxillo, Pedro de Esquivias, or Carlos Avallo will, any of them, be glad to have me when I choose. O 'tis a gay thing to be loved by many cavaliers! But leave me, I intreat—no, command you!" said the lady, curling up her black tresses with her white slender fingers.

"Grant me but a single kiss, Olivia, and I will retire never to trouble you again. I will seek death in our first encounter with the enemy."

"You love yourself too well for that."

"Grant me but one salute, and I leave you. Oh, after all the misery of my

long year's absence, do not refuse me that!"

"Take it, thou false *picaro*, and be gone," replied the coquettish girl, pouting her cherry mouth, towards which the cavalier advanced his well-moustached lip.

"Perish first!" exclaimed the enraged Truxillo, rushing forward and driving his sword through the back and breast of the unfortunate lover. "Die in your audacity, whoever you are, you false interloper! Die, villain!" he added, repeating the stab; and the cavalier died without a groan. "Farewell for ever, false Olivia," cried the savage condé; "and remember that my love, unworthy as you are of it, alone protects you from the effects of my fury and disappointment!" He was about to leave the place, when his eye fell upon the countenance of the cavalier he had so ruthlessly and rashly slain. He was now lying stark and dead, the blood from his wounds streaming over the oaken floor of the room. Truxillo groaned deeply, and striking his forehead, staggered back, dropping his sword, while his countenance became pale and livid.

"*El Espiritu Santo santissimo! O Dios mio!*" he cried in a husky voice, the tone of which was heart-piercing and horrible, "I have slain my brother,—my brave brother! *O Manuel el Carbinero*,—is it you I have murdered? Ten thousand maledictions blast you, false woman! blast you, and follow you to all eternity! 'Tis you have wrought me this deadly sin!" And rushing into the balcony he sprung into the street, leaving Ronald in the apartment of the lady, standing irresolute and stupified with amazement at the suddenness of this catastrophe, which came to pass in less time than I have taken to record it. Olivia, whose voice had at first failed her in the extremity of her terror, now shrieked long and loudly to arouse the household, which she did so effectually, that in three minutes they were all mustered in her chamber, armed with all sorts of weapons, and among others Lisle with his drawn sword. Great indeed was their astonishment to see Ronald in the sleeping-room of Donna Olivia at midnight, and an officer lying dead on the floor, weltering in a pool of blood. All clamorously demanded an explanation of this singular scene, and the indignation of the old duke it is impossible to describe, such room was there for scandal in the story of a cavalier being slain at night in the bed-room of his daughter. *Diavolo!* thought he, all Spain, from Cape Ortegal to Gibraltar, will be ringing with the tale! Some of the females attempted to recover the lady, who had sunk on her bed in a swoon; while the others required Ronald, in shrill tones of anger and surprise, to give a detail of the matter. This he hesitated to do, not wishing to criminate the condé, and still less wishing to be taken for the culprit himself.

In this dilemma the bustle and commotion were increased by the arrival of a pompous old alcalde, who dwelt opposite, and Senor Rubio, the notary, with six alguazils, who were for arresting Ronald on the instant; but, laying his hand on the hilt of his dirk, he vowed to run through the heart the first who laid a finger

upon him; upon which the limbs of the law, recoiling, began to handle the locks of their heavy *trabucos*, and more blood would probably have been shed had not the alcalde interfered.

This magistrate, whose person and authority the duke had always treated with contempt, was very glad to have opportunity of affronting him; and assuming as much consequence as he could, he administered an oath to Ronald in the Spanish manner, by swearing him across his sword and dirk, and then desiring him to relate what he knew of this matter,—and word for word his relation was committed to writing by the keen-eyed and sharp-visaged little notary. Englishmen might have doubted the relation; but in Spain the words of an honourable cavalier are not to be questioned, and the account proving satisfactory to the alcalde, in so far as concerned Ronald Stuart, he was permitted to retire; while Senor Rubio, and the six men with blunderbusses, were sent off in pursuit of the condé, whom they discovered on his knees before the very shrine he had made the subject of his jests an hour before. Three days afterwards he was tried by a general court-martial, composed of Spanish officers,—the General de Costa being president. Every man supposed his death to be certain; but he was, strange to say, acquitted. Yet life was no boon to poor Truxillo, who, being continually haunted by the miserable death of his brother, became reckless of existence, and by throwing himself madly in the way of danger, endeavoured to perish in expiation of the crime he had committed in the blindness of his rage and jealousy.

This occurrence appeared for the present to be a death-blow to the hopes of Louis Lisle. On the following day the duke quitted Aranjuez with his family, retiring suddenly no one knew whither. He was so much enraged against Olivia, who indeed was not to blame, that he threatened to disgrace her for ever, by incarcerating her in the *Monasterio de los Arrepentidas*[*] of Seville, but the tears and entreaties of Donna Virginia made him change his intention: the sisters were separated, and for ever. Olivia was sent off to Galicia, and confined in a solitary convent among the wild ridges of the Sierra de Mondonedo, where, if living, she probably still resides.

[*] A place of confinement for ladies who misbehave.

CHAPTER III.

THE SKIRMISH OF FUENTE DUENNA. THE LEAGUER

OF ALBA DE TORMES.

”Comrades, should it please high Heaven
That we see Castile once more,—
Though we now go forth as outcasts,
Sad, dishonoured, homeless, poor,—
We’ll return with glory laden,
And the spoilings of the Moor.”
The Cid.

About the middle of October the legions of Marshals Jourdan and Soult, having formed a junction, advanced, under the command of the latter, fifty thousand strong, from Valencia on Madrid, and in a short time arrived within a few leagues of Aranjuez. Combining his forces with those of Generals Elio and Freire, and with the Spaniards of Don Carlos de Espagna, Sir Rowland Hill, at the head of forty thousand well-tried soldiers, moved to meet them, commencing his march from Aranjuez on the 23rd of October. Many a sorrowful farewell was said that morning, and many a bright eye grew dim as the retiring sound of the British drums died away among the windings of the Tagus. Crossing the latter, immediately below the walls of the palace, the division marched to Colmenare de Orijo, a town of Toledo. Here different brigades were posted at the several fords of the Tagus, by which Soult’s infantry might attempt to pass. That at Fuente Duenna fell to the lot of the first brigade. On the second day after their bivouacking there, a party of the enemy’s cavalry were seen approaching the river, either to cross or reconnoitre. The light company of the Gordon Highlanders, and Captain Blacier’s company of the German rifles, were ordered to receive them at the ford. Unluckily for himself, Lisle accompanied ”the light bobs” on this occasion as a volunteer, in place of an officer who was sick. Seaton commanded the whole, and he placed the companies in ambush among some laurel-bushes, willows, and long reeds which grew by the water-side, overlooking the place where the dragoons must cross if such was their intention. The Highlanders knelt down on the right knee, but the Germans, who were posted among the reeds, lay flat on the ground, and levelled their short rifles over the glazed tops of their shakoes, which they placed before them. All were ready to let fly a volley among the unsuspecting Frenchmen, who came forward at a gallop with their carbines unslung. The party consisted of nearly eighty heavy dragoons. An officer of cuirassiers and two others in staff uniform accompanied them. They drew their bridles at the brink of the river, and from his place of concealment Stuart recognised his friend

De Mesmai in the cuirassier; and in one of the staff officers Monsieur Law, the Baron de Clappourknuis, in the other their late host at Aranjuez, the Duke of Alba de T——.

"Stuart," whispered Lisle, "is it possible, that the officer without the epaulets is really the duke?"

"Without doubt 'tis he."

"How base and treacherous!"

"He will receive the reward of his treason instantly. It has always been whispered that he was false to King Ferdinand and his allies. A base wretch! to join the invaders of Spain when so many brave men are struggling with heart and hand to free her from the grasp of the Buonapartes. Evan, bring that officer down. Mark him when the word is given to fire."

"Were he as fause as Menteith, an ounce o' cauld leed will settle him," replied Evan, blowing some loose powder from his lock. "I'll tak' him canny, and wing him aucht inches below the oxter,—that's just in the belt."

"No, no, for God's sake!" whispered Louis to Stuart. "He is the father of Virginia de Alba, and were he as false as Judas that would save him."

"Hush!" whispered Seaton, in the same low tone; "they are conversing, and I should be glad to hear the news from Valencia."

"*Monsieur le Duc* will perhaps be so good as to inform us whereabouts this infernal bridge of Fuente Duenna lies?" said De Mesmai.

"Ah!" chimed in the baron, in Spanish, "this is the place marked by the marshal in his map."

"The bridge lies lower down the river," replied the duke; "but there is a ford in this neighbourhood, which I will have the honour to show you, senores."

"Do so, in the devil's name!" replied De Mesmai hastily, while he surveyed the duke with an expression on his dark face which showed how much he despised such an auxiliary, notwithstanding his rank. "We have ridden quite far enough to see this ford, and when you have shown it to the baron, I will condescend to thank you."

"De Mesmai!" said the baron, holding up his hand warningly.

"Bah! *Monsieur le Baron*,—I comprehend; the British may look for a visit in the morning, which will yield them more danger than delight. With your permission, Monsieur Law, after reconnoitring this ford we will retire as soon as possible, because I little like riding here in such open ground. These bushes opposite might contain a thousand riflemen, or some of your bare-legged brethren, than whom I would rather face the devil. I have provided a white stake to drive into the ground, which will mark the ford for Lamorciere's chasseurs, who lead the way in our attack on Hill's troops to-night."

"Colonel Lamorciere shall be welcome," said Seaton, as De Mesmai moved

his horse along the bank of the river, chanting gaily an old rondeau beginning with,—

"Pauvres Anglais!
Vous n'avez que de l'arrogance,
Pauvres Anglais" &c. &c.

At that moment the Highland bugle-boy, who knelt by Beaton's side, sounded "*fire!*"

The bugle of the Germans answered on the left, and a deadly volley, which enveloped the whole place in smoke, was poured upon the French, nearly one half of whom fell from their saddles. Horses were seen galloping off in all directions, dragging their riders by the stirrup, or leaving them dead or dying on the ground. The traitor dashed his spurs into his horse's flanks and fled at full gallop, followed by the baron. But not so De Mesmai, whom this unexpected volley had filled with the utmost astonishment and ferocity, although it struck a temporary panic into the dragoons.

"Revenge! *mes camarades.* Follow me,—charge! By the name of the bomb! I will cleave to the gorget the first dastard who attempts to fly. *Vive l'Empereur*! Forward—charge!"

Animated by his example they crossed the ford at a gallop, dashing the water right and left; and forcing their horses up to the bank, even while exposed to a hot fire, they fell furiously with hoof and blade among the scattered Highlanders. It was a piece of unexampled daring for a few dragoons to cross a river thus, under a hot fire from concealed musquetry.

"*Vive l'Empereur*! No quarter to the Germans!" shouted De Mesmai, leaping his horse over the underwood.

"Form square!" cried the deep and manly voice of Seaton. "Rally—rally! Quick, Highlanders, or you will be cut to pieces! Close to the centre, Germans and all; blow 'the assembly,' bugler! Hurrah, my lads! Shoulder to shoulder, Highlandmen! and give them the bayonet." With the speed of thought a rallying square was formed. Blacier's Germans and the Highlanders mingled, the long cross-hilted daggers of the former acting efficiently as bayonets when fixed to the muzzles of their rifles. Ronald, while dressing, as it is technically termed, one of the faces of the square, narrowly escaped a cut aimed at him by a dragoon, who was instantly shot by Angus Mackie, a private next to him; and Seaton had the feathers of his bonnet sheered away by a stroke from De Mesmai's sword. But the cavalry seldom came within a pike's length of them; the stunted brushwood, the broken nature of the ground, and the prostrate men and horses encumbered their advance, while the steady fire of the little square disheartened and disconcerted

them. After two brave attempts to break the band of infantry, De Mesmai was compelled to recross the ford, leaving sixty dragoons killed or wounded behind him. Notwithstanding the hasty nature of their retreat, the twenty who retired with him cut down and carried off several of the straggling riflemen, dragging them across their holster-flaps by main strength of arm. Some of these they were soon compelled to drop, when galled in retreat by the fire of the victorious light infantry, who again lined the bank, and kept blazing away so long as they were within range.

"Well done 60th!" exclaimed Seaton, as he mustered the companies together. "'Tis hard to say whether the green jackets or the tartan kilts have distinguished themselves most this morning. Lamorciere's chasseurs will have need of other guides than the dragoons, if they visit the ford to-night."

"Ech! Capitan Seetun, ve hab gibben dem *der teufels braden* for breakfast,—ech, ech!" replied Blacier, cramming a quantity of tobacco into the bowl of a huge pipe, which he had pulled from the mouth of a Serjeant and transferred to his own. "Someting more betterer dan *wahr-sagen* vill show dem de foord dis nicht,—de dragoons scarcely vill."

"No; I believe not, Blacier, my old boy! I shall recommend you to the notice of Sir Rowland in my account of this affair. You have long deserved the brevet."

"*Der teufel hole dich*! I tink so. Much obleege—much obleege to you."

The Germans had suffered a little in this skirmish, several having been sabred by the French; but only two Highlanders were killed, and these by carbine shots. Every where around the ground was strewed with helmets, holsters, sabres, carbines, and the bodies of men and of horses, rolling about in agony, or lying motionless and still in death. Sometimes a head, a boot and spur, or a gauntletted hand rose above the clear current of the Tagus, and then sunk for ever, as some wounded straggler was swept down by the stream. All the arms and accoutrements lying scattered about were, in conformity with the usual practice, dashed to pieces and completely destroyed by the victors.

"We have escaped easily in this affair," said Seaton, as he mustered his light company, "only a file of men killed; it might have been otherwise, had we formed square less promptly. You have done well, my gallant green feathers; you will get an extra ration of grog for this morning's work!" The Highlanders responded by a cheer.

"The Germans have lost many; they lie pretty thick by the water-side."

"Owing to their own want of alacrity in answering the bugle-call. Many of them have their heads cloven down, even through the thick shako."

"This will teach the survivors to be smarter in future. But where is Lisle?"

"Stuart, by all that is sacred he has fallen into the hands of the enemy!"

"He was close beside me at the moment the bugle sounded to form square,

and I have not seen him since."

"I am afraid, sir, Mr. Lisle is either killed or taen awa' prisoner," said Serjeant Macrone, whose bare knee was streaming with blood, which he endeavoured to stanch by a piece of tartan rent from a plaid.

"I saw him stagger under the stroke of a sabre at the moment the dragoons broke frae the bushes amang us," observed another serjeant, advancing his pike.

"And has any man seen him since?" asked Stuart of the company breathlessly. Angus Mackie and several others replied that they had, but their statements differed so much, that it was impossible to come to any conclusion. One declared he had seen him killed "by a cloure on the croon, and that he never moved after it;" another stated that he slew the dragoon who wounded him, but all agreed that he had never gained the shelter of the rallying square. Evan Iverach declared, that "as sure as death he saw puir Maister Lisle grippit by the craigie, and dragged awa' by the officer of the cuirassiers." This last statement appeared the most probable, as no traces of poor Louis could be discovered on the ground save his sword and bonnet; and Stuart had a dim recollection of seeing a red uniform among the few prisoners whom De Mesmai's dragoons succeeded in carrying off amid the smoke and confusion.

From Villa Corrijos Ronald next day wrote to Alice, giving an account of her brother's capture in the skirmish at Fuente Duenna; and while he deplored the event, he said not a word of his fears that he was desperately wounded. He had very little doubt that he must have been so, otherwise De Mesmai, strong and muscular as he was, would have found it no easy task to carry off Louis in the singular manner he did.

Sir Rowland Hill, on discovering that King Joseph and Marshal Soult were manoeuvring to outflank him, prepared instantly to frustrate their intentions, and give them battle. Making forced marches by day and night at the head of the British, Spanish, and Portuguese troops he had collected together, he skilfully took up a strong position in front of Aranjuez, intending there to await the arrival of the enemy.

The troops passed the Puento Largo at midnight. A detachment of miners were making preparations to blow it up, and their red lights, burning under the ancient arches and twinkling on the sluggish waters of the Jacama, presented a singular appearance as the regiments marched above them towards the hills, where the position was taken before day-break. But no battle ensued. A despatch arrived from the Marquess of Wellington, saying that he had been forced temporarily to abandon the siege of Burgos, and order an immediate retreat into winter-quarters in Leon and Estremadura,—a sad and most unlooked-for reverse of fortune to the army, who had driven the enemy before them into Valencia and the northern provinces. Marching through the wide and fertile plains, in the

midst of which rises Madrid, the second division commenced its retreat in obedience to this order. Passing close by the walls or earthen defences of the Spanish capital, they bivouacked at the distance of a league from it. There was no time to pitch tents, and the troops lay on the ground without them, exposed to all the misery of a most tempestuous night of wind and rain. Next night they were more comfortably lodged in the village and spacious palace of the Escurial. Ronald's light company were quartered in the royal chapel, a building which contains the tombs of all the Spanish monarchs, from Charles the Fifth down to the present age. Crossing the Guadarama, or sandy river, at a village of the same name, the great mountain was ascended, through which lies the famous Guadarama Pass, and from which an extensive view of the surrounding country is obtained.

The mountains were growing dark as the setting sun, enveloped in dun clouds, sank far behind them, and the effect of the scenery was considerably heightened by the march of so many thousand men,—cavalry, infantry, and artillery, up the winding pathway among the silent and solitary defiles, disappearing, section after section, with colours waving and arms glittering, down the deep pass of the Guadarama. Afar off on the plains of Madrid, leagues in their rear, clouds of dust rolling along the green landscape, marked where the pursuing squadrons and battalions of Soult followed the route of Sir Rowland with precision and rapidity.

On the 8th November, to cover the retreat of the whole army, and to stay Soult's advance, the first brigade was ordered to defend, to the last extremity, the town of Alba de Tormes, near the eastern borders of the ancient kingdom of Leon; a forlorn sort of duty, when it is remembered that so small a band were to oppose the concentrated French army, 90,000 strong, I believe. On being reinforced by General Hamilton's Portuguese brigade, and two companies of Spaniards under the Condé de Truxillo, every means were taken to render the place as strong as possible by erecting trenches and barricading the streets,—almost useless precautions, as the town, which lies low, is commanded by two adjacent heights. Its appearance, when the brigade entered it, was indeed miserable and desolate, having been completely deserted by the inhabitants, into whose hearts the retreat of the British and the advance of the French had stricken terror.

The soldiers had tasted nothing for thirty-six hours, and although drenched with rain, and wearied by a hard and forced march, had to remain under arms around the old and ruinous Moorish wall of Alba, during a very chill November night. About dawn, as no enemy had yet appeared, after guards had been posted, the troops were dismissed to take up their quarters in the dreary and empty houses, where every thing had been carried off or destroyed by the inhabitants before their flight. The drizzling rain which had fallen during the night had drenched them to the skin, but a dry article of clothing was not to be had, as the

baggage was far away on the road to the rear. However, doors and shutters were torn down from the houses, and blazing fires kindled on the tiled floors, around which officers and soldiers crowded together without ceremony. Another day of starvation was before them,—untold gold could not have produced an ounce of flour in Alba. At night, by the great exertions of the commissary, some horse-beans were procured, and a handful given to every man; but early next morning some muleteers arrived from Corde Villar, bringing a few small bags of flour, which were received with wild demonstrations of thankfulness and joy by the starving brigade.

Every man who could bake was set to work, and the ovens were speedily filled with tommies, as the poor fellows designated their loaves, and expectant crowds, with eager eyes and hollow cheeks, stood waiting around the bake-house doors.

The hot and smoking bread was scarcely brought forth for equal distribution before the bugles sounded, and the distant reports of carbines announced that the enemy were coming on; and the picquet of the 9th light dragoons, posted in front of the town, had begun to retire before the heavy cavalry of Soult. "Stand to your arms!" was now the cry on all sides, and a scramble and uproar ensued among the soldiers at the ovens. The hot loaves were torn to pieces in handfuls and scattered about, and many who had fasted for eight-and-forty hours, (the repast of horse-beans excepted,) received nothing, while too much fell to the share of others.

Ronald was unfortunately among the former, as it was impossible for an officer to struggle for a mouthful of food among the men, and until that day he never knew what it was to experience the utmost extremity of hunger. But there was no help for it then; and venting a hearty malediction on the Duke of Dalmatia, he joined the light company, which lined a part of the Moorish wall facing the direction in which the enemy were momently expected to appear. The trenches, barricades, and other hastily-erected works were manned, and two hundred of the Highland light infantry were placed in the ancient castle of Alba, a lofty round tower built by the Moors. The rest of the troops, not engaged in lining the walls, occupied those streets which would protect them from the view and fire of the enemy; and General Howard ordered a part of the regiment of sappers to undermine the bridge over the Tormes, which at Alba is both deep and rapid, to the end that it might be blown up, to cut off the pursuit of the enemy when the British were compelled to abandon the town. The light dragoons, retiring through Alba, halted on the other side of the river to await the event, and immediately afterwards Soult's advance came in sight.

A company of infantry, the head of a column, appeared between the two hills which overlook Alba. They were beyond the range of musquetry, and halt-

ing there, they ordered arms and stood at ease. Shortly afterwards a staff-officer, wearing a glazed cocked-hat and green uniform, and mounted on a spotless white steed, descended at a trot towards the town, and with the most perfect coolness walked his horse slowly before the wall, which was lined by the 50th and Highlanders, riding within fifty yards of their musquets, a distance at which, had they fired, he must undoubtedly have been slain.

"A devilish cool fellow!" said Seaton. "He jogs easily along, looking every moment as if he expected a shot was coming to spoil his impertinent reconnoitring."

A murmur and cries of "Tak him doon! tak him doon! Gie him his kail through the reek," arose among the Highlanders, who began to look to their flints and priming.

"Weel would I like to gie that chield's pride a fa'!" said Angus Mackie, cocking his musquet. "The blind hauf hunder' surely ha'na seen him. Dearsake, Captain Seaton! just say the word,—will I fire?"

"Why,—I know no objection," said Seaton, looking inquiringly towards Cameron, who was standing on foot near an angle of the trench, with old Dugald Mhor beside him holding his charger by the bridle. "Colonel, some of my fellows are anxious to fire; shall I permit them? I have some deadly shots in the light company. Monsieur's reconnoissance will end the instant Angus fires upon him."

"Shame on you, Highlanders!" exclaimed Cameron, his eyes beginning to sparkle as usual when he was excited. "Would you fire on a solitary individual, who cannot return you a shot? He is a brave soldier although a rash one, and I will never permit such a deed to be done. Keep steady, men; you will have firing enough in a short time."

The light company were abashed, and the life of the Frenchman was saved,—a piece of generous clemency which Cameron soon had reason to repent. The staff-officer, continuing at the same deliberate pace, ascended one of the heights, where he was joined by an orderly on foot, who by his directions was seen to place eleven stones, equi-distant, around the summit. Descending past the head of the infantry column in the valley, he ascended the other eminence, and there the same movements were performed; after which they disappeared to the rear.

That French officer, who so narrowly escaped death, was MARSHAL SOULT,—the great Duke of Dalmatia himself, as one of his own despatches, which a few days afterwards fell into the hands of our troops, sufficiently testified.

Scarcely had he withdrawn, before twenty-two pieces of artillery, each drawn by four horses, ascended the heights at full gallop, and took their ground at the several marks which Marshal Soult had laid. In an instant the gunners

leaped from their seats; the guns were wheeled round, with their yawning muzzles pointed to Alba; the horses were untraced, the limbers cast off, and with the speed of thought the cannoniers, all stout fellows, wearing high grenadier caps, grey great-coats with large red epaulets, were seen hard at work with sponge and rammer, charging home the cannon. Their active figures were seen more distinctly by the yellow light shed across the sky by the morning sun, the rays of which shone merrily on the glistening Tormes, the brown autumnal woods, the mouldering walls and desolate streets of Alba, where soon the work of death was to begin.

"Well, colonel," said Seaton, "what think you of this gay preparation? We shall have sixteen-pounders and long nines flying like hailstones in a minute more. You will scarcely rejoice at allowing the white steed to carry off its rider with a whole skin."

Cameron bit his lips, and his fiery eyes flashed; but he made no reply.

"Hech!" muttered an old Highlander; "it's a true sayin' at hame—Glum folk are no easy guided. Ta cornel's been makin' a fule o' hersel the day before the morn; hoomch!"

"Keep close under your walls and trenches, lads," cried Campbell, who was watching the heights through a telescope levelled across the saddle of his horse. "Keep close; but never duck down when a ball comes: as old Sir Ralph used to say, 'it looks d—ned unsoldierlike.' Here comes a shot."

A flash, and a wreath of white smoke, announced the first cannon-ball, which, striking the wall of a house, brought a mass of masonry tumbling into the street. Whiz came a second, and a third, and a fourth,—all in quick succession. The French cannonade commenced then in good earnest, and continued incessantly from ten in the morning until five in the afternoon,—firing thirteen hundred round of shot and shell, and perhaps to so hot a discharge of cannon so small a body of troops, in such a defenceless place, were never subjected before. Without the least intermission it continued for seven hours, and even then the enemy only ceased to cool their guns, and await the completion of a plan formed by Soult for surrounding and completely cutting off the defenders of Alba. It was a miracle that every man in the place was not destroyed; but the enemy chiefly expended their shot on a large empty convent, which they supposed to be full of soldiers, and in consequence levelled it to the foundations.

One sixteen-pounder came whizzing amongst the light company, and, striking the breast-work of loose earth, buried Seaton and a section of men under it; and a hearty laugh arose from the regiment, as they scrambled out of the trench, shaking off the soil and turf which had covered them up.

Although shot were crashing, shells bursting, and houses falling incessantly for seven consecutive hours, only about fifty Highlanders were killed.

The loss of the other corps I have never ascertained, but the streets were every where strewed with the dead. Many of the wounds were beyond conception frightful, being all by cannon-shot or bomb-splinters, tearing absolutely to pieces those they struck, and shearing off legs and arms like withered reeds. Macildhui, a Serjeant, was killed as Ronald was delivering some orders to him. His head was carried away like an egg-shell, and his brains were spattered over the pavement. Night was closing, and the enemy's guns were still in position on the heights, from which another iron dose was expected in the morning, when an aide-de-camp from Salamanca, covered from plume to spur with dust, dashed into the town at full gallop, and informed General Howard that 3,000 French cavalry had forded the Tormes some miles above Alba, that his position was turned, and that the Marquess of Wellington desired he would abandon the town without a moment's delay, otherwise the first brigade were lost men. The order was instantly given to decamp, and the place was quitted double-quick, the troops moving through those streets which concealed their movements from Soult, and forming in close columns on the other side of the Tormes to be in readiness for the cavalry, should they make their appearance. To deceive the French marshal, the sentries were kept on the walls until the last moment; and Stuart, with ten light-company men, was sent to "bring them off."

"Farewell, senor!' cried Truxillo, waving his sabre to Ronald over the battlements of the ancient Moorish tower, which he had volunteered to defend to the last with his two companies of Castilians, to cover the retreat of Howard's and Hamilton's brigade.

"Adieu, gallant condé!" answered Ronald, as he passed beneath the walls with his party. It was the last time he ever beheld him. By the sound of his silver whistle he collected the Highland sentinels from all points. These, with Major-general Howard, Wemyss, the brigade-major, and Ronald himself, were the last men who quitted the ruins of Alba. The mounted officers rode at a trot, and the heavily laden infantry followed double-quick, with their musquets at the trail. The moment the bridge was cleared the sappers sprung the mine: a roar like that of thunder shook the current of the Tormes, and a cloud of dust and stones rose into the air. Ronald, who was severely bruised by the falling fragments, cast a glance behind as he hurried along. The bridge was a mass of ruins. The Spanish flag was waving from the round tower of Alba, which was now enveloped in smoke, and flashes of musquetry broke from it on all sides as the forlorn band of the condé opened a sharp fire from the rampart and loopholes upon a dense and dark column of French infantry, which was seen descending rapidly towards the town, with tri-colours flying, and brass drums beating in that peculiar manner by which the French regulate the quick step. After a desperate resistance, Truxillo and his Castilians were captured; but the sound of the firing was long heard by

the brigade as it retreated in squares along the road for Ciudad Rodrigo, thus completely frustrating Soult's design to enclose and cut them off by his cavalry, who appeared in about half an hour, and met with so desperate a resistance that they were compelled to retire with immense loss.

That night the brigade halted on the skirts of a cork wood, five leagues distant from Alba de Tormes. The half-leafless branches afforded but a poor protection from the rain, which continued to pour without cessation until day-break, when the weary march was recommenced.

It was indeed a night of misery! Although worn out with fatigue and hunger, it was impossible to sleep on the wet ground, on which the rushing rain was descending in drops larger than peas; and almost equally impossible to stand, after what had been endured for some days past,—marching from dawn till sunset laden with seventy-five pounds weight, and fasting for six-and-thirty, or eight-and-forty consecutive hours. Cursing themselves and their fate, many of the soldiers were so disheartened at the retreat, and the miseries they had undergone since they left Aranjuez, that they were often heard aloud "wishing to Heaven their brains had been blown out in Alba!"

Ronald, being sent on out-picquet, lost even the slight shelter afforded by the wood; but the soldiers had lighted prodigious fires, upon which even the power of the rain was lost; and seated by one, he passed a sleepless night, listening to the rain-drops sputtering in the flames, and to the hoarse croaking of frogs in a neighbouring marsh. During the night it was discovered that the wood was the lair of wild pigs, and a regular hunt ensued; by which means scores were shot during the glimpses of moonlight. As fast as they were killed they were quartered, and served out to the men, who crowded round the fires, broiling them on their bayonets and long steel ramrods. Major Campbell, who was a keen sportsman, and had been accustomed to shoot by moonlight at home, exerted himself so well, that with his own hand he shot five, and brought them to the bivouac, where he threw them among the soldiers. The out-picquets had been puzzled to comprehend the meaning of the firing within the wood, and Ronald was agreeably surprised by his servant bringing him a slice of wild pork, famously fried in a camp-kettle lid, and with it a *berengena* (a fruit of the cucumber genus) which he had found in the wood and reserved for his master, although almost perishing for want of nourishment himself. But the instances of Evan's fidelity are innumerable.

The contents of the camp-kettle were shared between master and man, without ceremony, and without the absence of salt or other seasoning being perceived.

For this affair of pig-shooting in the cork wood, the commander-in-chief took the opportunity to tell the army, in a general order, that they had degener-

ated into "a lawless banditti," and that, without having suffered the least privation, they were in a state of mutiny and disorder. This taunting and bitter address is still remembered with peculiar annoyance by the few survivors of that brave army.

But, to return to the unhappy and unlooked-for retreat from Burgos, privations the troops *did* suffer, (and I say so, in defiance of that general order,) and privations such as soldiers never endured before or since. Continuing their rapid retreat across the frontier, on the evening of the 19th of November, the first brigade entered the miserable village of Robledo, in Leon; and as the soldiers halted and formed line in the street, pale, exhausted, wayworn, famished, and absolutely in rags,—shirtless, shoeless, and penniless, they seemed more like an assemblage of gaunt spectres than British men. Ronald's shirt had not been changed for ten days, nor had his beard been shaven for the same period. His shoes were completely worn away, and his bare feet had been cut and wounded by the flinty ground, while his uniform hung in fritters about him. Every officer was in the same predicament.

The military chest was empty, the stores exhausted. The cavalry and artillery horses perished in scores for want of forage; and during the whole retreat from Alba de Tormes to Robledo, the soldiers had fared on scanty rations of tough beef, horse-beans, acorns and castanos picked up by the way-side; or now and then, when the commissary could procure it, a few handfuls of wheat served out to each officer and private—unground. On reaching their winter-quarters thousands of soldiers died of sheer exhaustion, or were invalided and sent home, to become burdens to their friends, parishes, or themselves, for the remainder of their lives.

CHAPTER IV.

ANGUS MACKIE.

"The bud comes back to summer,
And the blossom to the tree;
But I win back—oh, never!
To my ain countrie.

I'm leal to the high heaven,

Which will be leal to me;
And there I'll meet ye a' sune,
Frae my ain countrie."
Scottish Song.

In the beginning of the next month the Highlanders were marched across the Sierra de Gate to the ancient city of Coria, in Estremadura, where they were to remain until they had recovered from their late fatigues, and received recruits, clothing, supplies, and arrears of pay from Lisbon. While on the march across the sierra, Evan's comrade, Angus Mackie, a soldier of whom I have made frequent mention, deserted from the light company, and, singularly enough, was discovered to have gone off in the direction of the enemy,—a circumstance which exasperated the whole regiment against him. But the true reason of poor Mackie's disappearance soon afterwards came to light.

On the second day after their arrival at Coria, the mail bags were brought from the rear, and Ronald, who was on guard with twenty Highlanders at one of the four gates of the city, was much annoyed at being unable to inquire if any letters had come for him, and he passed the whole day in a disagreeable state of expectation and excitement. In the evening the guards were relieved, and he hurried to his billet, which was situated in one of the narrow and gloomy streets leading from the market-place towards the cathedral. At the door he was met by Evan, who informed him that "twa letters frae hame were awaiting him in his room. Major Campbell had left them there some time before."

"Foolish! Why did you not bring them to the guard-house?"

"But alake, sir! there isna ane for me," said Evan, without minding the question. "My faither micht hae sent me ae screed, and I houp that naething waur than the broon coo—(as he ay ca'd the yill), or a wee drap ower muckle o' the barley bree, have keepit him fraed."

"A light, Evan! a light! this place is very dark," cried Ronald to his retainer, who had followed him up stairs to hear what news the letter contained.

"Twa candles, sir," said he, as he lighted them. "Twa, nae less. By the alcalde's order, the auld patron body has to furnish ye wi' twa,—which maks ye 'as braw as the Laird o' Grant.' Ye mind the auld saying, I daur say?"

Ronald snatched the letters, and beheld with joy and delight that one was from Alice,—the other from his father.

"Poor Louis!" muttered he aloud; "how much I wish that he was here!" Ronald was absolutely trembling with joy as he opened the letter and prepared to read it.

He drew his chair close to the table, and raised the snuffers to trim the

candles; when, lo! the lights were both blown out, and the snuffers flew from his hand with a loud report.

"Gude guide us!" exclaimed Evan, astonished at being so suddenly involved in darkness; but a hearty malediction escaped Ronald, who was chafed and infuriated with the delay this unexpected circumstance caused.

"Light them again," cried he. "Did you say that Major Campbell had been waiting for me in this room?"

"Ay, sir, a gay gude while,"

"Pshaw! this is some trick of his: he has put a pinch of powder in the snuffers. His practical joke has been somewhat mis-timed. Get me fresh lights." Although Ronald laughed heartily at this occurrence afterwards, he was greatly enraged by it at the time, and an age seemed to elapse before Evan brought him the candles again. Love-letters are interesting to those only for whom they are designed, and it is not my intention to give Miss Lisle's letter at length; but the reader, if concerned about the matter, may be assured that its contents were in every way just what Ronald could have wished them,—save in one part. She expressed her joy to hear that Louis was a prisoner, saying that he was "safer in France than fighting in Spain," and that she almost wished that Ronald himself might be captured likewise, to keep him out of harm's way.

"Evan, Jessie Cavers begs again to be remembered to you," said Ronald to his expectant follower, as he closed the letter.

"Does she really, noo? The dear lassie!" cried he, snapping his fingers, while his eyes glistened with delight; and he commenced a sort of strathspey round the table. "My ain bonnie blithesome Jessie! Mony a gloaming I have spent wi' her among the sauch-tree woods o' Inchavon, and the haughs o' the Isla. Deil tak the wars and campaigning! How blithely would I gie this unco land o' teuch beef and rotten nuts, hard fechtin and wearysome marching, for auld Scotland, sae brave and sae bonnie, wi' its green grassy glens and high heather hills, its lochs and its woods! Ochone! Oh, Maister Ronald! gin we once mair saw Benmore, and fand the smell o' oor ain peat reek, I dinna think we would be in a hurry to leave hame again. And then Miss Lisle o' the big ha' house would be your ain, and my bonnie doo Jessie mine! I have written to her three times, and deil a scrap o' a letter has she sent me. She writes weil aneugh, thanks to the auld dominie at the schule o' Latheronweel. But what does the laird say? Are a' weil at oor ain ingle-neuck?"

"All, Heaven be thanked!" replied Ronald, glancing rapidly over the pages of his father's letter; "but leave me just now, Evan, and see who that is knocking in the piazzas below. I will detail the news from the glen afterwards."

His father's letter, although it contained many expressions of pride, praise, and exultation for Ronald's conduct at Almarez, was written much in the same style as his others usually were: every thing was looking gloomy at home; the

flocks and hirsels were perishing on the mountains, and the tenants in the glen had failed in their rents. "But they are our people," continued the old gentleman, "and I cannot drive them forth from the sheilings where they were born, and from the glen where the purple heather blooms so bonnily above the graves of their fathers. I cannot savagely expatriate, as other proprietors are doing daily, the descendants of those true and loyal vassals, who stood by our ancestors in danger and death during many a soul-stirring time in the years that are gone. No! I have more honour, compassion, and generosity. Poverty is their misfortune, not their crime. Heaven knows how little a space of time remains for me to be over them, as all my affairs are inextricably involved, and in a few months that letter of cautionary, granted in an evil hour to protect that rascal Macquirk, becomes due. God alone knows where I can raise the money. £8,000 will scarcely pay it, and I believe I will have to lay it down every stiver, as Macquirk has retreated to the sanctuary of Holyrood-house for protection from his creditors. Last month I was down in Edinburgh, endeavouring to procure the needful on a bond,—but in vain. Lochisla is too deeply involved already. Curse on the hour in which an honourable Highland gentleman of birth and family has to sue at and succumb to a narrow-hearted and blood-sucking attorney! a wretch that will make a beggar of any man who is simple enough to trust him, or become entangled in the meshes of *the* profession, which, like a true old Highlander, I regard with proper hatred and contempt. D—n them all! I say, heartily; and all tax-gatherers, messengers at arms, and excisemen likewise! Some of the last kind of intruders carried off Alpin Oig's still from Coir nan Taischatrin, and a great noise was made in Perth about it. Three came up the glen with a warrant for his apprehension; but I hid him in the old dungeon under the hall, where I would advise them not to try and look for him, if they wish to keep their bones whole. It was a great insult to seize the still, but I am powerless now, and can only think with a sigh of the time when my father hung two of them on the *dule tree* at the tower gate,—and no man dared to say, What dost thou? It was the day before he marched for Glenfinnan, and the unfortunate gaugers were left to feed the eagles and corbies of Benmore. Scotland was Scotland then! Dirk and claymore! was the cry when a Highland gentleman was insulted. I saw, by the papers, that young Inchavon has been taken prisoner. Well, I dare say you will not miss him much. His sister's arts have completely failed to entrap the Earl of Hyndford. He took his departure suddenly for Edinburgh last month, leaving Miss Alice to fly her hawks at lesser game."

Ronald had scarcely finished the perusal of this disheartening letter, when Evan entered hastily. "Oh, sir," said he, "I have an unco' tale to tell ye aboot my comrade Angus,—puir cheild."

"How! has he been robbed by picaros,—slain by *guerillas*, or what?"

"O, waur than a' that."

"He deserted in the direction of the enemy; I was sorry to hear of it. He was always a favourite of mine and of Seaton's. Did he reach the French lines?"

"Eh, no, sir! Captain Blacier's riflemen fell in wi' him amang the hills, and there has been an unco' tulzie. But weel do I ken for what puir Angus deserted. It wasna the French he was awa to join; he was off for Almendralejo, sir."

"Almendralejo! Stay; I remember a story now. Surely it was not his attachment to some girl there which led him to commit so rash an act?"

"Just naething else. O Maister Ronald, ye ken weel what an unco' thing love is."

"I have seen the girl,—Maria Garcionados."

"Ay, sir,—a bonnie lassie, wi' een like slaes, cheeks redder than rowans, and skin like the drifted snaw; but she has been a dooms unlucky jo for Angus. I'll tell ye the haill story. Ye maun ken, sir, that mony months gane past, when we were quartered in Almendralejo, Angus fell over the lugs in love wi' this braw gilpie, whan we were billeted in her ain house. Ye heard frae Mr. Macdonald o' the toosle we had wi' her cuisins, and unco' auld Turk o' a faither. Hech! it was a teugh job, wi' sharp skenes and bayonets, and a' that. Weel, sir; syne the day Angus first tint sicht o' that lassie, he has never been the same rattling, roaring kind o' chield he was; but ay wae and dowie, soughing and sighing till it was gruesome to hear him. Yesterday, or the day before it, when coming ower the hills,—ye mind the bit clachan we stoppit at for a night's rest?"

"Los Cazas de Don Gomez?"

"Ay, sir, just sae,—a deevil o' a lang nebbit name! At a wine-house there Angus and I forgathered wi' a muleteer loon frae Almendralejo,—Lazaro Gomez, he ca'd himsel. Ye'll may be mind o' him?"

"Perfectly; but be quick with your story."

"Aweel, sir, the mule-driver gied us a' the news and clashin frae aboot Merida and ither places, and amang ither things tauld Angus that auld Sancho Garcionados,—or *el Picaro*, as the Spaniards ay ca' a lawyer, was gaun to compel the lassie, whether she wad or no, to marry a rich alcalde. Od, sir! I never saw a face change as puir Mackie's did, while the carrier callant chatted awa wi' us in his broken English, never kennin' the while that ilka word was fa'in' like scaudin' lead into the heart b' puir Angus. He came to me that nicht at tatto beat, and said he could thole this life no anither minute, and that—come weal, come wae, he would gang off for Almendralejo, and save the lassie or dee wi' her. I did a' I could to pacify him, but he minded me nae mair than the wind whistlin' ower the muir. He came to me whan I was on sentry at the toon end. His een were glistening, his face was white, like that o' something no cannie, and his gartered knees were chaffing thegither. I grew eerie to look at him, for the nicht was dark

and gloomy, and the wind came soughing doon frae the hills wi' a sound like the moan o' a deid man. Ae starnie was glintin on the hill-tap, and I saw the reflection o'd in the rinnin water,[*] which passes the toon wa's. Angus stretched his hands towards the bit starnie, and said it was shinin' ower Almendralejo then,—and may be, his ain true love was lookin' at it; and that it hung like a lamp in the mirky, lift to guide him to whar she bided.

[*] The Alagona river, which passes Coria.

"'Hoots, havers!' said I, 'ye'll sune get ower'd; and may be that gomeral muledriver's story o' auld Sancho's dochter was a' a lee,—every word o't. Gang hame to your bed, my man, and ye'll be better the morn.'

"But he just gied an unco' sough, and wrung my loof, gaed doon the brae, and left me. Next morning Serjeant Macrone reported him absent frae parade, and then I kent that he had taen to the hills and was awa'. The black een o' that Spanish lass hae cuisten' a glamourie ower him waur than witchcraft. Amang the hills he fell in wi' Captain Blacier's company o' the 60th, some o' wha spiered the gate he was gaun? Angus couldna or wadna tell, and a fray o' some kind ensued atween him and the German loons: in the middle o't, Angus drew his bayonet on auld Blacier, for which he now lies in airns in ane o' the square toors o' Coria."

"O the fool! Attempted to stab Blacier, did he?"

"Ay, an vera nigh stickit him i' the wame. Puir Angus! he ay hated thae thrawn gebbit Hanoverian dogs, as he ca'd them; for his faither, like yer ain, had been out in the forty-five,—wi' the Prince sae bauld and braw."

"The unfortunate madman! he will surely die. It is death, by the articles of war, to draw weapon upon an officer."

"So Serjeant Macrone says; but alake! Maister Ronald, I houp it will no come to that. Blacier is only a German, ye ken," said Evan, while his eyes began to glisten. "Surely the Cornel, Captain Seaton, or may be yoursel, will get him ower it. Angus and me hae ever been cronies and brithers syne the first day we met at La Nava, and I would be unco' laith to lose him noo. Ye ken hoo dowie ye were yoursel for mony a lang day after brave Maister Louis fell into the claws o' thae taid-eating loons, and no a' Maister Macdonald's jokes or merriment could rouse ye."

"Prepare yourself for the worst, Evan. Your poor friend will certainly die, if this crime is proved against him." * * * *

Stuart was one of the members of the general court-martial ordered to try this case, in which desertion was coupled with a flagrant act of insubordination.

The court met in the palace of the bishop, as there was not another house in Coria containing an apartment fit for the purpose,—the town being very inconsiderable, having only about fifteen hundred inhabitants, although strongly defended by walls, towers, gates, and a very singular fortress, the ascent to which is by a flight of upwards of a hundred steps. From this strong-hold Mackie was brought before the court which was to decide his doom.

The room in which it met, was gloomy and old, and the dim light from four mullioned windows fell uncertainly on the war-worn uniforms and well-bronzed faces of the officers seated around the table, on which lay paper, pens and ink, a bible, and the articles of war. The president, the Hon. Colonel Cadogan of the Highland Light Infantry, sat at the head; the judge-advocate, an officer of cavalry, stood at the foot of the table to read the charges,—the members taking their places according to their rank; the seniors on Cadogan's right, the juniors on his left. After the court had been sworn, by the president holding forth the bible, and every officer laying his hand upon it and swearing "duly to administer justice according to the rules and articles now in force for the better government of his Majesty's forces, without partiality, favour, or affection," the proceedings commenced. Pale, dejected, and apparently cast down to the lowest depths of mental misery, the unfortunate young Highlander stood before the military tribunal. His red coat, threadbare and patched with divers colours, his frittered tartans, and a deep scar on one of his sun-burnt knees, another on his cheek, gained at Corunna,—all bore witness for him of the service he had seen, but which was little cared for there, as all had served alike. Tall and erect he stood before them, glancing from one to another in a firm but respectful manner. One by one the evidences against him were examined, and he found no fault with what any man said of him. Seaton and Serjeant Duncan Macrone stated the time when his absence was first discovered, and the former spoke highly of his general character and conduct, and acquainted the court that his life had been twice saved by the prisoner,—first at the battle of Fuentes de Honore, in May 1811; and again at Arroya del Molino in the November of the same year, when he was encountered by two aides-de-camp of the Prince d'Aremberg during the action. Honest old Blacier, although the most aggrieved party, was unwilling to be the means of depriving the Highlander of existence, and taking his pipe from his mouth, gave his evidence with marked backwardness; he concluded by saying, "Dat he believed de *henckers knecht* vas under de influence ob de pig-skins, or *der teufel*, or *zauberei*, vich means de vitshcraft, and I vould not hab it on my conscience dat I occasioned a young man's being shot and sent to *der teufel* for showing a bare blade ven his bloodt vas up; and I hope de coort' vill recommendt him to de tender mercy ob Lord Vellington, so dat he may be shaved."

"Your wishes, with those of Captain Seaton, shall have due consideration

with the court, Captain Blacier," replied the president; and the rifleman withdrew, puffing vehemently with his long pipe. When called upon to make his defence, the prisoner had little to say. He knew that any attempts to extenuate his double crime would be perfectly unavailing, and his knowledge of the rules of the service led him to anticipate his doom. Yet his keen grey eye never quailed or grew less bright, and his voice never faltered while he addressed the court in the following manner:—

"Weel do I ken, sirs, that I have been acting wrang,—unco' wrang. I hae been guilty, in sae far that I abandoned my quarters, and was awa amang the hills; but I deny solemnly, and may I be haulden mansworn, if ever I ettled to desert, or gae ower to the enemy's colours. I was clean wud, and kenned na' at the time whar I was danderin' to. I tell your honours the truth, and I would scorn to affirm it wi' an aith, because I never tauld a lee in a' my days, and hae nae need to fib or flaw noo. But, sirs, I think there isna ane in this room that wadna hae dune as I did that nicht, when I kent that I was on the brink o' losing for ever and ay the winsome lass to whom I had plighted heart and troth; and I will affirm, gentlemen, that neither the danger or disgrace o' haeing it imputed to me that I abandoned my standard, could keep me frae trying to save her frae sic a tyrannical and avaricious auld carle as her faither. It has been said, in the 'crime,' that I was gaun the gate to the enemy's lines. Ablins I was, and ablins I wasna, for I was wading through a sea o' desperation,—I was dumbfounded and gane gyte that nicht, and it was a' after I had bent the bicker a gay gude while, as my comrade Evan Iverach has tauld unto ye.

"O sirs! I hope that ye will neither flog nor degrade me; but let me dee the death my crime is said to merit. Let me dee noo,—noo that I hae broucht sorrow and wae, sorrow and disgrace to my honest faither's fireside; for though he is but a puir auld cottar body at Braemar, it will bring his bald head to the grave if he hears I hae come to the halberts,[*]—it would be sic an awfu' disgrace! the haill kintra-side wad ring wi't. Let me rather die, sirs: I say again,—a hundred times I hae faced death, and I can easily face him ance mair. But it is whan I think o' my faither and mother at hame amang the heather hills,—struggling wi' eild and wi' poortith,—the ane herdin' sheep in bonnie Glenclunaidh amang the lang yellow broom, and the ither spinnin' hard at the ingle-neuk, whar I hae sae aften toddled at her knee,—'tis whan I think o' them that I am ready to orp and greet, and that my stout heart fails me,—a heart, sirs, that never failed on mony a bluidy day. I hae nae mair to say, your honours, but just that I humbly thank ye for hearing me sae lang, and that I wad as sune dee as live."

[*] The triangles: three pikes were used in those days.

This address, which was delivered with considerable vehemence and gesture, and spoken in a very northern and provincial dialect, was very little understood by those members of the court who were not Scotsmen; and Ronald Stuart, whose heart yearned with a truly Scottish love towards his countryman, explained to them the substance of what Mackie had said. He was found guilty of the seventh and eleventh articles in the second section of the articles of war; viz. desertion,—aggravated by an intention to join the enemy, and drawing, or offering to draw, upon "a superior officer." He was sent back to the fortress of Coria, and the proceedings and sentence of the court were despatched to head-quarters, with strong recommendations to mercy from Colonel Cadogan, and from Fassifern: but many months elapsed before an answer was returned, and during all that time the poor Highlander pined in the noisome vaults of the castle or fort of Coria. But of him, more anon.

In consequence of the approach of the French under General Foy, the first brigade moved from Coria while the sentence of the unfortunate Mackie remained unknown,—every member of a court-martial being sworn to solemn secrecy. The 50th regiment occupied Bejar, so famous for its mineral wells, and some sharp fighting ensued in its neighbourhood; but Foy's troops were completely routed with great loss. The Highlanders occupied the beautiful village of Banos, which lies secluded in a deep and narrow valley between Leon and Estremadura, surrounded on every side by abrupt precipitous mountains, which are covered to their rugged summits by the richest foliage; but amid their caverns, fastnesses, and dingles lurk herds of wolves, the wildness and ferocity of which keep the inhabitants in a continual state of terror and alarm; and so daring had these savage animals become, that it was necessary to keep large fires burning at night around the village, to scare them from the posts of the sentinels.

Soon after the regiment arrived at Banos, the sentence of Angus Mackie was ordered to be put in execution, having been approved of by the proper authorities. On the retreat from Burgos some symptoms of insubordination had appeared among the other brigades, when the soldiers became maddened by the miseries they underwent; an officer of "the buffs" had been shot by a soldier of that regiment. In other corps discipline seemed almost set at nought, and it was determined that an example should be made. The private of the 3rd regiment was hanged, and Angus Mackie, who, although far less criminal, had been convicted of desertion and insubordination, was sentenced to be shot to death in presence of his comrades, who among themselves deeply pitied and deplored that so gallant a lad should suffer so severe a sentence for his exaggerated crime. No charge of injustice could be laid to the account of the court which tried him, the "finding" of its members having been regulated by the stern but necessary articles of the Mutiny Act. Many months had passed away since his trial; the first excite-

ment of the affair had died away, and during all that time he had been confined in the dreary fort of Coria,—a sufficient punishment alone for the crime he had committed.

This unhappy affair cast a gloom over the whole regiment,—a gloom which was apparent in every face, as the unwilling Highlanders paraded in the valley of Banos to witness his execution.

It was in the month of May 1813; the evening was a still and beautiful one. The sun was verging towards the west, and his crimson rays streamed through the deep dark dell, upon the vine-clad cottages and sylvan amphitheatre of Banos. Concentrated in that narrow and gloomy glen, where the immense mountains rose on every side to the height of many hundred feet, and where crags and rocks shot up in cones and fantastic spires, almost excluding the light of day from the little huts at the bottom of the dell, were the seventeen infantry regiments of the second division, together with the cavalry, drawn up on the steep faces of the hills, so that the rear ranks might overlook the front. The paisanos of the secluded village, awe-struck at the unusual scene, and the sight of so many thousand steel weapons glittering amid such dense masses of foreign soldiers, forsook their cottages and clustered together on the summit of a steep rock, to behold the fatal event. The troops formed three faces of a hollow square; the rock upon which the peasants were congregated occupied the vacant space. A spot of velvet turf, the village-green, stretched to the foot of it, and there was dug a grave,—a grave for the yet living man; the wet damp earth heaped up on one side of it, the rolls of turf and a rough deal coffin lay on the other. Near these stood the base-drum of the Gordon Highlanders; a bible and a prayer-book lay open upon its head.

The Highlanders formed the inner faces of the square.

All was solemn silence and expectation; not a whisper was heard through all that dense array; not a sound smote the ear save the rustle of the summer foliage, as the evening wind stirred the tall chesnuts or rich green cork-trees which nodded from the black precipices. The general, the staff and field-officers were all on horseback, but remained motionless. At last it was known that the doomed man was approaching, and the arms of the escort that conducted him were seen flashing in the sunlight, as they descended from the hill tops by the winding pathway which led to the bottom of the valley. Sir Rowland Hill touched his hat to an aide-de-camp, who then passed among the troops at a hand gallop, whispering to each commanding-officer; the words of command to fix bayonets and shoulder arms were immediately given, and before the varying tones of the different colonels died away, the prisoner appeared amid the square surrounded by his escort, under charge of the provost-marshal. His own corps, I have said, was in front, and he moved slowly along the silent ranks with downcast eyes

towards the spot where his grave and coffin lay displayed. He drew near the former, and cast a glance into its gloomy depth and, shuddering, turned his back upon it, muttering: "I would just be sax and twenty the morn. Sax and twenty! oh, it's an unco thing to dee sae young. O my faither—my mither!" he groaned aloud; "farewell to you—to auld Scotland, and a' I hae loed sae lang and weel! It will be a sair trial to my kinsfolk in Glenclunaidh, when they see my name on the kirk doors o' Braemar—as ane that has dee'd wi' disgrace on his broo."[*]

[*] By the military regulations, the names of soldiers who behave meritoriously, or misbehave themselves grossly, are affixed to the church-doors of the parish in which they were born. In Highland regiments the threat of informing friends at home of a soldier's misconduct was sufficient to keep him in order for the time to come.

He was clad in his white undress-jacket and kilt, and stood bareheaded, with his bonnet in his hand. He was pale and emaciated with long confinement, but his bearing was firm and as soldier-like as ever. His eyes seemed unusually bright, and at times a red flush crossed his otherwise deadly pale cheek. There were two aged monks from the San Ferdinando convent of Candeleria present, but the Highlander refused to hear or communicate with them. Yet the honest friars were determined not to abandon him in his last hour, and withdrawing to a little distance, they placed a crucifix against a fragment of rock and prayed earnestly, with true catholic fervour, to that all-wise Power above, before which the soul of one they deemed a heretic was so soon to appear.

There was no chaplain present with the troops; but the prisoner was attended by the venerable Dugald-Mhor, who walked slowly beside him bareheaded, with his bonnet under his arm. He read portions of the Scripture from an old dog-eared bible, which he produced from his *sporran molloch*; and the low solemn tones in which he read could be distinctly heard by all, so very still was the place; and as the hand of the village-clock approached the hour at which the soldier was to die, a deeper sadness fell upon the hearts of the beholders, who, although long accustomed to all the heart-harrowing scenes of war, had never before witnessed a death in so solemn and peculiar a manner.

Mackie and his attendant sung together the hymn—

"The hour of my departure's come," &c.

and when it was concluded, the hand of the clock on the alcalde's house wanted but five minutes of the hour. The soldier cast a hasty glance towards it, and,

falling upon his knees, covered his face with his hands and burst out into an agony of prayer, from which he was only aroused by the seven strokes of the last hour he would ever hear on earth striking from the dull-toned bell.

His last moment was come!

When the sound ceased, Cameron of Fassifern and his field-officers dismounted from their horses, which were led away, and the provost-marshal drew up a section of twelve soldiers opposite where the prisoner yet knelt on the turf.

Many of his comrades now took their last farewell of him; and Evan Iverach, to whom he had given seven pounds, saved from his pay while prisoner at Coria, to send to his parents at Braemar, retired to his place in the ranks with tearless eyes, because Evan had a mistaken idea, that to have shown signs of deep emotion would have been unmanly. But that night, in his billet, honest Evan wept like a woman for the loss of his comrade and friend. During the bandaging of Mackie's eyes, Fassifern took off his bonnet, and kneeling down, commanded his regiment to do so likewise. As one man the Highlanders bent their bare knees to the sod, joining, as they did so, in the solemn psalm which Dugald and the prisoner had begun to sing. It was a sad and mournful Scottish air, one which every Scotsman present had been accustomed to hear sung in their village kirks or fathers' cottages in boyhood. It softened and subdued their hearts, carrying back their recollections to their childhood, and to years that had passed away into eternity. Many heard it chanted then for the first time since their native hills had faded from their sight, and as the strain died away through the deep and narrow vale of Banos, it found an echo in every breast.

Dugald closed his bible, and, placing a handkerchief in the hand of the prisoner, withdrew, and covering his wrinkled face with his bonnet, knelt down also. Now came the duty of the provost-marshal, whose unwilling detachment consisted of twelve picked men, of disorderly character, on whom, as a punishment, fell the lot of slaying their comrade.

With his eyes blindfolded, the unfortunate Highlander knelt down between his coffin and his grave, and, without quivering once, dropped his handkerchief.

"Section!" cried the provost-marshal, "'ready—present—*fire*!" The words followed each other in rapid succession, and the echoes of the death-shot were reverberated like thunder among the hills around. A shriek burst from the females of the village. Red blood was seen to spout forth from many a wound in the form of the prisoner; he sprung convulsively upwards, and then fell backward dead on the damp gravel, which was so soon to cover him.

The hearts of all began to beat more freely; but at that moment the red sun sank behind the darkening hills, and a deeper gloom enveloped Banos, the effect of which was not lost on the minds of the beholders.

All was over now! The corse lay stretched on the ground, and the smoke of

the musquetry was curling around the grave which yawned beside it. Cameron sprung on his horse, and his voice was the first to break the oppressive silence. The shrill pipes sounded, and the rattling drums beat merrily in the re-echoing vale, as corps after corps marched past the spot where the body of Mackie, though breathless, lay yet bleeding, and moved up the winding pathway towards the pass of Banos, whence by different routes they marched to their cantonments in the villages and camps among the mountains. When all had passed away, the pioneers placed the dead man in his coffin, and covered him hurriedly up; the sods were carefully deposited over and beaten down with the shovel, and the grave of the man who had been living but ten minutes before, presented now the same appearance as the resting-place of one who had been many years entombed. The weeds and the long grass waved over it.

The village *paisanos* placed a rough wooden cross above it, to prevent, as they said, "the heretic from haunting the resting-place of his bones;" and near this rude emblem was placed a vine, which Evan Iverach tended daily—clearing its root of weeds and encumbrances, watching and pruning the stem, and long before the regiment left Banos he had twined it around and hidden the limbs of the cross; and when the Highlanders marched from the valley, as they wound through a deep defile among the mountains Evan's farewell look was cast to the place where the vine-covered cross marked the grave of his comrade.

CHAPTER V.

AN ADVENTURE. A HIGHLAND LEGEND.

"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broad-sword, targe and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurchus glade."
Marmion.

Before the regiment left Banos to take the field again, Ronald had an unlooked-for adventure with a fierce denizen of the neighbouring mountains, which nearly cost him his life.

There was a certain part of the hills, from which the valley of Banos

strongly resembled his native place, Strathonan, but on a much smaller scale; and thither Stuart was in the habit of repairing almost daily, to indulge freely in those long reveries so usual to a Highlander, and enjoy the beauty of the prospect which bore so near a resemblance to his home. A slight effort of the imagination made it at once Strathonan, near the source of that celebrated trout-stream, the Isla; but the sound of the guitar and castanets came on the wind instead of the war-pipe of Albyn, and destroyed the illusion. There were neither bucks nor roes bounding over the mountain-slope; and instead of the plaided shepherd or agile huntsman starting from the copsewood, a lazy yet handsome Spanish peasant appeared at times, sauntering slowly along, clad in his short brown jacket tied round the waist by a broad yellow scarf, leather gaiters bound with red thongs, a cigar in his mouth, a staff in his hand, and a stiletto in his girdle. Often did a figure wearing this romantic dress, or enveloped in a huge brown mantle, appear on the solitary pathways of the hills. Far down below, on the village green, instead of the lively strathspey or martial gilliechallium,[*] the graceful fandango or bolero was danced by the athletic *paisanos* and olive-cheeked girls of the valley.

[*] Sword dance.

His patron had often warned him of the danger which he incurred, by wandering so far among mountains so much infested by wolves; but Stuart always considered himself safe enough, as he never went without his sword and dirk. His host acquainted him with many wonderful tales of men having been killed and devoured by them among the wild places; and said that, within his recollection, nearly twenty children had been carried off from the very heart of the village.

"Senor," said he, on one occasion, "you can know little of the nature of the wolf, as perhaps there are none now in your country; but they have the cunning of the fox, together with the strength and ferocity of the tiger. On entering the village in the evening, he moves about with careful and stealthy paces; and when he seizes on a child, grasps it by the throat so as to prevent it giving a single cry, and bears it away to the recesses among the hills. I have known of a lad of fourteen being carried off thus. A man belonging to the village, a brave guerilla of Mina's band, was attacked one evening in the pass of Banos by a band of wolves. He slew three with his rifle and poniard, but the others tore him to fragments. This brought the attention of senores the alcaldes of the valley[*] to the matter, and they offered a reward of eighty reals, or four duros, for each wolf's head brought to their houses, and forthwith war was proclaimed against these fierce inhabitants of the sierras.

[*] Banos is divided into two districts, each ruled by its own alcalde; the northern part of the village lies in Leon, and the southern in Estremadura.

"A dozen hides and heads were brought in weekly, and we continued this dangerous sport until the British entered the valley, when firing in the neighbourhood could no longer be continued. Since we acted upon the offensive, the wolves have become more shy and never enter the vale, but it is death to encounter the herds on their own ground; therefore I would pray you, senor, if you value your own safety, never to wander about as you are pleased to do."

Ronald thanked the worthy vine-dresser for his advice and good-wishes, but laughed at his fears about the wolves, and told him that while he was armed with his sword, he considered himself secure against any such antagonists; and so continued to ramble about as usual.

One evening, while he was surveying the valley from his old post when the sun was setting, he became overpowered with the heat of the atmosphere and the fatigue of a long walk, and fell fast asleep beside a rude wooden cross, erected to mark the spot where the only *abogado* who ever appeared in Banos had been poniarded by his first client for unfair dealing. How long Stuart slept there he had no idea, but while dreaming that he had that worthy clerk to the royal signet, Mr. Macquirk, among the mountains of Banos, even close to the abogado's cross, and was about to take summary vengeance upon him for the manner in which he had bamboozled and swindled the old gentleman at Lochisla, he was awakened in a very disagreeable manner by something grasping him roughly by the throat. With the rapidity of light all the stories he had heard of the wolves flashed upon his memory. He was fully awake in an instant, and found himself grappling and struggling savagely with one of those terrible animals, by moonlight, on a solitary hillside many miles away from the village, where the watch-fires of the guard-houses could be seen twinkling afar off at the bottom of the deep valley, like red stars. His brass gorget and the massive lace, on the collar of the coat, together with a stout military stock, had saved his neck from the fangs of the gigantic wolf, which, by straining every energy of strength and courage, or rather desperation, he grasped with a ferocity almost equal to its own, and retaining his hold, threw upon the turf beside him. Its struggles were terrible, and his hands, which encircled its tough and brawny throat, were torn by its claws; yet he never relaxed his iron clutch until the breath and strength of his antagonist began to fail, and then putting his right hand to his side for his Highland dirk, he remembered with rage and anguish that it was left behind at his billet. The moment was indeed a critical one. Two other wolves were approaching the spot cautiously, and Stuart, remembering how often he had heard of their overpowering man by

numbers, considered himself for ever lost. It was like some horrible dream, and his heart became filled with an agony of horror and alarm which it had never known before.

"Heaven help me now!" gasped he. "Ah! had I only my dirk, or even a *skene-dhu*, they would be welcome." He cried aloud for aid, but the cries were feeble, as his tongue was swollen and clove to his palate with the keenness of his terror; and ere the echoes of his last shout died away, he was struggling with the others, and was endeavouring to elude their fangs by rolling over and over, and fighting fiercely with hands and feet. Scarcely had the two wolves come to the aid of their half-burked comrade, ere Stuart imagined that other sounds than the echoes of his cry reverberated through the wilderness. It was—what? the halloo of a true Highland huntsman!

"Hoigh! Diaoul! what's a' this?" cried Dugald Mhor Cameron, plunging headlong among them, with a long dirk gleaming in his right hand and a *skene-dhu* in his left. One wolf fled, another was pierced thrice to the vitals by Dugald's dirk, and rolled away for several yards, tearing up the earth in rage and agony, until it was finally destroyed by the sharp black knife being drawn across its thick throat by Dugald, who handled it well, being an adroit deer-stalker. The other savage, which had been so gallantly grasped by Ronald, he dispatched by repeated stabs of the dirk, which he drove home to the hilt, sending eighteen inches of cold iron into the body at every stroke. While this passed, poor Stuart, exhausted and overcome, sank backward on the turf, just as Fassifern rode up with his claymore drawn.

"I trust we have not been too late," he cried earnestly, as he leapt from his horse, which had been snorting and shying aside from the scene of the fray. "I am sure, Dugald, we answered to his first cry. He is one of ours; an officer too,—Stuart, by heavens!"

"But for Dugald's prompt and gallant succour, all would have been over with me by this time, colonel," said Ronald, as with difficulty he staggered up from the turf, which was plentifully besprinkled with the blood of his enemies.

"Are you hurt in any way?" was the eager inquiry of both.

"My hands are torn a little; but my sash and coat are all rent to fritters."

"How opportunely Dugald came to save you!"

"Opportune, indeed! I will never be able to repay him for this night's work."

"Ochone! Mr. Stuart," replied the old man, who was cleaning his weapons in his plaid, "dinna say a word about thanks; keep a' them for the kernel there."

"I was coming over the mountains from Candeleria," said Fassifern, "where I have been president of a court-martial. Your cries alarmed us within a few yards of this old cross, and my horse began to snort and rear, refusing to advance a step; but trusty Dugald went headlong on, and with his short weapons, I see, has done

you right good service. 'Tis well the matter is no worse, and had the wolves not given you so severe a mauling, Stuart," added the colonel with a smile, as he put his foot in his stirrup, "I should have sent Claude for your sword again. You know you should never be without your arms, or forget the order against strolling more than two miles from camp or quarters. By my word, these were no ordinary foes to contend with, these wolves; they are larger than Highland shelties, and their skins will be a prize for the *paisanos* in the morning, for Dugald is, of course, too proud to take fee or reward from the alcaldes."

"I have escaped their maws by a miracle," said Stuart, yet gasping with the excitement of the fierce struggle.

"By nae miracle at all, sir," said old Dugald, "by nae miracle; but just by the help o' a teuch auld carle's hand and the bit cauld iron; and I assure your honours, I wad rather face a thoosand rampaugin wolves, than ae kelpie, habgoblin, wraith, spunkie, sheeted ghaist, deadlicht, broonie, or ony ither scrap o' deevildom sae common at name in the Hielands. Hoich, sirs! it was indeed nae sma' matter to cut the weasens o' thae awfu' monsters o' wolves; but," said he, holding aloft his long Highland dagger, which flashed back the rays of the moon, "but that is a blade that has rung on the target o' the *lham-dearg*; and after *that*, what could a bold hand not do wi' it?"

"On the target of who?" asked Ronald.

"The *lham-dearg*, sir."

"The words are Gaelic; but who is he?"

"A spirit wi' a bloody hand, that haunts at the mirk hour the wood o' Glenmore, in the Grants' country."

"What has this to do with your dirk?" said Stuart, who became interested in every thing which looked like a northern legend.

"Pooh!" said Cameron; "'tis an old ghost story, and not one of Dugald's prime ones. But he is as prosy with his legends, as Colin Campbell is about Egypt and Ralph Abercrombie."

"He doesna believe it noo," muttered Dugald, shaking his white hairs sorrowfully; "but when he was a bairn at hame in Fassifern-house, I hae made his vera lugs tingle wi' fear at the name o' the *lham-dearg*, and he used to grane and greet for a licht that he micht see to sleep, as he said; and in thae days he wadna hae gane into a dark place, to be made king o' the braw Highlands frae Castle Grant to Lochaber. But noo wars and campaigning hae learned him to scoff at a' thae matters, though his faither, the laird, (gude guide him!) a man as auld as mysel, believes every word o' them. I daursay, he doesna believe noo that deidlichts burn on the piper's grave in the auld kirk-yaird at hame; or that spunkies and fairies bide in the glen o' Auchnacarry, kelpies in Loch-Archaig, or that the *daoine shie* haunt the dark holes, cairns, round rings, and unco' places o'

the Corrie-nan-gaul in Knoydart, where I mysel hae seen them dancing tullochgorm in the bonnie moonlicht."

"Certainly not, Dugald. What I believed when a child, will scarcely pass now for truth; and I believe you never saw any thing unearthly until Ferintosh had swelled your belt to bursting. Come, Dugald, acknowledge this to be true," said Cameron, laughing.

"May be ye'll no believe in the red-cap, that haunts the auld tower at Archaig; and may be no in the vera *taisch*?" said the old servitor in a voice approaching to a groan at the other's apostasy. "Ochone, may be no! although I mysel saw bluid on his hand, and tauld him o' it the day before the shot struck him there at the battle of Arroya del Molino."

"Dugald," said the colonel, "I will not argue with you about the second sight, because I know you have some pretensions to the character of a *taischatr*. You certainly have me at vantage there, and your prediction about the shot at Arroya came true; and exactly twenty-four hours after you said my hand dropped blood, a musquet-shot passed through it. A very singular coincidence indeed."

"It was nane," replied the old Gael firmly, "it was nane; and I saw the shot before it came, because there was a wreath before my een, and a' the power o' the *taisch* was in me."

"Well, Stuart, what think you of the second sight?"

Ronald was loath to express his disbelief in this superstition, which found a disciple in the colonel, and so hesitated to reply.

"I see you are too true a Highlander to disbelieve in its existence, and yet you are reluctant to acknowledge the truth," said Fassifern laughing, while he mistook the other's meaning. "But let us reach Banos, and over some of the bottled sherry which I lately got from Lisbon we will discuss these matters, and hear Dugald's story of the spirit of Glenmore, which if you are at all superstitious might have too much effect if related by him in Gaelic by moonlight, and on a lonely hill-side."

This proposal was at once accepted, and they began to descend the narrow and winding pathway which led from the rugged summits of the sierra towards the village. Dugald advanced in front, leading the horse of Cameron, who followed behind with Stuart. The latter thanked his stars for escaping from his late encounter so easily, having only sustained a few severe scratches and bruises. While enjoying some of the colonel's pure bottled sherry, a rarity in Spain, where the wine is ever kept in greasy hog-skins, Ronald soon forgot his disagreeable adventure at the abogado's cross. Dugald who, in consideration of his venerable age and relationship to Fassifern (being a fortieth cousin or so), was seated at the table, partook of the wine, and to wile away the time related in Gaelic the Highland legend he had referred to. Many readers may consider it a foolish, per-

haps an intrusive tale altogether; but had they heard it far away from home, in a hut at Banos, related in expressive and poetical Gaelic by such a reverend and warrior-looking old man as Dugald Cameron, it would have had a very different effect from what it can ever produce when related in plain and unvarnished English, stripped of all the Ossianic description and style in which Ronald Stuart first heard it.

The Lham-Dearg

"My story commences at the close of the fatal,—ay, sirs, I may say the most deplorable battle of Culloden; a battle which laid prostrate, for ever the hopes of a gallant prince, the cause of an illustrious house, and the energies of a brave and loyal people, and proved that *right* may contend in vain against *might*, and that justice must sometimes yield to the overwhelming majority of brute force. I was then but a wild Highland boy of fifteen, and followed the clan-regiment of the noble Lochiel, upon whom I attended as a sort of page, to carry his target and scabbard on the march. My brave old father, too, was in the battle; and being, in consequence of his relationship to the chief, a front rank man, he greatly distinguished himself in that desperate but unavailing charge we made on the troops of the Elector, after foolishly enduring a cannonade which miserably thinned our numbers. Ah, sirs! had we at first rushed on them with the broad-sword, as was ever our wont, another race would have filled the throne at this hour; but when we did charge, Cumberland's two lines were swept before our long blades like winnowed chaff upon the gale. Even then the day seemed ours, when the fire of the third compelled us to recoil. Ochone! let me think of it no more, for I grow wild at times when the memory of these days swells up in my withered heart, and the dangers, the glory, and the chivalry of the 'forty-five' are all remembered with mingled pride and sorrow. I was but a child then, and yet on that bloody day I shot dead several of Barrel's regiment, while the Camerons were among them, hewing them down like willow-wands with axe and claymore.

"In the rout which followed, I fled away with our wounded chieftain, and gained a place of safety among the hills; but my father was taken captive by the Campbells from the west country, and so he was one of the few who escaped the death decreed to all by the bloody mandates of the German duke, whose memory will be abhorred and execrated while grass grows and water runs in the land of the Gael.

"It is of my father's adventures I have now principally to speak.

"He was disarmed and manacled by the false sons of Diarmed, and from amidst them he beheld the merciless red-coats slaying, murdering in cold blood

the helpless and unresisting wounded by spontoon and bayonet, by the sword and volleys of musquetry; while the relentless Cumberland rode about the muir of Drummossie with his staff, treading down the hearts of better and braver men than ever will come of his tribe.

"The sun set that night on a field of blood, and one of woe and desolation to the Highlanders.

"Those wretched prisoners, whom the blood-glutted soldiers were too weary to slaughter, were, to the number of four hundred and forty men, enclosed in a hollow square, surrounded by the regiments of Barrel, Wolfe, and Bligh, who hemmed them in with fixed bayonets, and subjected them to every taunt and insult that national hatred, the meanest malice and cowardice when most triumphant, could suggest. Amongst other brave and unfortunate clansmen my father listened to them; his bosom swelled with rage and agony, and he longed to burst his bonds and leap like a tiger headlong upon them. But he was powerless, unarmed, and ironed, rather like some base malefactor than a gentle-blooded *duinhe-wassel* of the clan Cameron. The cutting taunts of Bligh's soldiers roused at last even the ire of Colonel Campbell of the Argyleshire men, and his blood became fired at the gross abuse lavished upon his countrymen. Stepping forward with his sword drawn, he sternly commanded them to be silent, and said that he would wager his commission against a crown-piece, that any Highlander there would meet in equal arms, and vanquish the best man present that wore a scarlet coat.

"'Ha! do you say so, sir?' cried the duke, who with his staff was in the centre of the square.

"'May it please your highness, I do most assuredly,' said Campbell, raising his bonnet; 'and I long to see the matter put to the test, to cure these southron gentry of their unwarrantable insolence. By my faith, they seem to forget the good use they made of their heels at Preston and Falkirk!'

"'And you will stand to your wager, colonel?'

"'My commission to a crown-piece.'

"'Done!' said the duke. 'Your bet is a fatal one, as you will find to your cost, ere many minutes pass away. Your very words savour of Jacobitism and treason; and your commission shall certainly be lost, if your rebel beats not a champion of my choosing. My friend, Major Von Thunderbotham, of Bligh's, may consider your command as his already.'

"'By Heaven! your highness, no dog of a Hessian that ever wore a head, shall command the men of Macallummore's race!' replied Campbell bluntly, and regardless of the consequences.

"A gigantic dragoon of Cobham's horse offered himself readily as the duke's champion; and on his colonel bearing testimony of his strength, activ-

ity, and expertness with his weapon, he was accepted. In his broken English, the ungenerous duke now addressed the prisoners in a style at once savage and insulting, offering freedom to any one of them who, in an encounter with the broad-sword, could foil the trooper. The words had scarcely fallen from his lips, before my father strode forward and claimed the combat.

"'Strike well, Cameron, for the honour of the Highlands!' said Campbell, as my father flung aside his fetters as he would have done a coil of adders.

"'Had you and others of your race struck for the right this day, the Prince would not have been a fugitive in the land of his fathers!' replied the other with an indignant scowl.

"'Oich! you are somewhat insolent for a cock laird or upstart gilly,' said the abashed Campbell. 'But remember that freedom is before you if you conquer; and if not, the hemp is grown—ay, man, and twisted too,—that will hang you like a dog from the walls of Carlisle some day to come.'

"'Better a thousand times to die on the scaffold with the white cockade on my brow, than eat the bread of a foreign oppressor and usurper,' replied my father heedlessly. 'But am I to encounter the sidier roy with my hands, after the base manner of his people?"

"'No: take my claymore,' answered Campbell; 'its temper and metal are matchless. Luno of Lochlin never forged a better: and if you are brave as you are impudent, I have no fears for you.'

"'But a dirk; what shall I do for a dirk?'

"'Take mine, Evan of Tor-a-muilt,' said an aged Highlander stepping forward, wearing red tartans and the bramble-berry badge in his bonnet. He placed a dirk,—this very weapon with which I slew the wolves to-night,—in the hand of my father, who started back with awe at the sight of the giver. The Highlanders around shrunk back likewise. His height was superhuman; his hair was white as snow, and a beard of the same hue descended to the square buckle at his girdle. His eyes had that keen and bright expression in them which seemed to harrow up the soul, and read the inmost thoughts of those he looked upon. In his bonnet he still wore that badge which all others had discarded for safety,—the white rose of the Stuarts.

"'Strike well, Cameron, and you will have your revenge,' said he, waving his bonnet as he added, 'God bless King James the Eighth, and send death to the Elector of Hanover!'

"'Shoot him! bayonet him! Forward!' cried Cumberland in a tempest of fury, and with the hoarse accents of rage. 'Blow out the brains of the insolent rebel!'

"But the aged speaker of the treason had disappeared, and although the prisoners were narrowly searched twice over, he could no where be found, and

the fury of the duke was boundless. What became of the old man, no one knew. He disappeared suddenly from amidst them; but whether he sunk into the earth or melted into thin air, remains yet a mystery; but the Highlanders were filled with terrors, and every man drew his plaid closer around him, and shrunk from the touch of his neighbour. After threatening the English trooper with the lash and triangles if he did not vanquish his opponent, he commanded the combat to begin without further delay. The dragoon cast aside his leather gloves, and drawing his long blade, stood upon the defensive. My father belted his plaid tighter about him, drew his bonnet over his brow, and rushed, in the northern fashion, headlong on his adversary, who was compelled to retire backwards, acting only on the defensive. Burning with hatred and fury, my father pressed forward, heedless of the weapon of the soldier, in whose broad breast he buried the dirk of the mysterious Highlander, and then gathering all his force for one mighty effort with the claymore, he clove the unfortunate dragoon down to the neck, cutting even the folds of his white cravat.

"'Well done, Cameron! Hoigh! for Lochiel!' cried Colonel Campbell. 'Now your highness will perceive what thews and sinews the mountains can produce. I have gained my bet. Your countryman the major is likely to continue one a little longer, and the crown-piece will go to my good champion.'

"'King George has lost a true man,' replied the duke fiercely, 'and hell is cheated of a Scots rebel for a short time longer. Well now, dog of a Highlander! you have missed the gallows this time; but I believe only a little time will elapse before you dance yet to the hangman's hornpipe.'

"At this supposed smart remark a loud laugh arose among his glittering staff, and was echoed by the soldiery; but a prouder and more triumphant shout burst from the unfortunate Gaelic prisoners. Many a gallant battle-cry mingled with it. *Fraoch-eilan! A dh'aindeoin cotheireadh! Craigellachie!* from the men of Glengarry, Clanronald, and Strathspey. Loud and long they shouted in defiance, till the crimson cheeks and carbuncles of the corpulent duke turned white with vexation and fury. When the commotion had subsided Colonel Campbell put a few crown-pieces into my father's hand, and pointed to the hills.

"'Begone now,' said he, 'and thank your mother for giving you such good milk, and for making such a man of you.[*] Away! the mountains are before you, and you are once more a free man.'

[*] These were the very words used by Colonel Campbell when his singular combat terminated, after the field of Culloden. See any History of the Civil War, 1745-6.

"'I want not your gold or your silver, sir!' said my father, tossing the pieces on the bloody grass. 'Your money is the wages of treason to Scotland, and rebellion against King James. I heed not your frown, sir. God will now be the best judge between your cause and ours, after this fatal day. Keep your money, and I will, with your permission, retain the claymore; it may yet be drawn for King James the Eighth.'

"And without vailing his bonnet, or deigning to bestow a glance on Cumberland, he broke through the ranks of Wolfe's regiment, and made off with all speed towards the mountains of the Grants' country, where he hoped to remain in safe hiding until the clans gathered together once more, or the present danger had passed away. After concealing himself in the *Chlachdhian*, or sheltering-cave of Cairn-gorm, and after wandering for days in Duthil and Inverallan, and being sorely hunted and pressed by the parties of red-coats scouring and devastating the country, he found himself one night compelled to take refuge in the great fir forests of Grant of Rothiemurchus, the whole country from Lorn to the mouth of the Spey being infested with bands of the *sidier roy*. Beacons of destruction, by night and by day, blazed on hill and in valley, while the proud halls of long-descended chieftains and the green huts of their faithful vassals were given indiscriminately to the flames; and the shrieks of helpless women and children were borne on the breeze, which had so lately swelled with the *piobrachd* and march of the Highlander. It was a sight indeed to make him thirst for vengeance, when nightly he looked forth from the cavern of the blue mountain to behold the sky red with the fires of the destroyer. But, alas! the neck of the Gael was bending beneath the foot of the stranger, and the power of the proud race who would never bend, was then broken.

"To shut out sights and sounds which every where announced the downfall of Albyn, my father plunged into the recesses of the wild forest of Rothiemurchus, but his retreat was not unmarked. A party of king's troops, Hessians I believe, clad in yellow uniform, beheld him from a neighbouring eminence, and despatched a party of ten men, to shoot or destroy him in any way they chose,—Cumberland having doomed to death all who wore the garb of the Celtic race. For nearly an hour these Georgian sleuth-hounds followed upon his track with murderous eagerness and precision, firing at intervals whenever he came in sight. Their fire he returned, and shot dead three with his Highland pistol.

"Dashing on, and threading the mazes of the forest with the rapidity and activity of a true mountaineer, he contrived to baffle his pursuers, and reached what he supposed to be the inmost recesses of the wilderness. There, panting and breathless with exhaustion, he flung himself to rest on the green sward, cursing and deploring the hour when a son of the Gael had to flee from the arm of a stranger, and was hunted like a deer on his native hills by the soldiers of one he

deemed a German despot and oppressor.

"He rolled himself up in his plaid, and creeping close under the pine branches, lay listening with intense eagerness when the crash of a bramble or the rustle of leaves should announce that the Hessians were on his track. The night was calm and still. Not a heather-bell or blade of grass was stirring, and the pendent branches of the gloomy and gigantic pines hung down perfectly still and motionless. Not a sound was heard throughout all the immensity of the vast forest, save the hoarse murmurs of the foaming Spey, whose waters came hurrying down from the far-off hills of Badenoch, and swept through the recesses of Rothiemurchus on their course to the Moray Frith. There was no moon shining, but the night was clear and cloudless, and at times the red stars were seen twinkling through the dark foliage of the pines.

"As my father (Evan of Tor-a-muilt,[*] as he was named) lay thus in concealment, he suddenly remembered that he was within the bounds of the place haunted by the terrible spirit of Glenmore and Rothiemurchus,—the *lham-dearg*, or bloody-hand, who compelled all who crossed his path during his nocturnal rambles to do battle with him, and none were ever known to survive the awful conflict. He would have started up and fled; but remembering that it was equally dangerous to avoid as to seek the company of evil spirits, he resolved to remain where he was, saying over his prayers like a good catholic, and imploring protection from Saint Colm of the Isles. Yet his blood ran cold with terror, perspiration burst forth from every pore, and he covered his head in his plaid to shut out any frightful sight or sound that might invade the stillness of the gloomy wood. He locked his hand in the basket-hilt of his claymore, and lay hearkening so intensely, that he might almost have heard the dew dropping from the leaves.

[*] The Wedders-hill, an eminence at the foot of Loch-Archaig, in Kilmallie, Inverness-shire.

"A loud exclamation in a barbarous language, and one unknown to him, caused him to start up; and the report of musquetry, the crash of shot striking the trees, and the light uniform of a score of Hessians appearing at a short distance, compelled the hunted Highlander again to seek safety in flight. As unrelentingly as ever they pursued, incited by the hope of plunder, and the reward given for every dirk and claymore. The soldiers, to procure Highland weapons, committed a thousand outrages, even in the town of Inverness, and among the mountains tortured by various means the poor peasantry to reveal where their arms were concealed; after which they were either shot or bayoneted.

"'May the curse of Glencoe be upon ye! and may the raven's croak be

your only coronach, ye wolves' whelps!' cried he, as he again fled through the wood. 'Better face a Highland bogle than the bayonets of the Hessians, a race as cowardly as they are merciless!'

"He sought the most difficult and devious paths and soon the shouts of the enemy died away behind him in the distance. No sooner did he find himself in safety than his former fears returned, and as he paced slowly along a narrow forest-path, where the branches were locked together overhead, and where only the pale starlight glimmered at times, he beheld before him the figure of a gigantic Highlander. He was moving but a few yards in front, and his form towered up between the trees in dark and shadowy outline. The belted plaid fluttered behind him, and the eagle's wing, with the forbidden badge of James VIII., adorned his bonnet. With long and stately, but noiseless strides, he continued moving before my father, who often hallooed aloud to him to turn or stand, without receiving an answer. The checks of his tartan were red, his white beard streamed about him, and my father at once recognised by it the aged warrior who had presented him with the dirk on the muir of Drummossie.

"'Turn and assist me, if you are a true son of the hills? The blood-hounds of the Hanoverian have been on my skirts the live-long night; and even now they track me like a stricken deer.' My father received no answer to many such exhortations, yet he continued closely to follow the stranger, who always contrived to elude his grasp, and led him a wearisome ramble across the ravines and deep corries, through brawling torrents and intricate dingles, until, enraged at his contemptuous and singular conduct, he drew his claymore.

"'Turn, base coward!' he exclaimed, 'turn; and I will try whether the boss of your target is proof against the strokes of claymore and skene-dhu, or the *biodag*. Turn, turn; or by my father's bones, I will smite you through the back!'

"Even while he spoke, the form which had glided so far before him suddenly vanished, and he found himself at the mouth of a cavern, huge, black, and yawning, with the long and dark whins waving gloomily from the rocks around. A moment he recoiled at the sight of it, but summoning up his energies he entered boldly, calling aloud on his midnight companion in terms of threat and defiance, until the winding recesses of the cavern rang with the sound.

"It seemed to him that other noises mingled with the deep echoes of his voice. A tempest of wind tore through the cavern, hurling him violently to the earth. The trees of the forest without were shaken as if by a tempest; the Spey thundered louder over a neighbouring cascade, and the roar of its falling waters was mingled with the shrieks of the river kelpie. My father sprung up, and instinctively stood upon his guard, but an oppressive feeling of horror took possession of his mind; a cold perspiration bedewed his forehead; his lips were parched and his mouth clammy; he could hear his heart throbbing audibly, while

he strained his eyes till they almost started from the sockets, as he endeavoured to pierce the gloom. At that moment he would have faced a whole brigade of red-coats to have been free from that terrible cavern, but he had gone too far to recede, and he gathered courage from despair.

"He heard the clank of steel, and the tread of heavy feet sounded as if afar off, in hollow and vaulted places. Something like the fold of a damp plaid or shroud was waved across his face, and the memory of the *lham-dearg* again rushed terribly and vividly upon his mind.

"Expectation and horror wound him to a pitch of madness: he held aloft his target, and even while his hair bristled under his bonnet, and the marrow of his bones seemed turning to ice, he defied the spirit to battle.

"'Bloody hand of Glenmore! spirit of darkness! spirit of hell! come forth? Here a true man, a Cameron, defies you!'

"While the words were falling from his lips the awful figure stood before him, arrayed as an ancient warrior of the hills, and a halo of lambent fire playing around his form rendered him terribly distinct amidst the surrounding darkness. My father's brain boiled and whirled while he looked upon him, and his heart grew sick and palsied with fear: he knew that he was in the presence of an infernal spirit. Notwithstanding his terror, he recognised the white-haired warrior from whose hand he had received the dirk, and whom he had followed with taunt and defiance through the wood; but a superhuman courage armed his heart and nerved his hand, and calling aloud on heaven and Saint Colm of lona to aid him, he rushed forward to the encounter. The face of the spectre was changed from what he had first seen it: it was distorted and terrible with rage, and his eyes glared like stars of fire. My father saw the blade of the *lham-dearg* descending like a flash of lightning, yet he shrunk not; he felt it ringing upon his target, but he sunk with the mighty force of the blow, and a whirlwind seemed again to rush through the cavern, and bear him along with it, dashing him senseless to the earth.

"When consciousness returned, the morning sun was shining gaily in the wide blue vault, the dewy pines of Rothiemurchus were glistening in the light, and afar off rose the huge sides of the blue Cairngorm. The eagle was boldly winging away from his eyrie among the shores of Loch-avon, and soaring aloft on the balmy air; the mountain Spey was rushing as usual through the corries and chasms of the pine-clad glen, from which the white mists and foam of its course were curling in the bright sun, above the dark fir trees of the vast Highland forest.

"My father rose; he stretched his stiffened limbs and looked cautiously around him, but neither spectre nor red soldier was in sight. Behind him yawned the arched mouth of the black cavern: he shuddered as he looked upon its gloomy depth, and turning away, plunged into the forest in hopes that some loyal ten-

ant or forester of the laird of Grant would yield him somewhat to save him from perishing of want."

"Then, Dugald, this terrible encounter turns out to have been only a dream after all," said Stuart.

"Nothing more," remarked Fassifern.

"It was nae dream, sirs," said Dugald, forgetting his Gaelic, and resuming the Lowland dialect, "it was indeed nae dream; and as proof positive, he found his target cloven like a nut-shell by the stroke of the spirit's blade—what nae mortal sword could hae dune; for it was covered wi' four barkened bull-hides, and with three hundred brass studs,—and yet it was cloven in twa, and his arm felt the wecht o' the unco' cloure for mony a day after."

"A very foolish story, Dugald," said the colonel. "But you have forgotten to tell us that your father had emptied a capacious hunting-flask of fiery mountain whisky before he entered the cavern; and probably a fall on the rocks might account for the cloven targe."

"Sir, ye never tried to account for it in that way before," replied the old man indignantly; "bethink ye, when at hame, how ye wadna put your nose outside the door-stane after dark, for fear o' encountering *lham-dearg*. Ye were but a callant then, to be sure; but even now, wi' a' your bravery,—and I ken that, like a' o' your name, you've a lion's heart in the field, on the water ye tremble like an aspen leaf, and a' for fear o' the kelpie. But as for my faither's adventure, ye ken the hail country-side rang, and yet rings, wi' the story."

"Your father, Dugald, was always seeing things such as no other man ever saw, I believe."

"I ken he was farer seen than maist folk; but mair than he hae viewed the fightin' spectre o' Glenmore, but nae man ever cam aff sae easy frae a tulzie wi' him. Four o' Rothiemurchus' gillies ance foucht a battle wi' him near Loch-morlach, and never ane o' them survived the scuds his claymore gied them."

"Well; and the dirk—"

"My faither wore till his dying day,—and I shall wear till mine, in memory of that adventure. It's no different frae other men's,—a sharp blade wi' a buckhorn hilt, ye see; but he micht sink it to the guard in an aiken tree, and it ne'er would bend or break. But, as I said before, my faither was farer seen than ither folk, and he ance had a mair solemn and eerie adventure wi' a wraith,—ay, sirs, *his ain wraith*, than the ane I hae now related.

"He joined me when I was wi' the Prince and Lochiel, biding in concealment amang the wild shores of Loch-Archaig, at Kilmallie. The Prince of Wales lived in our puir hut on the top of Tor-a-muilt, frae whar we had a look-out for mony a mile, and richt gude need there was! The hail country was swarming wi' red-coats and blood-thirsty mercenaries, under the Prince of Hesse. Ochone! ochone-

aree! Had you seen the gallant Prince Charles as I saw him then! O sirs! the vera thocht o't maddens me. He had neither shirt, shoe, nor hose on; he had been wandering for six weeks in the Corrie-nan-gaul of Knovdart, bare-footed, dressed in an auld tartan coat and *filleadh-beg*, wi' a lang beard hanging frae his chin. He carried a musquet, dirk, pistol, and horn; and but for his famished and wae-begane face, lookit mair like some wild reiver o' the isles, than the son o' braid Scotland's king.

"We were a' in the same plight, and ever since the dool-day o' Culloden had lived in caves and forests, like the beasts o' the field. My father found us out in our hiding-place—a feat which baffled the followers of Cumberland, to whom no true Scotsman would betray us,—even although thirty thousand pounds were offered for the prince, dead or alive! My father fell on his knees, and sair he wept to see the son o' his king a wandering outcast and outlaw, amang his ain Highland hills. He tauld us o' his encounter wi' the *lham-dearg*, but the prince laughed heartily, just as he used to do at Holyrood, and wadna believe a word o't. Aweel, sirs, we wandered lang about Archaig and Glenpean, stealing for the prince's support the few sheep which escaped Cumberland's order to destroy every living thing in the country. Mony, mony were the miseries and calamities he suffered until the month of September, when he embarked at Moidart on board o' the Ballona, a Nantz ship o' thirty-twa guns, broucht for him by the loyal Colonel Warren. Lochiel, Glengarry, Borodale, and a hundred common men, including my faither and mysel, followed them into banishment.

"In France the prince, wha indeed never, while ae plack rubbit on anither, forgot auld friends, got Lochiel command of one of the regiments composed of Scots and Irish refugees, wha served the French king. As in duty bound, we followed Lochiel, and became soldiers of his battalion, which soon became so famous,—the Royal Scots regiment. We were wi' the army under the Mareschal Saxe, whan the French defeated oor auld enemy the bluidy Duke of Cumberland at Laffeldt, in June 1747, and compelled the British troops to retire in disorder. Wi' a' the memory o' the past, o' our prince's wrangs, and the awfu' butcherie o' Culloden glowing in their minds, the Royal Scots fought wi' richt gude will against the scarlet ranks o' the British, and unco' slaughter we made amang them wi' bayonet and claymore, when they were compelled to flee, and retire in disorder on the toon or village o' Val.

"On the evening o' the battle day my father stude on duty as an advanced sentinel frae the French picquets; placed by the Mareschal Saxe in the direction o' Maestricht, where the British army lay. It was just aboot the gloaming, the clouds were gathering in the lift and darkening the flat, level, I may say meeserable landscape; and my faither, puir man, strade sorrowfully to and fro on his lanely post, sighing sairly as he thocht on mony a braw and brave comrade and

clansman then lying cauld and stiff on the plain o' Val, and ower wham nae coronach could be sung, or cairn raised in the land o' the stranger. He thocht too o' his humble sheiling at hame, on the Wedders-hill, and compared the view frae it wi' the 'Lawlands o' Holland,' wi' the dull marshy flats, the yellow canals, and slaw-moving barges, the windmills, and smoky toons about Laffeldt. Different indeed was the scenery frae that around the lanely auld thack cottage at hame, where the blue Loch-Archaig rolled to the base o' the dark an' towering mountains, covered wi' the siller birch or black pines to their vera tap.

"Puir man! melancholy and sad he grew, but his surprise was aroused when he saw a Hieland soldier, wearing a garb the vera counterpart o' his ain, walking slowly, at a few yards distance, as if likewise on sentry. My faither stoppit to observe him, and the stranger stoppit also; and the outline o' his form was distinctly seen, as he stude wi' his back to the west, whare the sky was a' crimson and gowd wi' the last flush o' the day that had passed awa'. My faither challenged twice aloud, but gat nae response; and his birse beginning to rise, he made a motion as if handling his musquet, biting his cartridge, and a' that, ye ken. The stranger did sae likewise, imitating his motions exactly as his shadow on the wa' or reflection in a looking-glass wad hae dune. A queer and eerie sensation passed over my father on behauldin' this, and a souching cam ower his heart when he bethoucht him that a' wasna richt. Yet boldly he gaed towards the figure, and step to step as he took them, mimicking ilka motion, the ither advanced also, until my faither made an involuntary stop, and it did sae too.

"At that moment a feeling o' awfu' and immeasurable horror entered the soul o' my faither, when he viewed in the face and figure o' the stranger an exact counterpart o' himsel'—every lineament o' his face, every check in his tartan, were the same—the same his arms and badges. Then did he ken that he beheld his wraith, and that the hour of his departure was at hand.[*] As the expression o' his face became distorted wi' terror and awe, the features o' the wraith or bogle underwent the same change, and his ain een seemed glaring back upon himsel wi' affricht. He rushed madly forward wi' his charged bayonet, but the form melted into thin air, and disappeared.

[*] A species of second sight is believed in by the Highlanders, which is supposed to be a forerunner of death. An apparition haunts them, or appears at times, resembling themselves in every respect. The legendary stories of such appearances are innumerable, indeed, over the whole of Scotland.

"He tauld his comrades o' the sicht he had seen upon the muir, and every true Gael believed him, and knew that his hours were numbered then, and that his

time amang them would be short. Yet his heart never trembled, and he went forth to battle the next day wi' a spirit that never flinched, and a hand that never failed, till the death-shot struck him. Sairly his story was jeered by the Lawland loons and men frae south o' Dunkeld; but next day, at the vera return o' the hour in whilk the wraith appeared, he was shot dead in the attack upon the British post at Mount Saint Peter, when the Mareschal Saxe was endeavouring to drive Cumberland beyond Maestricht. Ochone! mony a brave and leal Scot's heart grew cauld that nicht, sirs,—my father's amang the lave. I rowed him up in his plaid, and buried him wi' my ain hands, howking his grave at the side o' the road between Saint Peter's and the Scheld. The live-lang nicht I wroucht in piling a cairn aboon him, that the feet o' the stranger micht no tread ower the place o' his repose.

"Now, sirs, that the things I hae tauld unto ye this nicht are true, and a' happened just as I hae described, I firmly believe; and that some men are doomed to behauld strange sights and unwarldly visions, nae body will deny."

"I decidedly do, Dugald," said Cameron; "but your father, Evan of Tor-a-muilt must have been seeing double when he saw the wraith,—no disparagement to him when I say so, for I have heard that he was as brave a man as ever belted on a broad-sword. But rations of Nantz were more plentiful under the Marshal Saxe than with Lord Wellington's troops, and doubtless Evan Cameron never went on guard without a good allowance."

"Deevil a bit, sir," replied the old man testily. "Ye maun ken there was fechtin' and marchin' enough and to spare, but neither pay nor plunder could be gottin under King Louis. In the year after the battle o' Laffeldt, our chief, the gude and the gallant Lochiel, died o' a broken heart, I'm free to say, for the thocht o' being an exile for life weighed heavy on his soul. Sair I sorrowed for him, and so did a' the Royal Scots regiment, for there wasna ane that wadna hae laid doon his life for Lochiel. After seeing him laid in a foreign grave, I cam awa' cannily hame, to live amang my ain folk by bonnie Loch-Archaig, when the dool and dirdum o' the 'forty-five' was a' passed awa' and blawn ower."

CHAPTER VI.

A BATTLE.

"Let blusterin' Suchet crously crack,

Let Joseph rin the coward's track,
Let Jourdan wish the bâton back
He left upon *Vittoria*.

If e'er they meet their worthy king,
Let them dance roun' him in a ring,
And some Scottish piper play the spring
He blew them at *Vittoria*.

Peace to the spirits of the brave,
Let a' their trophies for them wave,
And green be our Cadogan's grave
Upon thy field, *Vittoria*."
Scottish Song.

In the long interval of time during which Lord Wellington's army remained cantoned on the Spanish frontier, no hostilities took place saving General Foy's fruitless attack upon Bejar, and the defeat of the French under General Frimont in the vale of Sedano, near Burgos. During the winter, supplies of every kind,—pay in some instances excepted,—arrived from Britain, to refit the army and enable it to take the field, which it did in an efficient state in the month of May, 1813.

During the long residence of the Gordon Highlanders in the valley of Banos, they had become quite domesticated among its inhabitants; and it was a daily occurrence to see them assisting in household matters,—working with the men in the gardens and vineyards, or carrying about in their arms the little children of the patrona on whom they were quartered; and before the battalion departed, the venerable *cura*, had wedded, for weal or woe, several of the olive-cheeked maidens of the valley to men who wore the garb of old Gaul.

On the 13th of May the corps marched from Banos, and the entire population of the secluded vale accompanied them to the end of the pass, and watched them until the notes of the war-pipes died away in the wind, and the last bayonet gave a farewell flash in the sun-light as the rear-guard descended the mountains towards the plain of Bejar, where Sir Rowland Hill mustered and reviewed the gathering brigades of his division.

The troops presented a very different appearance now from the way-worn, ragged, and shoeless band which, in the close of the last year, had retired from Burgos. Fresh drafts of hale and plump British recruits had filled up the vacancies caused by wounds, starvation, and disease; and a few months in quarters had restored the survivors to health and strength: the new clothing had completely

renovated their appearance, and all were in high spirits, and eager again to behold their old acquaintances, Messieurs the French. Sir Rowland complimented Fassifern on the appearance of his Highlanders, who cocked their plumes more gaily now than ever, as they marched past to "the garb of old Gaul." Truly, new scarlet jackets, Paisley tartan, and bonnets from "skull-cleeding Kilmarnock," had wrought a wonderful change upon their ranks.

Although the Duke of Dalmatia and many battalions of French had been ordered into Germany, Buonaparte's army in Spain still mustered 160,000 strong. King Joseph, at the head of 70,000 men, kept his head-quarters at Madrid; the rest were scattered through the eastern provinces, under Suchet and other commanders. It was determined by the British and Spanish governments to make one grand and determined effort to drive the French across the Pyrenees, on again taking the field against them. An efficient train of pontoons was fitted out to assist in crossing those deep and rapid rivers by which Spain is so much intersected. Every thing which would tend to the comfort of troops on service had been provided; and the army in the end of May, as I have before stated, commenced offensive measures against the enemy.

Lord Wellington, with the light division, moved on Salamanca; Sir Thomas Graham crossed the Douro, with orders to move on Braganza, Zamora, and Tras-os-montes, and to form a junction with the allies at Valladolid; while Sir Rowland Hill, from Estremadura, was to march on the same point by Alba de Tormes. By these movements the allies turned that position on the Douro which the French generals had resolved to defend; and so rapid was their march, that General Villatte, who occupied Salamanca with three thousand men, had barely time to effect a retreat, with the loss of two hundred, and a few pieces of artillery. The able Wellington, after placing the right and centre divisions in cantonments between the Douro and Tormes, joined Sir Thomas Graham, whose troops, after encountering many difficulties in crossing rivers, ravines, and mountains, over which they had to drag their heavy artillery and pontoons, took up a position on the left, in communication with the Spanish army of Galicia under General Castanos.

The French, who were utterly unprepared for these rapid movements, retired precipitately, destroying in their retreat the bridges at Toro and Zamora; and the combined army now directed its march in triumph on Valladolid, one of the finest cities of Old Castile, and one which might be styled a city of convents, as it contains no fewer than seventy,—one of them the palace of Philip IV. Crossing Escueva, the allies continued to press impetuously forward, and the enemy to retire unresistingly before them. Joseph abandoned Madrid, concentrated the French legions around the castle of Burgos, which he blew up on the 13th of June, and with his whole force retired under the cloud of night towards the Ebro, the passage of which his generals made every preparation to defend. But again he

and they were signally baffled by the skill, talent, and penetration of Wellington, who moving his troops by the San Andero road, crossed the river near its source at Puente de Arenas and San Martino, a measure which so disconcerted the plans of Joseph and Marshal Jourdan, that they were again compelled to retreat, and the allied army continued its march to Vittoria.

On the 20th of June the second division encamped on the plain of Puebla, near Vittoria. The first brigade was then commanded by the Hon. William Stuart (a brother of the Earl of Galloway) a true and gallant soldier of the old school, whose valuable services received no requital from his country.

The time had now arrived when Joseph was compelled to make a final and determined stand in defence of the crown he had usurped, or behold it torn ingloriously from his brow, and on the very ground where Edward the Black Prince, on the 3rd of April, 1367, totally defeated another intruder on the Spanish soil—Henry the Bastard, and restored Don Pedro to the crown of Castile.[*] The time was likewise arrived when the legions of France, whose movements since the commencement of the campaign had been a series of retreats, should make a decisive effort to renew their fading laurels, or by being driven disgracefully across the Pyrenees, lose for ever that hard-earned fame which they won under the banners of the great Emperor.

[*] This battle was fought at Navarete, a village on the Zadorra, near Vittoria. See the Chronicles of Sir John Froissart.

Early on the morning of the 21st of June the allies were in motion; Sir William Stuart's brigade moved in front of the second division, which marched along the high road to Vittoria. The morning was beautiful, the earth was fresh with dew, and the merry larks were soaring aloft over bright yellow fields, which were soon to be drenched with blood. The sky was clear, blue, and cloudless, and the shining current of the Zadorra flowed among thickets and fields of ripe waving corn, which often afforded concealment to the light troops during the action. Violets, cowslips, and a thousand little flowers which flourish so plentifully by the wayssides in Spain, were blooming gaudily in the fresh dew; the brown partridge was whirring about, and ever and anon a fleet rabbit shot past as the troops moved into the corn-fields, treading and destroying the hopes and support of many a poor husbandman. Afar off, their hues mellowed by the distance, rose the bold and lofty ridges of the Pyrenees and other sierras, the outlines of which appeared distinctly against the pure blue beyond. Save the near tread of feet, or the distant blast of a bugle, no other sounds were borne on the morning wind but the bleating

of sheep and goats, or a matin-bell tinkling in some solitary hermitage, calling its superstitious inmates to prayer for the success of the friends of Spain.

To the British it was known that the enemy were in position in front, and every heart beat high, and every fibre was thrilling with excitement, as the columns moved towards the plains in front of the town of Vittoria. Moving in close column of companies, the Highlanders marched through a field of ripened corn, which nearly overtopped the plumes of their bonnets. The other corps of the division followed and then halted for a time, during which the crop, which was all ready for the sickle, was soon trodden to mire. But 'necessity has no law.' The flints were examined, the colours uncased, and the drummers were provided with temporary litters, formed of pikes and blankets, for bearing off the wounded officers.

Fassifern's eyes kindled up with that bright and peculiar expression which they ever had when he became excited.

"Highlanders!" cried he, as the regiment again moved forward, "in a few minutes we shall be engaged with the enemy; but I need not exhort you to do your duty, for in that you have never yet failed. Keep the strictest silence on the march, but you may shout till the mountains ring again when the pipes blow to the charge."

"Fu' surely and brawly well set up a skraigh then, lads!" said his equerry, Dugald Mhor, who was the only man who dared to reply. "But it's an unco' thing for Hielandmen to keep their tongues still, whan the bonnie sheen o' steel is glintin' in their een. Troth, lads, we'll gie a roar that will mak' Buonaparte himsel shake in his shoon, if he be within hearin'."

The soldiers began to cheer and laugh, while Dugald waved his bonnet, but the voice of the colonel arrested them.

"Silence, Dugald!" said he to that aged follower, who with his sword drawn stuck close to the flanks of his horse; "silence! You always create some uproar in the ranks by your odd observations. I am ever apprehensive that you will thrust yourself needlessly into danger; and indeed it would relieve me of much anxiety, if you would remain in the rear. You know well, Dugald, how much I would regret it, should any thing happen to you during the engagement to-day."

"That depends just upon yoursel, sir: whar ye lead, I will follow," replied the old man, whom the world would not have tempted to separate himself from Cameron, who had often insisted on many occasions that Dugald should not peril himself by coming under fire. These were injunctions which the obstinate old vassal valued not a rush; and so in these good-natured altercations the master was always overcome by the man, who seemed to regard fighting rather as a sport or a pleasant source of excitement, just as one would view a fox or stag-hunt.

While Major Campbell was boring Ronald Stuart with a painfully accurate account of the battle of Alexandria, and the position of the French forces on that memorable occasion, the legions of Joseph Buonaparte appeared in sight. As each regiment quitted the path among the corn-fields and entered upon the plain before Vittoria, they came in view of the whole battle-array of the enemy, occupying a strong position covering each of the three great roads, which at Vittoria concentrate in the road to Bayonne. The long lines of dark infantry appeared perfectly motionless, but their burnished arms were shining like silver in the sun; the tri-colours of the legions were fluttering in the breeze, and many of their bands struck-up the gay *Cà ira* and *Marseillois* hymn on the approach of the allies.

The right flank of Joseph's army extended northward from Vittoria, across the stream of the Zadorra, and rested on the hills above the villages of Gamarra Mayor and Abechuco, covered there by strong redoubts. Between the right and centre was a thick cork wood, into which were thrown many corps of infantry to keep open the line of communication. The right centre rested on a height which commanded the vale of the Zadorra, and which was strengthened by nearly one hundred pieces of artillery. Their left and centre occupied the bold ridges above the village of Subijana de Alava, with a *corps de reserve* posted at Gomecha, and a brigade thrown forward on the lofty and rocky mountains of Puebla to protect their centre, which might have been outflanked by the main road where it crosses the Zadorra. Joseph Buonaparte in person commanded the whole, having Marshal Jourdan acting under him as lieutenant-general. The armies were pretty well matched, each mustering from 70,000 to 75,000 men, the French having the advantage in occupying a strong position, which every means had been taken to strengthen.

Each regiment of Hill's division, on its debouching from the Vittoria road, formed line from close column, and advanced in that order towards the enemy. To the latter the view of the allied army at that hour must have presented a grand and imposing spectacle; so many dense masses moving successively into the plain, and deploying into line by companies obliquely, with all the steadiness and regularity of a review; the bright barrels and bayonets of upwards of 70,000 musquets shining in the rays of the morning sun; the silken standards of many colours,—red, buff, white, blue, and yellow, waving over them; the bright scarlet uniforms, relieved by the varied green of the landscape; and then the many warlike sounds increased the effect of the scene. The neighing of cavalry horses, the roll of tumbrils and gun-carriages, the distant yet distinct word of command,—the mingling music of many bands, the trumpets of the horse, the bugles of the riflemen, and the hoarse wailing war-pipe of the Highland regiments, ever and anon swelled upon the breeze, pealing among the heights of Puebla, and dying away among the windings in the vale of Zadorra.

The prospect before them must have been one of no ordinary interest to the martial legions of France. At the moment that the distant bells of the convent of Santa Clara de Alava struck a quarter to ten, the memorable battle of Vittoria began.

"There go the Spaniards,—the soldiers of old Murillo!" exclaimed Seaton, as a loud and continued discharge of musquetry rang among the ridges of Puebla. The sound caused every heart to bound, for the day was big with the fate of many!

"Murillo and the Condé d'Amarante have attacked the left of the French," said Cameron, watching the operations through his telescope; "but they will be compelled to retire unless succoured, and that promptly, too! The heights are becoming covered with smoke—— By heavens! they are giving way."

At that moment an aide-de-camp dashed up to the brigade, with Sir Rowland's order for the 71st regiment to advance, and sustain the attack on the heights, in concert with the light companies of the division, while the Highlanders and 50th regiment were to support them in turn.

"Now then, Stuart!" said Seaton, giving Ronald an unceremonious slap on the shoulder, "see if another gold cross is to be won upon Puebla. We shall be under fire in five minutes,—forward, light bobs! Forward double-quick!" Away they went in high spirits to the assistance of old Murillo, whose troops were already wavering, under the steady fire of the French. The roar of cannon and musquetry had now become general along the lines, and was absolutely astounding. War on a great scale is a grand, yet a terrible thing. The whole valley of the Zadorra,—the fortified heights of Gomecha on the enemy's right, those of Puebla on their left, the dark woodlands between, the corn-fields, the hedges, and all the grassy plain below, were enveloped in smoke, streaked with continual flashes of fire. In the villages every hut had become a fortress, loop-holed and barricaded, every wall of cabbage-garden and vineyard a breastwork, for possession of which armed men contested desperately, hand to hand, and point to point.

The Honourable Colonel Cadogan commanded the 71st, and other companies, which moved up the heights to the assistance of the Spaniards on the extreme of the British right. Forming line on the hillside, they advanced with a determination and impetuosity truly admirable towards the enemy, whose close and deadly fire was thinning their numbers rapidly.

"Now, soldiers! upon them like fury! Forward, charge!" cried Cadogan, dashing spurs into his horse's sides. A loud hurrah was the reply, and simultaneously they pushed forward with the bayonet, and rushing like a torrent through clouds of smoke and sweeping volleys of shot, fell headlong upon the enemy, and all was for a time hewing with the sword and butt, or stabbing with bayonet and pike. A severe and bloody struggle ensued, but the French were driven

tumultuously from the heights, after suffering immense loss, and having their commanding officer captured.

Ronald, who was then engaged in a charge for the first time, became bewildered,—almost stunned with the whirl, the din, and the wild uproar around him. The excitement of the soldiers had been raised to the utmost pitch, and they became, as it were, intoxicated with the danger, smoke, noise, blood, and death which surrounded them.

Impetuously they continued to press forward upon the foe with all the fury of uncurbed steeds, and the conflict was renewed, foot to foot, breast to breast, bayonet to bayonet, and with eyes of fire men glared at each other above their crossed weapons. When rushing forward with his company, at the moment they mingled with the enemy, Stuart encountered—or I should rather say, when half-blinded with smoke ran violently against a French officer, a cut from whose sabre he parried with his dirk, while, at the moment, he passed his sword through his shoulder, hurling monsieur to the earth with the force of the thrust. At that instant he was stunned and laid prostrate by a blow on the back part of the head, dealt from behind by the butt-end of a firelock, or truncheon of a pike. Vainly he strove to regain his feet, but reeled senseless on the sod, and the last sounds he heard were the triumphant cheers of the British, drowning the feebler cry of *Vive l'Empereur!* from their antagonists. Almost at the same moment the brave Colonel Cadogan fell from his horse, writhing on the grass with the agony of a mortal wound. A yell burst from his regiment, the Highland Light Infantry, as they beheld him fall; an echoing shout broke from their companions, and redoubling their efforts with the bayonet, after frightful carnage, they obliged the enemy to retire precipitately down the mountains. Their left was thus completely routed and in disorder, and the British flag waved triumphantly on the bloody summits of Puebla.

Encouraged by this good fortune, Sir Rowland Hill ordered his second and third brigades to attack the heights of Subijana de Alava, which were gallantly carried after a severe and stern conflict. King Joseph, alarmed at the loss of these important positions, directed his left wing to fall back for the defence of Vittoria, and Sir Rowland, pressing forward with his usual vigour, followed up this retreating movement.

Cole and Picton attacked their centre, and after a spirited resistance the whole chain of heights was abandoned, and the French army began to retire, but in admirable order, on Vittoria. General Graham dislodged the enemy from the hills above Abechuco, and his countryman General Robertson, without permitting his troops to fire a shot, but solely acting with the bayonet, drove them from Gamarra Mayor after great slaughter, and sustaining during the advance a tremendous fire of cannon and musquetry. Towards evening Graham's division

was pushed forward across the Zadorra, and ordered to secure the road leading to Bayonne. By that time Lord Wellington's centre had penetrated to Vittoria, and the enemy's right wing had totally given way. All was now lost, and the greatest confusion ensued among the foe. The court equipage of King Joseph, the baggage, the artillery, and the military chest of his army were all captured. Those columns retreating on the road to Bayonne were driven like herds of sheep back upon that which leads to Pampeluna, and then the French army became one vast mob, a disorganized and fugitive rabble. Joseph, owing his safety to the swiftness of his horse, abandoned the wreck of his troops and fled towards Pampeluna, hotly pursued by Captain Wyndham with a squadron of the 10th Hussars. In this great victory the loss of the allied army amounted to 5,000, and that of the French to 6,000 or upwards, and the defeat of the survivors was attended by every accompaniment of disgrace. A thousand prisoners were captured by the allies, and of the two solitary guns, of all his immense train, which Joseph succeeded in taking off, *one* alone reached Pampeluna, the other being taken next day.

Lord Wellington deserves the highest admiration for the excellence of his dispositions and manoeuvres during the whole of that brilliant campaign, and most decisive victory. Every arrangement, every movement of the French generals had been completely baffled and disconcerted by his superior skill and military talents. In four weeks, he had driven them from Madrid to Vittoria, turning their strong positions on the Douro and Ebro, and at last compelling Joseph and Jourdan to show fight at a point where their army was utterly destroyed.

The battle had almost been fought and won while Ronald Stuart lay senseless among the heaps of killed and wounded on the hills of Puebla. The French, after being repulsed from the latter, detached a legion, 7,000 strong, to recover them, which movement being perceived by General Stewart, he despatched Fassifern with his Highlanders to the assistance of the troops already there. The regiment moved quickly to the front, and after inconceivable exertions gained the summit by clambering up the steepest part of the mountains, a feat perhaps only to have been performed by Scots or Switzers. They soon reached the spot where the desperate charge had been made. Cadogan lay there drenched in his blood, and the carnage around him showed how fierce had been the conflict.

"Our light company men are lying thick here," said Fassifern, as he looked sternly around him.

"Here is Stuart," exclaimed Bevan. "Poor fellow, this is his last field!" The regiment passed in open column, double-quick, beyond the place where Ronald lay to all appearance, what his brother officers thought him to be, dead. Close by him lay Torriano, a lieutenant of the 71st, severely wounded, but there was no time to look at them. The Highlanders moved onward to the assistance of their friends the 50th and Highland Light Infantry, who were severely handled

by the enemy on the other side of the heights. There the carnage was appalling in some parts, where the ranks of friend and foe had fallen across each other in piles. Smoke and bright flashing steel were seen every where, and the echoes of the musquetry reverberated among the deep ravines and grassy summits of La Puebla. The overwhelming legion were still advancing; they had out-flanked the 71st, and cut off its communication with the 50th; and the superiority of the French numerical force was compelling these brave regiments to waver, when the cheers of their Highland comrades rang among the mountains, as they descended to their assistance. As Cadogan had fallen, the command of the troops devolved on Fassifern, and, acting under his orders, the three battalions compelled the legion to retire in disgrace and disorder.

Three other attacks did they make in succession, and with greater strength, but the attempts were vain. The first brigade were resolved to hold Puebla or perish, and Cameron continually drove them back. As the Highlanders said, "their hearts werna stoot eneuch for sae stey a brae," and the proud Frenchmen were compelled to abandon all hopes of regaining the important position.

Ronald lay long insensible where he fell, and when life returned the first sounds which saluted his ears were the distant roar of the musquetry, and all the confused din of a great battle, which the breeze bore up from the plains to the mountains where he lay. From loss of blood and the stunning effects of the blow, he was long unable to rise or even to speak; but his ear was intensely awake to every sound around him, and he eagerly longed to know how the tide of battle was turning in the valley below. The aching and smarting pain in his head was excessive. He placed his hand behind, and withdrew it covered with blood, and closing his eyes, again sunk backwards on the gory turf. Although his ears were invaded by the distressing cries and hoarse groans of agony from the wounded around him, his heart wandered to that Highland home where his very soul seemed to be garnered up; and in that terrible moment he would have given the universe, were it his, for a single glance at the heather hills and the wild woods around the old grey tower of Lochisla. He thought of his white-haired sire, and of what would be his sufferings and feelings should his only son perish in the land of the stranger. Alice, too,—but the thought of her inspired him with new life and spirit. He rose and unclasped her miniature, which was clotted and covered with his blood: he restored it to his breast, and looked about him. As the noise of the battle still continued without abatement, and he heard the shouts and battle-cry of the French mingled with the cheers of the British at times, he asked a French soldier who sat near him, shot through the leg, if he knew how the day had gone. He answered, without a moment's hesitation, that the troops of the great Emperor had outflanked, beaten, and cut to pieces those of Wellington, who was on the road to Lisbon, flying as fast as his horse could carry him. Although

Ronald put little dependance on this information, he resolved to satisfy himself. The Frenchman kindly bound up his head, and gave him a little brandy from his canteen; for which the Scotsman gave him his earnest thanks, being quite unable to yield more solid remuneration, not having seen a day's pay for six months. Making use of his sword as a support, he got upon his feet, and all things seemed to swim around him as he staggered forward.

Cadogan had been carried off by two soldiers of his own regiment, but his horse was lying dead upon a wounded Highlander, who had long struggled to free himself from its oppressive weight, and now called aloud to Ronald, who was unable to yield him the slightest assistance. As he passed slowly onwards to that part of the heights whence he expected to have a view of the whole battle-field, he beheld the officer whom he had encountered lying dead, pierced with a score of bayonet wounds. A soldier of the light company lay dead across him, with his face literally dashed to pieces by a blow from the butt-end of a musquet, and so much was he disfigured that it was impossible to recognise him. Close by a piper of the 71st lay dead, with his pipe under his arm: his blood had formed a black pool around him of more than a yard square. Hundreds were lying everywhere in the same condition, but further details would only prove tiresome or revolting.

With much difficulty, Stuart gained the extremity of the ridge, and the whole soul-stirring display of the field of Vittoria burst at once upon his gaze, extending over a space of ground fully six miles in length. Truly, thicker than leaves in autumn, the bodies of men were strewed along the whole length of the hostile armies. The warm light of the setting sun was beaming on the mountain tops, but its lustre had long since faded on the sylvan vale of the Zadorra, where the shadows of evening were setting on the pale faces of the dead and the dying. The plains of Vittoria, too, were growing dark, but at the first view Ronald was enabled to perceive, and his heart beat proudly while he did so, that the allies had conquered, and the boastful story of the Gaul was false.

Afar off he beheld dense clouds of dust rolling along the roads which led to Pampeluna and Bayonne. There the glistening arms were flashing in the light of the western sky, as the brigades of British cavalry swept on like whirlwinds, charging and driving before them, *sabre à la main*, the confused masses of French infantry, who, when their position was abandoned, retired hurriedly towards the main roads for France. He saw his own division far down the plain, driving a column like a herd of sheep along the banks of the river towards Vittoria; beyond which they pursued them, until the smoke of the conflict and the dust which marked its route were hidden by the cloud of night.

But long before this he had begun to descend the hills, and weak and wearied as he was, he found it no easy task to scramble among the furze, briars, and brambles with which their sides were covered. At the foot of them he found

many men of his own regiment lying dead. These had been slain by the fire of a few field-pieces, which the French had brought to bear upon them while moving towards Puebla. The moon broke forth when he reached the banks of the Zadorra, which he forded, the water rising up to his waist. This drenching added greatly to his misery, as the night was cold and chilly; but he walked onward as rapidly as he could, with the hope of reaching Subijana de Alava, Vittoria, or any place where he might hope to get his wound dressed, after which he trusted that he should be able to rejoin the regiment without delay. But losing his way, he wandered across the field, where the bodies of men and horses, dead or yet rolling about, broken waggons, dismounted or abandoned cannon, encumbered him at every step.

No shrieks now saluted his ears as he passed over the plain; but groans—deep and harrowing groans of agony, and half-muttered cries for water or pious ejaculations were heard on every side, while the ghastly and distorted faces, the glazed and upturned eyes, the black and bloody wounds of the dead appeared horrible, as the pale light of the moon fell on them. The vast field, although so many thousand men lay prostrate upon it, was, comparatively speaking, still; and to Ronald there seemed something sad and awful in the silence which succeeded the ear-deafening roar of the battle which had rung there the live-long day. Many a strong hand was stretched there powerless, and many a gallant heart, which had beat high with hope and bravery in the morning, lay there cold enough at night.

Little think the good folk at home,—those who for days would be haunted by the memory of some sudden death, which possibly they had witnessed in the streets,—little do these good people imagine, or perhaps care, for the mighty amount of misery accumulated on a single battle-field, and the woe it may carry into many a happy home and domestic circle. But the agony of dying men, and the tears of women, are alike forgotten and unheeded when forts fire, cities illuminate, balls are given, and mails sweep along, decorated with flags and laurels, in honour of a victory.....

Eager to leave the field behind him, Stuart hurried forward as well as he was able, until, stumbling over a dead cavalry horse, he fell violently to the earth, and his wound bursting out afresh, the light faded from his eyes, and he lay in a sort of stupor across the corse of a French soldier, in whose breast a twelve-pound shot was buried. While lying there he became tortured with an intense thirst, which he found it impossible to alleviate, until a drizzling rain began to descend, and after exercising his patience, he caught enough in the hollow of his hand to moisten his parched lips.

The sound of voices close by recalled him to himself fully, and he found that he was in imminent danger. A file of Portuguese soldiers approached, bearing a lantern to assist them in effectually plundering the dead. The knapsacks of sol-

diers were ripped open, and the contents carefully scanned; and the epaulets, lace, stars, &c. were torn away from the uniforms of the officers. Stuart's blood boiled up within him to behold brother-soldiers, men in arms, engaged in an occupation so truly despicable; but well aware of the danger incurred by encountering or threatening people so unscrupulous as death-hunters[*] he only grasped the hilt of his dirk, and lay perfectly still until they had passed by, which they luckily did without observing him.

[*] Death-hunters,—a name given by soldiers to those who follow armies to strip the dead after a battle.

Scarcely were they gone when another wretch appeared, bent on the same disgraceful errand. He was either a robber or guerilla, and carried on the hollow of his left arm a musquet, from which dangled a long leather sling. A pewter crucifix glittered on the band of his broad-leaved hat, and the polished brass hilts of the double daggers and pistols in his sash gleamed in the light of the moon, which at that moment shone forth with peculiar brilliancy. A new pair of large epaulets, which Stuart had put on a few days before, attracted this worthy's attention, and he came straight towards the wearer to possess himself of them.

What were the feelings of the young Highlander to behold in the robber the abhorred Narvaez Cifuentes, the destroyer of the noble and beautiful Catalina! An electric shock seemed to pass over every fibre, and again his heart beat violently. He grasped tighter the thistle-hilt of his short weapon, and watched with an eagle eye the motions of the robber. Narvaez knew him the moment their eyes met, and uttering a short but emphatic oath, he sprung forward and leaped upon Ronald with his whole weight, and pressing a knee upon each arm, perfectly incapacitated him from making any defence, especially in his weak and wounded state.

"How now, my gay *senor soldado*!" said Narvaez with a chuckling laugh, after they had glared at each other in silence for a few seconds. "Methinks we have met at last, under circumstances somewhat disadvantageous to your safety."

Ronald's only reply was a frantic attempt to free himself from the iron grasp of the other.

"Be still,—*carajo*!" said the ruffian as he unsheathed a poniard; "be still, or I may mercifully give a deep stroke at once, without having the little conversation I wish to enjoy with you, before you die."

"Dog of a robber!—dog of a Spaniard!" gasped Ronald in a hoarse accent. "Free but my right hand and, weak and exhausted as I am, I will meet you—"

"Ho, *Demonios!* a rare request! *Par Diez!* no, no, *mi amigo.* I will have these bright epaulets, (which I beg you will not spoil by struggling so,) and I will have this golden cross and other things, without either the risk or trouble of trying points with you. Hah! have you forgotten the night when we first met at Albuquerque? By our Lady of Majorga, you shall this night know that I have not! We have many odd scores to pay off, and they may as well be settled here on the field of Vittoria, as elsewhere. Besides, Senor Valour, when your corpse is found, you will be mentioned among the killed in the *Gaceta de la Regencia.* Hah! hah!"

"Wretch! you forget that this day my blood has been shed for Spain and Ferdinand VII.!"

"You have been paid for that, I suppose," replied the fellow, accompanying his observation, which might have suited a British radical, with an insultng laugh, while Stuart, panted with rage.

"Now, then,—what would you do were you released by me?"

"Stab you to the heart!"

The robber laughed.

"*Cuidado* was ever my motto," said he; "a dead man tells no tales."

Grasping and compressing Ronald's throat with his left hand, he flourished aloft his right, which held his stiletto, a sharp short dagger, with a round blade like that instrument known as a butcher's steel. "Now, *valiente senor*, compound for death, and not for life? I may prolong your tortures, giving a hundred stabs instead of one; but your dying moment shall be easy, if the lining of your pockets is tolerable. A stab for every *duro*! hah! hah!"

That instinctive feeling which causes every man to struggle to the utmost to preserve life, arose powerfully in the breast of Ronald Stuart at that instant, when he saw the deadly blade of the ruthless assassin gleaming above him in the moonlight. He felt that his last moment was come, and yet he resolved not to die without another gallant struggle. Exerting every energy—straining every muscle and fibre, by one desperate effort he hurled the robber violently backwards; but before he could rise, his merciless assailant again sprung upon him with renewed ferocity, and striking blindly with his stiletto, buried it twice in the turf close by Ronald's ear. There can be little doubt that this new attack would have terminated fatally for him, had not two officers, muffled to the eyes in their cloaks ridden hastily up, upon which the robber, without attempting to strike another blow, snatched up his rifle and fled,—but not unscathed.

"A death-hunter! He shall die, by heavens!" exclaimed one of the strangers, snatching a pistol from his holsters and firing after Cifuentes, who was seen bounding with the speed of a greyhound over the encumbered field, and the moon shone full upon him. A sharp howl of pain followed the report of the shot.

"Your shot has told, my lord," said the other officer. "These rascals deserve

no mercy."

"The fellow is leaping along yet. I would again fire, but for the waste of powder."

"He was struggling with some one here."

"Your arrival has been very fortunate," said Ronald, in a voice which faltered from weariness and excitement. "I have had a protracted and desperate struggle with the ruffian, and must have perished under his hands at last, as I am weak with loss of blood, and totally incapable of defending myself."

"Put this to your mouth," said the first speaker, "and take a hearty pull. 'Tis cold whisky-toddy,—a beverage not often got so near the Pyrenees."

"Thanks, sir!" said Ronald, as he put the flask to his lips, and drank gratefully of the contents. "So we have gained the day."

"Gloriously!" replied the other. "But where are you wounded?"

"On the head,—by a blow from a musquet-butt, or shaft of a pike. I received it on the heights of Puebla."

"Ah, there was sharp work there, when the battle began this morning. So you belong to the fighting division—Sir Rowland's? You have wandered a long way from the heights."

"I was endeavouring to rejoin my regiment," replied Ronald, staggering up, and propping himself with his sword; "I was loath to be absent while I could lift a limb. But to whom am I indebted for my safety? You are both countrymen, I believe, by your voices."

"You are right," replied the officer who wounded Cifuentes. "This is Captain Ramsay, of the 18th Hussars,—Ramsay of the Dyke-neuk-heid, as we call him at home; and I am Lord Dalhousie. We are riding to join the seventh division."

"I was not aware to whom I had the honour of addressing myself," said Ronald. "I shall be obliged by your lordship informing me where my own regiment now is."

"The Gordon Highlanders, I presume?"

"Exactly, my lord,—in Stuart's, late Howard's brigade."

"A brave regiment, and my heart warmed at the sight of their tartans today. They are a long way from this, pursuing the French along the Pampeluna road, and are probably as far as Salvatierra by this time."

"Then I can never reach them to-night," said Stuart dejectedly.

"Here are some of the Waggon-train," said the earl. "To their care we must consign you and be off forthwith, as all the troops are pressing forward en route for the Pyrenees."

As Dalhousie and his aide-de-camp rode off, the noise of wheels and cracking of whips announced the arrival of some of the Royal Waggon-train. One of the cars was advancing straight towards him, but slowly, as its course was con-

tinually impeded by the dead and wounded lying across its way. An officer of the train, with an immense plume in his cocked-hat, and wearing the rich uniform of this easy branch of the service, rode beside the waggon, into which they were putting those wounded men whose cries attracted their attention.

"The heights of Puebla?" said the waggon-officer, in a tone of surprise and expostulation to another who rode beside him. "Oh! it is quite impossible to detach any of my party so far."

"How, sir! so far?" replied the other angrily, in the voice of Major Campbell. "And is a brave lad to bleed to death and have his bones picked by the corbies, because a loon like you is afraid to climb a hill? By the Lord! he shall not perish through the neglect of one like you, whose whole share of a battle is seeing the smoke and hearing the noise at a comfortable distance, and then coming in with these infernal rattle-traps to pick up the wounded when the danger is all over."

He of the waggons was too much enraged to reply readily; and before he could speak, Ronald heard the voices of Macdonald and Evan Iverach.

"Come, major, don't quarrel about it. I am afraid that it will be a fruitless errand seeking Stuart among the heights. Poor fellow! I am too sure he was quite dead when we passed him this morning."

"Oh, Mr. Macdonald, dinna say sae!" groaned Evan, who had been lamenting as they came along, "dinna say sae! I have had an awfu' day o' wae and anxiety upon his account. There he is—God preserve me in my senses! No, my een dinna deceive me,—there he is!" cried Evan in a voice rising into a scream nearly, while he rushed forward as Stuart's figure, moving slowly towards them, met his view. Evan, as usual, began to caper and dance, blubber and weep with joy, while Campbell and Alister warmly shook the hand of his master.

"Ha, Stuart, my lad! I knew you were hard to kill," said Campbell; "and so, in spite of Alister's assertions that you were gone 'to the land of the leal,' I determined to set out in search of you as soon as the regiment halted. Old Ludovick Lisle of ours would have been buried alive, once upon a time, in Egypt, but for my interference. He had been struck down by an iron mace in some brawl with a loon of a Mameluke, and I knew that he was only stunned; so I poured a glass of brandy down his throat, and brandy never failed to bring old Ludovick to, whatever was the matter."

Ronald objected to entering the waggon, which was already crowded, and the bottom of it was covered with blood; so it moved off, the officer telling Campbell he should hear from him in the morning. The major replied that he should be very happy, and dismounting, gave his horse to Stuart; who, as they moved along, gave a report of his encounter with Cifuentes and interview with Lord Dalhousie.

"He is a brave man, and a good officer," said Campbell. "And as for Ram-

say, of the Dyke-neuk-heid, he is, though a Lowlander, one of the finest fellows I ever met, and the best mixer of Athol brose and whisky-punch in the three kingdoms. But we must move forward as fast as possible. Spur up this nag, Stuart; he was a French dragoon horse this morning, but has changed masters. My poor Rosinante, on which you ran such a rig at Almarez, was shot under me as we ascended the heights. Cameron likewise had his horse killed under him; and, to make the matter worse, had another killed over him, by which he was confoundedly bruised."

"But I see, major, that your left arm is in a sling."

"I received a scratch from the sabre of a French sub, who assailed me before I could draw Andrea; but I knocked him down with my stick, disarmed and took him prisoner."

"Well, Alister, I rejoice to see you have escaped this time; and Evan, my trusty fellow, too."

"A' sound and haill, sir; but I had a narrow escape frae a sharp-shooter birkie, wha put three shot through my bonnet just before the regiment cam' rattling doon the brae to our assistance."

"And how have the corps fared throughout this eventful day?"

"Easily indeed," replied Macdonald, "considering how our friends the 71st and the 50th have been cut up."

"Where is the regiment?"

"Bivouacked a few miles in front of Vittoria. None of the officers are killed, but some are wounded,—Cameron by the fall of his horse, which was killed by a twelve-pound shot, and Seaton had his left arm shot through; but the moment it was dressed he rejoined, and is probably now with his 'light bobs.' At the foot of the hills we lost a Serjeant and many men by the fire of the enemy's cannon, but—"

"But we had our vengeance to the full," cried Campbell, brandishing his stick. "They have lost as much as was ever tint at Shirra-muir. Forgetting the crown of Spain, only think, Stuart my man,—one hundred and fifty splendid pieces of ordnance, four hundred caissons laden with Lord knows what, the plunder of all Spain, perhaps! some millions of musquet cartridges, the baggage of the army, the military chest, colours and drums innumerable, and the baton of Jourdan, which he dropped in his hurry or fright. But the military chest—by Jove! had you seen how free the 18th Hussars made with it,—every rascal of them stuffing his boots to the brim with gold Napoleons! There will be a devil of a row kicked up about it at the Horse Guards, you may be sure of that. We have captured I know not how many carriages, every one full of the ladies of Joseph's court: rare work we have had with them! Alister, with twenty men, gallantly stormed one vehicle at the point of the bayonet, and seized four terrified young ladies,—one of

whom I believe is the Countess de Gazan, wife of the general of the same name."

"How horrified the poor creatures were!" said Macdonald. "One train of court-carriages, in flying away at full gallop to escape Graham's division, which had intercepted their flight to Bayonne, came among us, and were, of course, compelled to halt. But they were treated with all due gallantry and honour."

"Especially by Blacier's riflemen, who dragged some ladies out without ceremony, and rummaged them over like so many custom-house officers; and with their bayonets tore and ripped up the rich silk lining of the carriages, in hopes of finding concealed jewellery."

"Germans are more proverbial for their greed, than for devotion to the gentler sex. But Lord Wellington has despatched the ladies away to the rear, among the prisoners taken in the battle."

"A knowing chield!" said the major. "Some of these French girls are pretty enough to turn the hearts and heads of their captors. Arthur knew that, and thought them safer *en route* for Belem, than in the midst of his army. By my word! 'tis a devil of a thing to hear a sweet young girl, with bright black eyes, cherry lips, &c. &c., imploring you in most dulcet French to spare her life, and all that. What the deuce! Some of these fair creatures to-day seemed to think they had got among an army of ghoules or ogres, instead of honest British soldiers."

"I forgive their terror," answered Ronald. "Only imagine what would be the feelings of British ladies, falling as these did into the hands of a foreign army, flushed and fierce with the excitement of such a battle, the blood and glory of such a victory!"

On entering the town of Vittoria, they found it filled with French and British wounded; and the numbers were increasing, as the waggons went to and fro between the field and town, which soon became converted into an hospital. Cries, groans, and thrilling exclamations of suffering rang from every house; and men were lying in ranks below the piazzas of the market-place, waiting till their wounds could be looked to; and in every street lay scores of weary and maimed soldiers, who, unable to proceed further, had sunk down bleeding and expiring, helpless as babes, without a hand to close their eyes.

Stuart's wound was of too little importance to procure immediate attendance, all the surgeons being hard at work, with their shirt sleeves turned up, hewing off legs and arms mercilessly, as was their will and pleasure in those days. On with the tourniquet, and off with the limb, was the mode then; any attempt to reduce a fracture being considered a waste of time, and a style of cure troublesome alike to patient and physician. After searching about for some time to find a son of Esculapius unemployed, but without success, they adjourned to a café immediately within the Santa Clara gate.

The large drinking-room was crowded with officers, some of whom had

got their scars dressed, and, in defiance of the orders of *el medico*, were quaffing horn after horn of the country wine, in honour of the victory. Seaton, with his arm slung, was thus employed in one corner with an officer of the 50th, whose head was wrapped in a bloody handkerchief. Many others were in the same trim; and the conversation consisted of loud and boisterous observations and criticisms on this and that movement—the advance of one division, the retreat of another—promotion, brevet, thanks of parliament, a medal,—and so on; and all were lavish in their animadversions on the 18th Hussars, for making so free with the military chest. Their observations were often mingled with loud and reckless military merriment, and an occasional hearty malediction on some wound which would not cease bleeding, or an exclamation of pain at the twinges it gave. Many Spanish officers were sitting over chess-tables, absorbed in their favourite national game, forgetting altogether, in the interest which it excited, the battle so recently gained, and which was of so much importance to the liberties of their country. But it has been truly remarked by some one, that, give the Spaniard his cigar, his sun-shine, his *querido*, and amusements, and it is all one to him whether Spain is ruled by a Solon or a Caligula.

In another corner of the drinking-room, a Spanish colonel was sitting coolly with a napkin and brass bason under his chin, undergoing the operation of being shaved by the senior surgeon of his regiment, as it is, or was, the duty of that officer to take off the colonel's beard every morning, or whenever required. So much for the dignity of the medical profession in Spain.

Enveloped in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, which left no part of him visible but his twinkling grey eyes and red snub nose, Captain Blacier occupied the opposite corner, busy in preparing a luxurious German dish, the ingredients for which he produced from the havresack of glazed canvas which he carried with his blanket on his back. A large tin trencher stood before him, and into it he was shredding a cabbage, which he had picked up when skirmishing in the neighbourhood of Salvatierra the preceding day; and after sprinkling over it pepper, salt, vinegar, and garlic, he began to eat with infinite relish.

After getting his wound dressed by the Spanish medico, and after drinking a few horns of *agua y vino*, Ronald procured a light forage-cap in place of his heavy plumed bonnet, and accompanied by Seaton and those who found him on the field, he set out for the regiment, which, with Hill's whole division, lay bivouacked six miles in front of Vittoria, where, after pursuing the French till past midnight, they had halted.

On being accommodated with a horse, Ronald was enabled to accompany the troops, which moved next day to drive the enemy across the Pyrenees. Acting with his usual promptitude, Wellington pushed onward with the third, fourth, and light divisions to Pampeluna, whence the ex-king Joseph, with the greater

part of his shattered host, retired into France by the famous pass of Roncesvalles; while the rest, under the command of General Gazan, retired by the vale of El Bastan.

Lord Wellington surrounded Pampeluna, which was yet held by a French garrison; and Graham, who with the left wing of the allies had pursued the retreating enemy on the great road for France, came up with a corps near Tolosa, which he attacked and defeated, and driving them across the Bidassoa, boldly invested the strong fortress of San Sebastian, from the towers of which yet waved the tri-colour and the standard of King Joseph.

CHAPTER VII.

AN OUT-PICQUET ADVENTURE.

"Far, far away, in a strange country,
The soldier watch is keeping,
Beneath some tower at midnight hour,
When all besides are sleeping."
Scots Song.

To prevent the French from possessing themselves of the Maya heights, Wellington directed the Earl of Dalhousie, with his division, to threaten them by moving on San Estevan; while Sir Rowland Hill, with the first and three others of his brigades, made a similar demonstration, by marching through the wild and romantic pass of Lanz.

Along the whole line of march from Vittoria to the Pyrenees, a distance of about one hundred miles, the roads were strewed with dead or abandoned horses, broken waggons, dilapidated carriages, military caissons, and clothing of every kind; uniforms of officers, rich dresses, laces, veils, and gloves of ladies, which were torn forth from mails and imperials by the rude hands of guerillas and caçadores, and scattered about everywhere; thousands of French commissariat returns, bundles of bank-notes, and packets of letters, written to many who then lay cold beneath the turf at Vittoria, were scattered over the ground by which the French had retired. Many poor stragglers, disabled by wounds or starvation, fell into the hands of the conquerors, and with others many ladies of Joseph's

court, who on escaping, when the carriages were taken by Graham's division, had attempted to make their way to the Pyrenees by passing through wild and unfrequented places. Many of these unfortunate creatures fell into the power of the Spaniards, and were treated in a manner too barbarous to relate; and others were seen by the gentler British, fainting, expiring, or dead by the way-side, barefooted, almost naked, and reduced to the most pitiable condition. All who were found alive were sent under an escort to the rear, to be placed among the other prisoners.

The great chain of the Pyrenees was now before the victors, and on the 3rd of July, Hill, with his four brigades, began to ascend the heights. After a harassing march through that deep gorge among the mountains which takes its name from the town of Lanz, they came in view of the out-picquets of General Gazan's corps, and arrangements were made to drive them in forthwith. Led by Fassifern, the first brigade moved through the most solitary passes of the mountains by a village named Almandos, and took up a position on the left of Gazan's out-posts, upon which Sir Rowland gave orders to attack them in front. On finding that Cameron had turned their flank so effectually, they retired, firing by the way, and reached their main body at Barreta, where a sharp skirmish took place, in which the Condé d'Amarante's Portuguese suffered considerably.

Next day, Gazan retired precipitately through Elizondo followed by the Portuguese, who were eager to revenge the slaughter of their comrades in the preceding day's skirmish, and the troops resumed their march towards the heights of Maya.

"Cheerily now, Highlandmen!" cried Campbell, flourishing his cudgel, as he spurred his horse past the heavily accoutred sections, who were toiling up the mountains; "hold cheerily on, my lads! Set a stout heart to a stey brae,—ye mind the old saying at home: ye'll soon see the high road to Britain, the way we must all go, ere we see the curl of our ain peat-reek."

A few hours' march brought them to the summits of the Pyrenees, and afar off was seen the ocean, which they had not beheld for so long. It was the way to their homes, and from a simultaneous feeling, which inspired every man, three hearty cheers awoke the echoes of the mountains; caps and bonnets were tossed into the air,—the bands struck up "Rule Britannia," and the pipers blew till their faces grew purple and black. The brigades halted for a few minutes, and a dead silence succeeded the first outbreak of their joy. Every man's breast seemed swelling with emotions, which he found it impossible to communicate; but he read in the faces of his comrades the same joy which quickened the pulses of his own heart. The sea,—the same deep-heaving sea which swept around the rocks and shores of their own country, now spread its broad bosom before them; and long and wistfully they gazed on the white sails of the solitary British cruisers,

which here and there dotted the dark-blue waters of the Bay of Biscay. The green ridges of the Lower Pyrenees, the fertile plains and wooded vales of France, lay spread at their feet like a brightly-tinted map. Saint Jean de Luz, the famous and opulent Bayonne, and a thousand minor towns and villages were seen from those lofty summits, now trod by British soldiers for the first time. Behind them lay sunny España, through which they had toiled and fought their way, and where many a comrade had found his grave,—but no man looked to the rear. Every eye was turned to the north,—on France, which lay below them. But stern and bloody work was awaiting them, and many a one whose heart then bounded with thoughts of his native home, and with a thousand inexpressible hopes, wishes, and fond anticipations, was doomed to find his last resting-place on these very heights of Maya.

That night the troops bivouacked on the mountain side, a league in front of Elizondo. As it was generally his luck after any march which had been particularly long and tiresome, Ronald Stuart had command of an advanced picquet, forming one of the chain thrown out in the direction of Gazan's division, which had taken up a position lower down the mountains with the determination to dispute every inch of ground that led to *la belle France*,—a resolution which the Marquess of Wellington determined to put to the test next day. Stuart's orders were to visit his sentries every hour throughout the night, to keep them on the alert; a duty which proved very harassing after so long a march, as it was almost impossible to sleep in the short intervals between the rounds. However, fretting would not have bettered the affair, and rolling himself up in his cloak, he resolved to make himself as comfortable as he possibly could. A huge fire lighted by the soldiers lessened the cold, and counteracted the effects of a heavy wetting dew, which falls amid these mountains at almost every season.

After his ration of beef had been broiled on the embers, eaten without salt off the end of a ramrod, and washed down with a canteen-full of that rich cider, for the production of which the district around Elizondo is so famous, after listening to the merry bells of the town which were ringing in honour of the British, and after watching until he grew weary the varying effects of light and shade, as the red blaze of a dozen picquet-fires glared on the beetling crags, deep seams and gorges, or green sides of the hills, he found it almost impossible to resist the invasion of sleep. Even the miniature of his dark-haired Alice failed to enliven him, and he envied the privates of his party, who, having neither command nor responsibility, slept soundly by the fire, with their knapsacks beneath their heads and their arms piled beside them. On consulting his watch to see how the time went, he found that it was midnight, and that an hour had elapsed since his last visit. As it was necessary to be attended by some one, he awoke Evan,[*] and desiring him to take his arms, moved towards his sentinels, whom he had

considerable trouble in discovering, as the night was intensely dark. All was right, every soldier was on the alert, and Ronald was returning with his follower through the winding and rocky path towards the fire, which served as a beacon to guide them to their post, and which they beheld glimmering through the gloom some hundred yards off, when a piercing cry rang through the still air, at a short distance from the place where they were.

[*] An officer's servant is always on duty with his master.

"Hey, sir!" exclaimed Evan, beginning to unbuckle his pouch; "what can that be, in sic a wild place as this?"

"A woman's voice, I think."

"It cam frae the hill on the left o' the road,—I'm sure o't. Hech! it was an unco' cry."

"Follow me," said his master, beginning quickly to ascend the hill.

"Hech, sir! dinna venture up the bank till we hear something mair," said Evan cautiously, following promptly nevertheless. "My certie! we kenna what folk may bide amang the holmes and howes hereabout. At hame I have heard tell o' sic cries ringing at this time, between the nicht and morning, and they were ay for ill, and never for gude. Sae be advised, sir, and wait awee."

"Evan!" said Stuart angrily, "are you afraid of men?"

"Ye ken I am no, sir!" replied the Highlandman sharply. "I would scorn to turn heel on sax o' the best that ever trod on heather. Mair would, may be, be venturesome."

"Of bogles, then,—or spunkies, or what?" The soldier was silent.

"Campaigning might have taught you to laugh at such ideas, Evan."

"Gang on, sir," replied the other sturdily; "if auld Mahoud, wi' horns, hoof, and blazin' een sat on the brae head, I'll follow ye; but auld Dugald the cornel's man tauld me an unco' story ca'd the *lham-dearg*, that gars me scunner at my ain shadow after nicht-fa'." Again the cry rang loud and shrilly, and many others followed in succession.

"There is no mistake now," cried Ronald, rushing up the hill towards a light, which was seen twinkling through the darkness. "It is the voice of a woman,—and she cries for help." Scrambling forward, among rocks and stunted trees, a few moments brought them in front of a hut of the rudest and humblest construction. The light shone through the open hole which served for a window, and from this structure the cries, which had now died away, had certainly proceeded. Before he entered, Ronald reconnoitred the interior through the loop-

hole. Two shepherds, arrayed in the coarse clothing made of the undyed wool of the mountain sheep, sat smoking cigars and drinking at a rough wooden table, while they coolly surveyed a very singular scene. A young and very handsome woman, a lady evidently by her form and air, although her dress was torn and soiled, her white silk bonnet hanging in fritters, her hair dishevelled, and her feet almost bare, struggling wildly with, and exerting every energy to oppose, the brutality of—whom? Cifuentes! the diabolical Narvaez Cifuentes, who, like a bird of ill omen, seemed doomed to cross the path of Ronald Stuart wherever he went,—and even there, on the borders of France. He appeared the same ferocious dog as ever, with his matted hair and scrub-beard; but his aspect was now rendered hideous by a large scar on the cheek and chin, caused probably by the random shot which Lord Dalhousie had bestowed upon him at Vittoria. His musquet, sabre, and pistols lay upon the table. His stiletto he held to the white neck of the sinking girl, and swore by every saint in the calendar that he would plunge it in her heart, if she did not cease her cries. Overcome with terror and exhaustion, she sunk upon her knees before him, when Evan, applying his foot to the door, dashed it in, and Stuart, rushing forward, grasped Narvaez by the throat, hurled him to the earth before, in his own defence, he could strike a blow with his weapon, which Evan wrested adroitly from his hand, and saying, with a grin, that "it wad mak' a brave skene-dhu for his faither the piper," stuck it into his right garter. Fiercely did Cifuentes struggle with his athletic assailant, who, although he planted a foot on his throat, delayed, with a mistaken humanity, to bury his claymore in his heart,—a display of mercy Ronald had reason afterwards to repent most bitterly.

The two herds started to their feet on beholding this unexpected conflict, and the lady, in the extremity of her terror, flung her arms around Stuart, and, grasping him convulsively, completely impeded his motions. Of this circumstance his adversary did not fail to take the utmost advantage. After several fruitless efforts, he escaped from Ronald's powerful grasp, and, eluding the bayonet of Evan, who charged him breast-high, rushed from the cottage, and disappeared in the darkness with the speed of a hare. Ronald's fury was now turned against the villanous shepherds, whom, in the extremity of his anger, he threatened to put to death; upon which they quitted their dwelling, and made a hasty retreat. While Evan stood sentinel at the door, his master endeavoured to calm and pacify the young lady, whom he found to be French—very pretty, and very attractive. No sooner had her terror subsided, than she returned him thanks and praises with such volubility in French and English, that Ronald became almost abashed, and with some reserve inquired her name?

"The Baroness de Clappourknuis."

"Oh, indeed! And how alone in such a place as this?"

"Ah! monsieur, you need scarcely ask. When the royal carriages were captured, on the road to Bayonne, I was one of the few who effected an escape from them. Oh, pity me! *monsieur officier*, and do not deliver me up to be sent a prisoner to England."

"Madame, what would you have me to do?"

"Oh, any thing you please,—that is, monsieur, conceal me but for a day or so. General Gazan's troops are not far off, and my husband the baron is with them. I may find means to rejoin him safely. I am sure you will not treat me cruelly—your look is so gentle. But we Frenchwomen have quite a terrible idea of you British soldiers, and my fears have carried me thus far from the fatal plains of Vittoria. Ah! good sir, you may imagine, but I can never describe the terrors, the miseries, the horror I have undergone while wandering so great a distance, alone and unprotected, among these barbarous Spaniards. And, *O mon Dieu!* when I had almost gained the shelter of Gazan's lines, I fell into the power of that fearful creature, from whose savage treatment you have so bravely rescued me."

"Where did you meet with him, madame?"

"Wandering in the pass of Lanz,—for I was compelled to seek the most unfrequented paths. Clad in the habit of some of the *religieux* of this country, he met me. I had nothing to fear from one who wore the garb of peace. I confided in him: he offered to become my guide, and led me hither. You know the rest. Ah, monsieur! complete your kindness, I beseech you, and see me in safety to the French outposts!"

"What you ask of me, madame, I cannot perform, and I say so with regret. 'Tis three miles from this to the enemy's position. I cannot escort you myself, being on a particular duty, and I have not the means of sending you thither; yet, believe me, for the sake of poor D'Estouville's first love I would do much."

This was said in a tone of feeling, slightly mingled with reproach, and the colour of the lady came and went while she gazed on Ronald with a look of considerable surprise.

"Monsieur," said she, after a pause, "did you know Major d'Estouville?"

"Intimately, although a Frenchman and an enemy. I beheld him die."

"At Merida?" Her lip quivered.

"Yes, madame."

"Poor Victor!" said the baroness thoughtfully.

"The last words he uttered were your name,—Diane de Montmichel. He expired in great agony, on a bed of straw, stretched on the cold pavement of an ancient chapel."

"*Merci*! Ah, monsieur! do not, do not tell me any more of this!" said she, covering her face with her hands,—which, I may observe, were very small and

beautifully formed,—and beginning to weep and sob. "I dare not think of Victor now,—now when the wedded wife of another! To do so would be a sin, even although he is dead."

"D'Estouville told me his story. He loved you very truly, madame."

"I know that. You will certainly think me very cruel in deserting him, but Heaven knows I did not do so wilfully; I was not entirely to blame. At Lillebonne we understood that he had been killed; and long I wept and sorrowed for him, and protested that, until death, I would remain unwedded for his sake. Monsieur le Baron made proposals for my hand, and it was given him by my parent even before my consent was obtained. Terror, sorrow, and domestic persecution did the rest, and I became the bride of the new suitor, who indeed loves me very dearly, and I have every reason to be grateful to him. A coronet is a gay and attractive thing; yet think not, monsieur, that I have forgotten poor Victor, though I struggle with my heart to teach it the duty it owes the baron. One cannot have two loves for one heart," she added, sobbing and blushing.

"Well, madame," said Stuart, anxious to end her embarrassment, "some arrangement must be made. First, let us leave this place."

"*Eh bien!*" said the lady joyfully; and beginning to bustle about, she put her dilapidated dress in some order. "But," added she, shrugging her shoulders, "for where, monsieur?"

"With your permission, madame, to my picquet at the foot of the hill, in the first place," replied Stuart, consulting his watch. "I have been absent nearly an hour. Hah! there will be the devil to pay should I be missed."

"Ay will there, sir," said Evan, who had leaned his chin upon the muzzle of his piece, and 'glowered' with considerable surprise during the sudden and animated conversation which his master had carried on so glibly with the strange lady. "I hae been keepin' my lug to the wind, to hearken if ony soonds cam up the brae, but there has been naething asteer as yet. Ye hae nae been missed; but, gude save us, sir, let's awa before waur comes o't! Fassifern 'the chief' himsel's on duty; and whan he gangs the round, a bonnie kick up there will be gin ye're no at your post; and ye ken the cornel is waur than the deil to warsle wi'." Stuart knew that this was good and sound advice, however homely its delivery; and he prepared to rejoin his picquet, before Cameron, who was field-officer on duty, might visit it.

By pinning up here and there, tucking up one thing and letting out another, the lady wrought away rapidly with her neat and nimble little hands, working as only a Frenchwoman could have done, and in three minutes, her travel-stained and disordered attire was nicely and very passably arranged. Ronald offered his assistance, but the lady dispensed with it, thanking him with a smile, and saying he "could not be a very adroit *femme de chambre*." The glossy locks were smoothly

placed over her white forehead, and the crushed bonnet had almost resumed its true Parisian shape. Its draggled feathers were cast aside, but the rich white veil she disposed gracefully over the front; and, looking at Stuart with a glance of mingled archness, coquetry, and timidity, observed that she was "attired somewhat more *à la mode*," and took his proffered arm.

"Ah, monsieur!" said she, "once more I intreat you, do not deliver me up as a prisoner to be sent to England,—that horrid place!"

"Not if I can help it,—I pledge you my word of honour. In transferring you to the French lines, I incur considerable risk; but as the distance is so short, I will see if it can possibly be done before day breaks."

He threw his ample cloak around her, and giving strict injunctions to Evan not to acquaint his comrades who the lady was, began to descend the hill as quickly as the trembling steps of the latter would permit along such a dark and rugged path. Before leaving the hut, Evan took care to break and destroy all the offensive weapons it contained, saying as he did so, "that fules and bairns shuldna hae chappin' sticks." He proposed to set the hut in a "bleeze," to light their way down the hill, but his master at once objected. The darkness renewed the terrors of the young lady.

"Is the way long, monsieur?" asked she in a faltering tone.

"O no,—quite near. You see the picquet-fire yonder. Ah, madame! how fortunate I am in having come so opportunely to your rescue."

"Oh! I shall never forget you in my prayers,—never, monsieur."

"But why are you trembling so much? Surely you are not afraid of me?"

"O no! your behaviour is too cavalier-like and gentle for that; and we have become quite like very old friends in half-an-hour's time."

"Do you fear the darkness, then?"

"*Mon dieu*! Ah! the darkness is nothing new to me. Alas!" replied she, shrugging her shoulders, "since the field of Vittoria I have passed every night in dark and lonely places; and I wonder now how one so timid, and so delicately nurtured has not sunk under all the fears and privations I have undergone for some days and nights past." The lady started. At that moment the voice of a sentinel was heard to give the usual challenge.

"Who comes, there?"

"Rounds!" answered the bold voice of Fassifern, and the tramp of his horse's hoofs rang on the roadway between the mountains.

"Stand, rounds!" replied the sentry, porting his musquet, and so on; with the usual ceremony, the parole and countersign were given and received.

"Excuse me, madame, but for a minute," said Stuart. "I am just in time; an instant later, and I should have been missed." Leaving the side of the trembling lady he bustled about, and got his picquet under arms.

On the departure of Fassifern, whose movements the baroness had watched with no ordinary feelings of caution and fear, Evan was despatched for Macdonald, whom he found enjoying himself with some other officers at a wine-house in Elizondo. He came promptly enough, and was not a little surprised when Ronald requested as a favour, that he would escort a young lady to within sight of the French lines, explaining at the same time, in as few words as possible, her story and the nature of her situation.

Alister at once accepted the honour of being her convoy. "But," said he, looking into the gloom which surrounded them, "the route is confoundedly dreary across the mountains to the rock of Maya,—Gazan's post."

"I am perfectly aware of it," replied Stuart, with an air of pique. "'Tis impossible the baroness can go alone, and gallantry requires us to set Wellington's orders at defiance for once, and not deliver her up. I would have escorted her myself, but cannot leave my picquet."

"Monsieur," said the baroness, "I am indeed sorry to trouble you; but surely you do not complain of the duty—"

"Oh, no! impossible, madame," exclaimed Alister, the blood mounting to his handsome features at the idea, while, gracefully raising his bonnet, he observed her fair face by the red light of the fire. "But will you entrust yourself to the guidance of one who is entirely a stranger, through a road so dark and dangerous?"

"I have no alternative, alas!" said she, bending her bright eyes into the gloom, as if she strove to pierce the depths beyond. She shuddered. "'Tis very dark, indeed, messieurs. I have no alternative but to go, or to remain and be sent a captive to Britain. Monsieur, I will go with you. I will depend on the untarnished honour of a British officer, that I shall be conveyed in safety to Gazan's sentinels at the rock of Maya."

"Madame, you do me an honour never to be forgotten," answered Macdonald, with a bow profound enough for any "puffing señor" of Old Castile, while the lady took his arm.

"Lend me your dirk, Stuart. I left mine at the wine *caza*," said Alister, adjusting his belt and putting his basket-hilt free of plaid, sash, tassels, &c. "It is as well to be prepared for any sudden attack, and the baroness must be my warrant that I am not made a prisoner of by some of Gazan's scouts or sharp-shooters. So then, good-by, Stuart; I will come brattling up the brae in an hour or so."

The lady kissed her hand to Stuart and departed with Macdonald, feeling a confidence and assurance of safety which probably no British lady would have felt, if entrusted to the charge of a foreigner under the same peculiar circumstances.

"And this is Diane de Montmichel, the false love of poor Victor d'Estouville,"

thought Ronald, as her light figure disappeared in the darkness. "Well, I believe, if all the tales his friend De Mesmai told me were true, one cannot look for much faith in French women!"

For Macdonald's return he waited with considerable anxiety, which increased when the time by which he expected him passed away without his appearing, and day began to dawn on the Maya heights. He could not help dreading that Alister had not been wary enough, and had been captured by the French advanced sentinels. If so, the escape of the baroness would come to light, and he feared the Marquess of Wellington would make a deuced unpleasant row about it. He also remembered Narvaez Cifuentes, whom for some time he had forgotten, and supposed that his friend might have fatally encountered this savage bandit and some of his companions.

The morning had now dawned, but the valleys between Elizondo and the rock of Maya, and even the summits of the Lower Pyrenees, were still almost involved in darkness. Shaking the dew from their booming wings, the eagles were soaring through the blue sky from their eyries among the cliffs, and the morning breeze, as it swept along the mountain sides, bore with it the delightful perfume of the aromatic plants and little shrubs which flourish so plentifully in all waste places throughout Spain. From the dying embers of the picquet-fire a puff of smoke curled now and then on the pure air, but scarcely a sound woke the echoes of the place, save the proud and steady tread of the sentries as they strode to and fro on their posts.

Beyond the advanced chain of the latter, Ronald wandered far in search of Macdonald, and to await his return seated himself upon a fragment of rock, and watched attentively the long valley which lay between him and the Lower or French Pyrenees, varying this employment, by holloaing to the eagles as he used to do at home, or by hurling stones at the glossy black ravens as they screamed aloud, flapped their wings, and from the rocks of the surrounding wilderness stared at him as an intruder upon their solitude. The voice of some one singing a Gaelic song,—

"*Cha teid mis a chaoidh*,"[*]

caused him to spring to his feet.

[*] I will never go with him.

"Holloa, Alister! Is that you, my man?"

”Yes,” replied Macdonald, springing up the rocks to where Ronald sat, and leaping to his side with the activity of a deer; ”but you nearly made an end of me a dozen times. Every minute you sent a large rock sousing down the ravine upon my very path. Did you not hear me shout? Why, man, you have but half the ear of a Highland forester! I hope I am in time for the marquess’s arrival?”

”Yes; but what a devilish long time you have been! Madame the baroness and her squire were certainly in no hurry to reach the rock of Maya.”

”Why no; to tell you the truth,” replied Macdonald, laughing as heartily as his lack of breath would permit him, ”we consulted our own convenience and pleasure, and it has been the most agreeable night, or rather morning, march since I first saw the spires of Lisbon.”

”So I suppose. But did you escape the French sentries?”

”How would I have been here else, Ronald? They are posted at the foot of the rock of Maya, and must have been blind, if they did not see me. I led the young lady within a hundred yards of them, and there bade her tenderly adieu.”

”She thanked you, of course?”

”By so delightful a salute, that I began to persuade her to return with me; but she placed her little hand upon my mouth, and, as the novels say, vanished from my sight,—in other words crossed the enemy’s lines: so now, I suppose, she is in the arms of monsieur the baron, or as he would be more appropriately styled, Jock Law, laird of the Clapperknowes. What a pity ’tis that so sweet a girl should be the wife of that gruff old humbug! Hah! there go the pipes!”

”Wellington has come!”

The out-picquets rejoined their several brigades, which in a few minutes were in motion, and marched from Elizondo with their bands playing, and entered among the mountains towards that part of Maya where General Gazan’s corps were in position. In the forenoon they came in sight of the enemy, when Sir Rowland Hill halted, and Wellington, attended by a single aide-de-camp, rode forward to reconnoitre. Ronald Stuart had now for the first time an opportunity of particularly observing that great leader, of whom the world then heard, and were yet to hear, so much.

He was mounted on a slight but stout crop-tailed horse, without trappings; a pair of plain holsters were at his saddle-bow, and a short sabre hung from his belt. The exceeding plainness of his attire—a coarse blue cloak, and weather-beaten cocked-hat, totally destitute of ornament—contrasted strongly with the richly laced jacket and pelisse of his aide, an officer of the 10th Hussars, that regiment of exquisite celebrity. Wellington gave a keen but hasty glance along the ranks of the bronzed Highlanders as he rode past, and then bent his sharp eyes on the heights where the dark columns of French infantry appeared in position, their long lines of serried arms glancing as usual in the sun. For about three

minutes the marquess carefully made a reconnoissance of the foe through his telescope, and then issued his orders.

"Sir William!" said he.

General Stuart, a fine old soldier, with hair white as snow, a bronzed visage, and a purple coat adorned with a black aigulet, rode up, and touched his coarse cocked-hat of glazed leather.

"With the second brigade you will cross the Bidassoa, by the pathway leading from Elizondo, and ascending the mountains, turn the enemy's right. You will carry the rock of Maya at the point of the bayonet."

"It shall be done, my lord," replied Stuart confidently, as he drove spurs into his horse and galloped back to the second brigade; while Sir Rowland with the marquess ascended to an eminence, to observe the operations and success of this movement. While Stuart with his troops moved off and disappeared among the rocks and orchards of Elizondo, the other brigades remained under arms, and found, with considerable chagrin, that their part of the game was not yet come. After remaining for some time—an hour perhaps, watching attentively the French lines, the sound of distant firing, and the appearance of smoke curling along the hill sides, announced that the gallant Stuart had commenced the attack. Every ear and every eye were all attention. The fire became closer and more rapid; a cheer was heard, and in ten minutes the whole second brigade, consisting of the brave "Old Buffs," the 31st, the 57th, and 66th English regiments, were seen rushing up the hill under a close and destructive shower of shot, which they heeded less than if it had been a shower of rain, although it thinned their numbers deplorably. Forward they went with the bayonet, and the right wing of the French melted away before them.

The position was turned, and the cheers of the victors were echoed by their comrades below, whose blood was fiercely roused by the sound of the conflict.

"They have done well," said Wellington. "Forward! the light troops."

The command was obeyed with promptitude. The 6th Caçadores, the 71st Highlanders, and all the light companies moved off double quick, and the ravines among the hills rang with the clank of accoutrements and the tramp of their feet. These auxiliaries scrambled directly up the face of the hill, and the 50th regiment, moving to the front, opened a deadly fire on Gazan's left, while his troops were making ineffectual attempts to recover the heights on their right.

Exposed thus to a fire on their flanks, and galled in front by a cloud of sharp-shooters, who were scattered among the rocks and bushes,—bolting up every instant to fire, and then ducking down to reload, the French began to retreat down the hills towards France, but slowly, and keeping up their fire with gallant yet singular determination.

The coolness displayed by the light infantry in this skirmish was truly as-

tonishing. To them it appeared like ordinary shooting,—a mere amusement. The Highlanders and the caçadores were seen scampering hither and thither, leaping from rock to rock, firing and kneeling, or throwing themselves flat on the earth, laughing and jesting in a manner, which none but those that have been eye-witnesses of such an affair can imagine. Even the deep groan, the sudden shriek of anguish, as some comrade when struck by a French bullet tossed aside his musquet and heavily fell prone on the earth, wallowing in his blood, did not cool or restrain them; and thus they continued to advance for several miles, strewing the ground with dead, and peppering the retiring foe from every available point.

Gazan threw out a body of chasseurs to cover the retreat of his forces down the mountains, and with them an irregular fight was maintained the whole day. Night scarcely put an end to the contest, and allowed the jaded French to find a shelter in their own country. The night was excessively dark, and yet the firing continued for nearly two hours after the gloom had fairly set in, and only ceased when friends became confounded with foes. Seaton narrowly escaped being bayoneted by two of his own favourite light-bobs. Several of the French went the wrong way in the dark, and, falling among the British, were captured and sent to the rear. The effect of the midnight firing was peculiarly fine, in such a wide wilderness as the Pyrenees. Several thousand musquets flashing incessantly through the gloom, and wakening the myriad echoes of the mountains and gorges, presented a very singular sight, the pleasure of viewing which was considerably lessened by the continual whistling of shot; until the bugles on both sides called in the stragglers, and the British, giving one hearty cheer of triumph and defiance, withdrew to their main body.

The lines of the latter were now established along the heights of Maya. The whole of the mountains were enveloped in a dense fog; a tremendous storm of rain succeeded, but the troops, the unhappy out-picquets excepted, were snug under canvas. But there were exposed the hundreds of killed and wounded, who could neither be sought nor attended to then, and who lay scattered over miles of contested ground, under all the fury of the pitiless elements. For the dead it mattered not; but many of the wounded expired during the raging of the storm, which accelerated their end.

Seated in his tent, on the sloping sides of which the rain was rushing down, Stuart wrote letters for Inchavon-house and Lochisla. He found their composition no easy task, as the candle, which was stuck in a bottle, flickered in the wind, and sputtered with the rain-drops which oozed through the canvas sides of his bell-shaped covering. He held out hopes of his speedy return,—but he had often done so before; for every new victory was deemed by the troops a precursor of peace, and of return to their native homes. * * * *

Having now gained the important heights of Maya, Lord Wellington re-

tired to join another part of his army. The celebrated pass was left to the care of Fassifern with the first brigade, which encamped on the very summit of the hills, where the high road from the fertile vale of El Bastan descends to France.

The second brigade was posted in a valley to the right, and the Portuguese of the Condé d'Amarante occupied a mountain in front of the hamlet of Erraza, where a brigade of the same nation was quartered, under the command of Colonel Ashworth. The 82nd (Prince of Wales's Volunteers) occupied another part of the hills, about two miles off; and to these troops was left the defence of the pass of Maya, for which they were to fight to the last gasp,—orders which, when the time came, were faithfully and nobly performed.

CHAPTER VIII.

PASS OF MAYA.—PYRENEES.

"Again the kelpie nichered loud,
And gloated o'er his prey;
And the victims in the mountain pass,
Like tigers, stood at bay;

The first fire thinned the Scottish ranks—
Childe Sinclair hit the ground,
And as his life-blood oozed away,
He moaned—"

Massacre of Kringellan:—Vedder.

A month elapsed without the sound of a shot being heard, and the troops at the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles lay quietly encamped and unmolested amidst the fine scenery of the Pyrenees. The weather was now remarkably agreeable, and the officers procured plenty of wine from Elizondo and other Navarese towns in their rear, and they were beginning to be as comfortable as it is possible for troops to be under canvas. But a cloud was gathering in the valleys of Gascony below them.

The great victory at Vittoria, and the important events which followed it, had not failed deeply to interest and concern Napoleon, to rouse his wrath and

to wound his pride. That object, for which he had shed so much French blood, was now completely wrested from his grasp, and France herself remained in imminent peril while the armies of the conqueror hovered on the mountains which overlooked her territories. Fresh conscriptions were levied, and again France, in her folly, poured forth another army, which directed its march to the Pyrenees, to fight the battles of the insatiable Buonaparte. Soult was recalled from Germany to place himself at its head, as the "Lieutenant of the Emperor." Joining the French army on the 13th of July, 1813, he commenced re-organizing and preparing for a second invasion of Spain, with an energy and activity which restored the confidence and roused, as usual, the arrogance of the French troops, who commenced their march with the intention of driving the allies beyond the Ebro, and celebrating the birth-day of the great Emperor at Vittoria.

At that time Lord Wellington's responsibilities and difficulties were not of a slight nature, having to cover the siege of two strong fortresses and defend the wide space between them, which compelled him to extend and weaken his line. His skill was evinced in the distribution of his army, which he posted in the best manner likely to defend effectually the passes of the Pyrenees, and to cover the investments of San Sebastian and Pampeluna.

To effect the relief of the latter was the first grand object of the Duke of Dalmatia. From St. Jean Pied-de-Port, on the morning of Sunday the 25th July, he marched thirty-five thousand men against the troops of General Byng occupying the pass of Roncesvalles, which post they completely turned in the afternoon, after a most desperate conflict, from which the general and Sir Lowry Cole, who had moved up to his support, were compelled to retire.

On the same day General Drouet led thirteen thousand men against the right of Hill's position,—Cameron's command at the Maya pass, which he had orders to force, as the Highlander had to defend it,—*at all hazards*. At the time the attack was made no movement was expected, yet Drouet found the British not altogether unprepared for such an event. It was a beautiful Sunday, and the heat, even on the summits of the Pyrenees, was intense. As it was not supposed that the enemy were near, the tents were all standing, just as they had been for a month before; and the camp and baggage-mules were miles away down on the Spanish side, whither they were usually taken for grass.

Stuart on that morning had wandered from the encampment to some distance, where he was enjoying the appearance of solitude, so like that of his "Highland home," which reigned far and wide around him. The vast hills rose on every side, heaving their green summits to the sky. A death-like stillness prevailed, save when now and then broken by the scream of a wild bird, the hollow flap of a partridge's wing, or the faint and far-off tinkle of a mountain rill murmuring through some solitary gorge, leaping from rock to rock as it descended to the

bright plains of Gascony or Bearn. For nearly an hour he had wandered about there, when his solitary reveries were broken by the sound of a distant shot, the echoes of which rang among the splintered rocks and grassy peaks, recalling him at once to the present; and he hurried away to the camp, where the brigade was getting under arms, the soldiers mustering with their usual rapidity and coolness, without betraying the least surprise or confusion. From an out-picquet the word had been passed that the French "were in motion in front," and the fixing of fresh flints, snapping of locks, unrolling and examining of ammunition, gave token of every preparation being made to receive them with all due honour. Nearly an hour elapsed, and no more was seen or heard of the foe. All began to suppose it a false alarm, and many of the officers went forward to the outposts to reconnoitre.

"Where are the enemy now, Armstrong?" asked Cameron of an officer of the 71st, commanding the picquet which had given the alarm. "In which direction did you see them?"

"Directly north, and far down on the French side," replied the other, pointing with his sword. "We distinctly saw a strong party pass yon defile between the mountains: the glitter of their arms was apparent to us all."

"I'm afraid their feet were cloven," observed Seaton. "I see nothing but a herd of cattle crossing the defile you speak of."

"Horned nowte, just black short-legged Argyleshires," said Dugald, who, as usual, was close to Cameron's skirts. "I see them plain aneuch mysel, sirs; but the loons may be amang the hills for a' that." A loud laugh arose at the old man's observations.

"Well, gentlemen," said Armstrong, while his cheek reddened with anger, and he cast a furious glance on Dugald Mhor, "you are all at liberty to think as you please; but I tell you that there are cattle among the hills carrying bayonets on their horns, and that such is the fact, some here may learn to their cost, ere long."

"What fire the borderer displays," said Ronald, as Armstrong left the group abruptly; "and here is Alister his sub, quite fierce likewise about the matter."

"Search round," chimed in Campbell, in the same tone of jest; "search about, and probably we shall find the pig-skin at the bottom of which they saw the enemy. I remember once in Egypt, that old Ludovick Lisle—"

"What mean you, gentlemen?" said Macdonald, angrily; "do you take us for fools? I believe we have seen the enemy often enough to know them."

"Halt, Macdonald; you take our jests far too seriously," said Stuart. "If you saw the French, where are they now?"

"In front!" was the tart reply.

"They have been so, down in Gascony, for this month past."

"By all eternity! 'tis something new for me to have assertions doubted thus,"

replied Macdonald, considerably ruffled, yet loath to have high words with his old friend; and adding, "I will make no further explanations," he turned and left them, following Armstrong, who was reconnoitring intently through a telescope. While Stuart's cheek grew red with anger at the contemptuous manner in which Macdonald took leave of him, his sleeve was plucked by old Dugald Cameron.

"Dinna speak to him juist the noo," whispered that aged retainer solemnly; "his birse is up, and it is an ill thing to warsle wi' a Macdonald at sic a time. Dinna gloom wi' het faces at ane anither, for I tell you one will no behauld the ither lang, sae turn not the back o' your hand upon him; he may be mixed wi' the mools ere the hills grow dark wi' the gloaming, or redden again in the morning sun."

"What do you mean, Dugald?" asked Stuart, surprised at the Highlander's manner.

"Sir, I am farer seen than maist folk, and so was my faither before me. Baith loud and lang did you and Macdonald laugh ower your wine in the cornel's tent last nicht, and every laugh o the puir lad gaed to my heart. I kent by its hollow ringing he was *fey*."

"Fey?" replied the other, respect for Dugald's white haffets, alone restraining a violent inclination to laugh; "fey, Dugald? How?"

"Loud laughter, I mean laughter such as his, aye portends sudden death. Ony cailloch that ever wore a mutch, or ony giglet o' a lassie that ever wore a snood, will tell ye the same thing, sir. Sae dinna girn at or be thrawn gebbit wi' young Inchkenneth, for he'll no be lang amang us. Mony heads will there be on the heather ere the sun gaes doon." Dugald moved off, leaving Stuart considerably surprised at his superstition. At that moment Alister rushed towards them, with his bonnet in his hand.

"Look ye now, gentlemen," he exclaimed, tossing his long feathers in the direction of the winding way which led to France, "what call you these?"

Even while he spoke a dense column of French infantry appeared in the defile between the mountains, and a cloud of others, battalion after battalion, with their tri-colours fluttering in the breeze, advanced in succession, until thirteen thousand bayonets were gleaming in the light of the noonday sun. It was the whole of General Drouet's division.

"There is nae heather here, but I thocht and I said there would be mony a head on the green swaird ere the hills grew mirk in the gloaming," muttered Dugald ominously, as he viewed the advance of the French with kindling eyes. With the first blast of the bugle the troops were again under arms, and marched to the front of the pass to stem the approaching torrent; and, resolute as the soldiers were, they knew that the attempt to keep their position against such an overwhelming power was vain, unless Lord Wellington, who was distant at

San Sebastian, could by some means succour them. But obedience is the *first* duty of the soldier, and their orders were to defend the passes and fight to the last,—orders never yet mistaken by British troops.

The out-picquets first opened their fire upon the advancing masses, and although seconded by a body of light troops, were forced of course to give way. The 28th and 39th regiments, from Wilson's brigade, moved off to support the picquets on the right. With courage and resolution unparalleled these corps sustained the onset of their opponents, whose tremendous fire however compelled them to waver and recoil. The 34th or Cumberland regiment, with the 50th, came to their assistance. These last, forming a junction, rushed upon the French while exposed to the deadly fire of their extended front, and with unexampled intrepidity charged them with the bayonet, giving a check to their progress up the mountains. The French returned the charge, but at the same time made a flank movement, which their great numbers enabled them to do easily, to surround and cut off their rash assailants, who were at once placed in a critical position.

It was at that moment that Cameron brought up his Highlanders, and restored confidence to the regiments which had been falling into confusion. It is impossible to describe the scene which the Maya heights presented at that time. The deafening roar of the musquetry,—the driving clouds of smoke,—the tumultuous yells of the French, who were fierce, wild, and eager to wash away in British blood the disgraces of Vittoria, almost confounded those who were then for the first time under fire. The advancing enemy continued to shout more like savages than European soldiers, but their tremendous shower of shot was fast mowing down the little band which so gallantly endeavoured to resist them. Like a hail-shower the heavy leaden bullets were falling everywhere, and tearing up the turf even after they had passed through the bodies of the soldiers,—so close had the contending parties now come together.

The British had stood firm without flinching an inch; but the French, who were now fighting in a great disorganized mob, had continued to advance, by the rear men pushing on the *front*, until within thirty paces of the British line; and at so short a distance it may easily be supposed that the shot on both sides told with fearful effect, especially among the dense masses of the French, before whom, in five minutes, arose a pile of their own dead and wounded like a breast-work. Beyond this ghastly line they would not advance an inch, nor could they be prevailed upon to do so even by the most strenuous exertions of their officers, who, whenever the smoke cleared away a little, were observed brandishing their sabres, waving their colours and eagles, and enthusiastically crying, "*Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur! Vive la Gloire!*" But their soldiers heeded them not, and continued to load and fire with the utmost *sang froid*, but would not be led to the charge.

The brave 71st Highland Light Infantry, after fighting with their usual obstinacy and intrepidity, had been compelled to give way, by which three Portuguese pieces of cannon fell into the possession of the French. To recapture these, a desperate attempt was made by Lieutenant Armstrong, who, at the head of eight private soldiers, as brave and as rash as himself, rushed furiously on the enemy. With his sword in one hand and his bonnet in the other, the gallant Borderer was seen amidst the smoke leading them on; but all perished under the leaden shower, within a few feet of the French bayonets. After being reduced to half its number of officers and men, this fine regiment began to retire in disorder. The 34th and 50th were in the same perilous predicament, owing to the front and flank movements of the enemy, when Fassifern with his Highlanders entered the bloody arena. As the battalion moved in open column of companies, along the hill-top from the camp towards the pass, Cameron addressed a few words to them, exhorting them to fight to the last man, and maintain the ancient fame of the north. He reminded them that they were not fighting merely for the defence of Spain, but of those homes where their kindred dwelt. His voice became drowned in the din of the conflict which rolled along the face of the hills, and Stuart heard only the concluding part of his address, and part of it was in Gaelic. "Highlanders! we shall have a bloody sabbath here to-day; but we go forth to shed our blood that the sabbath-bells may ring in peace at home, in those green straths and wooded glens where many a Scottish heart is praying for us at this hour." The sound of the pipes, as the piper on the flank of each company struck up "*On wi' the Tartan*," was the only reply. What a gush of indescribable feeling came through every breast, when the blast of the pipe was heard at such a moment! Every eye lighted up, and every cheek flushed: the effect of the sound of that strange instrument on the sons of Caledonia is well known.

"In halls of joy and in scenes of mourning it has prevailed,—it has animated her warriors in battle, and welcomed them back after their toils to the homes of their love and the hills of their nativity. Its strains were the first sounded in the ears of infancy, and they are the last to be forgotten in the wanderings of age. Even Highlanders will allow that it is not the gentlest of instruments; but when far from their mountain-homes, what sounds, however melodious, could thrill their hearts like one burst of their own wild native pipe? The feelings which other instruments awaken are general and undefined, because they talk alike to Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, and Highlanders, for they are common to all; but the bag-pipe is sacred to Scotland, and speaks a language which Scotsmen only feel. It talks to them of home and all *the past*, and brings before them, on the burning shores of India, the wild hills and oft-frequented streams of Caledonia,—the friends that are thinking of them, and the sweethearts and wives that are weeping for them there. And need it be told here to how many fields of danger

and victory its proud strains have led? There is not a battle that is honourable to Britain in which its war-blast has not sounded; when every other instrument has been hushed by the confusion and carnage of the scene, it has been borne into the thick of the battle, and far in the advance its bleeding but devoted bearer, sinking to the earth, has sounded at once encouragement to his countrymen—and his own coronach!"[*]

[*] Preface to Macdonald's "Ancient Martial Music of Scotland."

Ranald-dhu with his comrades strove to call up the "fierce native daring" of the Highlanders, who continued to move quickly forward. The balls now began to hiss and tear up the turf around them, now and then striking down some poor fellow, who was left rolling on the ground in agony.

"The battalion will form line on the grenadiers," cried Fassifem,—"double quick!" The movement was performed with the rapidity and precision of a home-review. As the covering-serjeant of the light company took up the ground of alignement, holding his long pike aloft, a shot struck him in the head, passing through his right eye, and he fell dead. The line formed across his body, and the word of command from Seaton, "Light company; halt,—front,—dress!" had scarcely been heard on the left, before the orderly bugler, who stood by Cameron's side, sounded to fire, and the hoarse braying *piobrachd* now rang along the line.

The first volley of the Highlanders gave a temporary check to the enemy, and enabled the 34th and "old Half-hundred" to reform in order. The French line was now, as I have said, within thirty paces, and every lineament and feature of their dark and sallow faces could be distinctly seen at so short a distance. They were now in the midst of all the uproar, the smoke, the blood, the danger, the mingling of hideous groans and cries,—in short, the hell upon earth of a hot engagement, in which both parties became so heated by the slaughter around them, that all the softer passions were forgotten, and they longed, with a tiger-like feeling, to bury their blades in each other's hearts.

Ronald felt his pulses thickening, the blood tingling in his ears, for the sound of the musquetry had deafened them to every thing else, and his heart rebounded within his bosom until he could almost hear it beat; but it was with feelings the reverse of fear,—a wish to leap headlong among the enemy, to cut them down with his sword as he would whinbushes, and to revenge the slaughter the terrible fire of so dense a column was making among his gallant and devoted regiment. So thick was the smoke become, that he could scarcely see the third file

from him, and only at times it cleared up a little. What was then revealed, served only to infuriate him the more. The Highlanders were lying in heaps across and across each other,—piled up just as they fell; while their comrades fought above them, firing and reloading with all the rapidity in their power, until struck by a shot, and down they fell to perish unnoticed and unknown. Almost every shot killed; for the distance was short, and the wounds were hideous and ghastly, the blood spouting forth from the orifice as if through a syringe.

Now and then Ronald felt his heart momentarily recoil within him when he beheld some poor soldier, while in the full possession of life and energy, toss aside his firelock, and fall suddenly backwards across some heap of corpses—stricken dead. But a battle-field is no place for sympathy, and the feeling lasted but for an instant.

"Shall we never get the word to charge?" cried Seaton fiercely. "O Stuart! this is indeed infernal work,—to be mauled thus, and within a few feet of their muzzles."

"A charge would be madness, and our utter destruction. A single regiment against thirteen columns of Frenchmen—"

"We possess the pass, though. Poor Macivar is on the turf, and Macdonuil is shot through the heart. Hah! see to the left: the 50th are giving way—God! I am struck!" He sunk to the earth, with the blood gushing from his mouth and nostrils. A shot had pierced his breast, beating in with it a part of the silver breast-plate, and in great agony he rolled over several times, grasping and tearing the turf with fruitless efforts to regain his feet.

"Never mind me, light bobs, but stand by Cameron to the last. Hurrah!" Convulsively he strove to raise himself up; but another bullet passed through his neck, and a deadly paleness overspread his countenance. He gave his claymore one last flourish, he cast a glance of fury and despair towards the enemy, and expired. Scarcely a minute had elapsed since he was struck, and now he was dead!

"Poor Seaton!" muttered Ronald, and turned away. He had now the command of the light company; the other lieutenant lay bleeding to death a few yards off, and in the intervals of pain crying fruitlessly for water. One soldier, who had been struck by a shot across the bridge of the nose, became blind, and rushed frantickly among the enemy, to perish under their bayonets. Another, who had his lower jaw carried off, presented a horrible spectacle as he lay on the ground, vomiting up blood through his open throat, and lolling out his exposed and swollen tongue.[*]

[*] This man lived for many years afterwards, having the loss supplied by a mask, through which

soups were induced by a pipe for his sustenance. For pension he received the sum of nine-pence per day.

"Ninety-second! Prepare to charge!" cried Cameron, animated to fury by this deadly slaughter of his regiment. "Gordon Highlanders! prepare to charge," he repeated, as he galloped along the broken line with eyes flashing fire, while he waved his bonnet aloft. "Close up,—keep together; shoulder to shoulder, Highland men,—charge!" Ronald alone heard him, and repeated the rash order; but their voices were unheard amidst the din of the conflict. At that moment the smoke cleared a little away, and in front Ronald perceived a French grenadier sling his musquet, and advancing a few paces before his friends, stoop down to rifle an officer of the 71st regiment, who was lying dead between the lines.

"Iverach, mark that plundering rascal," said Stuart; "aim steadily."

Evan fired and missed.

"That was not like a man from the braes of Strathonan!" said his master angrily. "Fire, Ian Macdonald; you are one of the best shots in the company."

"My father shot the *Damh mhor a Vonalia* toon in Padenoch,[*] and I was aye thouchten to pe a petterer marksman than him," replied the young Highlander coolly, as he levelled his piece and fired. The Frenchman fell forward, beat the earth with his heels for a moment, and then lay motionless.

[*] A famous white stag, shot in Badenoch in 1807. It was believed by the Highlanders to be more than 200 years old.

"He's toon, sir: I have pitten a flea in his lug," replied the marksman, as he bit another cartridge.

For two hours this desperate and unequal conflict was maintained. The other regiments had given way in disorder, and the Highlanders began to waver, after the loss of their gallant colonel, who had retired severely wounded. Nearly all the officers were dead or dying on the ground, while others were endeavouring to find their way to some place where they could get their wounds dressed. Two alone were left with the regiment,—Ronald and another lieutenant, who, being senior, had the command, and finding that the battalion was reduced to less than a company, ordered it to retire towards the pass of Maya, having lost in two hours five-and-twenty officers, and three hundred rank and file. The other regiments were cut up in nearly the same manner, but none had lost so many officers. Stuart carried the king's colour, and a serjeant the regimental—all the

ensigns being killed or wounded. Poor Alister Macdonald was left on the field among the former. A shot had passed through his head, and he died without a groan. His friend Ronald was considerably startled when he saw him lying dead. The prediction of Dugald Mhor flashed upon his mind, and he looked round for that singular old Highlander; but he was away with Fassifern, on the road for the village of Irun.

The whole of the British forces were now in retreat before the overwhelming power of the enemy, column after column of whom continued to press forward. The defenders of the pass retired on the rock of Maya, abandoning their camp and baggage to the French. On retreating through the pass, Major Campbell, whose horse had been as usual shot under him, and who had first left the field owing to a severe wound, headed a few Highlanders, who scrambled like squirrels up the face of a precipitous crag, from the summit of which they kept up a hot fire upon the French troops, not only holding them decidedly in check and giving their friends time to retire, but revenging the previous slaughter in front of the pass. Here it may be worth mentioning that Major Campbell lost his celebrated cudgel, which, in the enthusiasm of the moment he sent flying among the foe, and unhorsed a mounted officer. He gave them also much weightier proofs of his good-will. Just as the flank of a column of French grenadiers reached the base of the crag occupied by the Highlanders, a tremendous fragment of rock, urged forward by the powerful hands of the major, came thundering down among them,—rolling through the dense mass of men with irresistible force and fury, making a perfect but terrible lane, and doing as much mischief as a dozen bomb-shells. Every man below held his breath for a moment, and then cries of rage and fury burst from the whole division of Drouet; while the Scots, pouring upon them a parting salute of shot and stones, descended from the other side of the rock, and rejoined their comrades in double-quick time. Under the orders of General Stuart the whole retired to the rock of Maya, those in the rear maintaining an irregular skirmish with the French; who, on perceiving this rearward movement, filled the air with cries of "Long live the great Emperor! Long live beautiful France!" mingled with shouts,—absolute yells of triumph and exultation.

Thoroughly enraged and disheartened, the British continued to retire, yet anxiously expecting that succours from Lord Wellington would arrive in time to enable them to face about, and beat Soult before nightfall. As the little band of Highlanders descended straggling from the hills, Stuart saw a lady (the wife of an officer of the 50th) on horseback, and in a miserable situation. Her horse had stuck fast above the saddle-girths in a deep morass, and she was too much terrified and bewildered to leave it. The balls of the sharp-shooters were whistling past her every second, and she cried imploringly on the retreating Highlanders to yield her some assistance; but it was impossible, and she fell into the hands of

the French. Her husband was lying dead, with his sword in his hand, in the gorge of the fatal pass. On the brigade of Sir Edward Barnes coming up from the rear, a new and sanguinary conflict took place; but the enemy were defeated, and the pass regained.

That night the shattered remains of the Gordon Highlanders bivouacked near Barrueta. The consternation of the inhabitants in the mountain villages, when the heights were abandoned and the French again advancing, cannot be easily described. From Barrueta, Elizondo, Maya, and Huarte, men, women, and children were seen pouring forth during the night and descending the mountain paths by torch-light, bearing along, with infinite toil, their sick and infirm relatives, their bedding, furniture, &c., to save them from the remorseless invaders, who, they too well knew would give all to the flames that was "too hot or too heavy" to carry off.

So eager were the French soldiers for plunder, that their searches were conducted upon a regular system. When a town was entered, every piece of furniture was broken, every plank raised to see whether any thing was hidden or buried, and the hammer and small saw, carried by every man in his havresack, assisted greatly this unsoldier-like work. It is said, that in Germany the vaults of the churches, the very graves in the church-yards were searched; and the brutality with which they treated those unfortunate Spaniards, male and female, who fell into their power, cannot be described. Therefore it is not be wondered at that the Pyrenean mountaineers fled at their approach, as from a legion of devils.

The roads were likewise crowded with wounded officers and soldiers, pouring down from the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles. Those who were able to move, were ordered to retire to Vittoria, which had already been converted into a vast hospital, and crowded to excess with the wounded of the great battle; and the miseries these unfortunates suffered, travelling without baggage or money in a strange country, weary, sick, and wounded, for a distance of one hundred miles during a hot season, are utterly inconceivable. Many wounds mortified, and became incurable; hundreds of men perished by the way-side of starvation and loss of blood, or reached Vittoria only to expire in the streets. Every medical officer had from ninety to a hundred patients on his list, and many lives were lost from the want of proper attendance.

The astounding intelligence that the Duke of Dalmatia had forced the Pyrenean passes, reached Lord Wellington at night, and promptly as usual he took means to concentrate his army, providing at the same time for the siege of San Sebastian, and the blockade of Pampeluna. The right wing was in full retreat from the mountains when he directed it to halt, and soon arrived himself to direct measures for covering Pampeluna, within a few miles of which Soult, eager for its relief, had now arrived. The discomfited troops from Maya were ordered to

march on the position before Pampeluna, and moved accordingly from Barrueta on Tuesday the 27th. A melancholy spectacle the parade of the Gordon Highlanders presented on that morning! The colours, which had been shot almost to rags, were cased, and carried by non-commissioned officers; two young lieutenants had the command, and as the solitary piper, Ranald Macdonuildhu, blew the 'gathering,' he watched with a stern and louring visage the few survivors of the late conflict, as they paraded on the hill-side, falling one by one into their places. Here were five men of the grenadiers, twenty men of another company, ten of a third, two of a fourth, and many others were totally annihilated, neither officer nor private being present. The Serjeant-major, with his arm in a sling, presented a list of the casualties to Lieutenant Logan, who commanded,—Logan of that Ilk, as he was named by the mess.

"Where is Captain Mac Ivor?"

"Killed, sir. I saw him lying dead, close by Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Macdonald."

"Where is Captain Bevan?"

"He retired, sir, with his arm shattered near the elbow, and expired at the moment Dr. Stuart attempted to remove the limb at the shoulder-socket."

"Where is Gordon?"

"Severely wounded, and gone to the rear."

"Grant?"

"Shot through the side."

"Macpherson and Macdonald,—Ranald Macdonuil, I mean?"

"Missing, sir." And so on—killed, wounded, and missing, was the answer to every question.

"God help us, sir!" said the worthy non-commissioned officer, as he raised his hand to his bonnet and turned away with a glistening eye, "but it's a heart-breaking thing to see the regiment cut up in this way."

The band was annihilated, and with a single drum and bagpipe the little party moved off, just as the morning sun rose above that deadly pass, where so many a gallant heart had grown cold, and ceased to beat for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLOCK-HOUSE. MINA.

Hill's division from the Pyrenees arrived at Pampeluna in time to share the fighting which ensued when Soult endeavoured to dislodge the allies on the 28th, but was repulsed with immense loss. Along the heights of Huarte the contest was very severe, and the bravery of the British was equalled only by that of their enemies. Every regiment charged with the bayonet; and the Highlanders,—ever at home at close quarters, more than once. Both armies remained quiet during the 29th; but Wellington, having completed all his arrangements, attacked the left and centre of Soult's forces next morning, and defeated them with great slaughter. Upon this discomfiture, the marshal's only object was to secure a safe retreat into France. After a fruitless attempt to turn Sir Rowland Hill's position at La Zarza, and fighting until compelled to cease firing by night coming on, they abandoned their ground under the favouring shadow of the darkness, and on the morrow were discovered in full retreat for France by the pass of Donna Maria. The allies "followed them up" in hot pursuit, fighting and capturing at every yard of the way, and on the 1st of August again took possession of those hard-contested passes, while the French retired into their own country completely thrashed, but certainly not to their hearts' content. With the exception of a slight bayonet-wound in a charge at La Zarza, Ronald Stuart had escaped with a whole skin during all these hard conflicts, known generally as the battles of the Pyrenees. But how much the regiment had suffered may be inferred from the fact, that of the thousand men who had landed in Spain under its colours, about eighty only were in the ranks.

The aspect of the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles, when re-occupied, was at once revolting and humiliating. The corses of friends and foes lay yet unburied there; but the death-hunters, the guerillas, and those ferocious banditti who infested every part of Spain, had been there at work; and most of the bodies were lying naked as when they came into the world. Ronald found Captain Mac Ivor in this condition, with his broad-sword so glued and encrusted with gore to his stiffened fingers, that it could not be removed, and so was buried with him. For many days the soldiers were busied in burying the dead. Deep holes were dug, wherein friends and foes were interred together,—thrown in just as they were found; and when the pit was brim full, the earth was heaped over it. These mounds of death,—fragments of uniform, tatters of tartan and plumage, shakoes and grenadier-caps, scattered about in thousands where the troops were encamped, served very disagreeably to remind them of what might be their own fate on some future day. With the exception of his sash and epaulets, ring and watch, &c., the body of poor Alister lay untouched, and Stuart was deeply moved, at least as much as a hard-hearted campaigner could well be, at the sight of his once merry and brave young comrade's remains. His claymore was grasped in one hand, and his bonnet in the other. The death-shot had passed through his

brain, and he had fallen in the act of cheering on his men. His dark locks were damp with the midnight dew, and a formidable frown contracted his fine bold forehead. He had lain for seven days uninterred, and Ronald prepared to commit his body to the earth. It was rolled in a blanket, while Evan dug a pit three feet deep and six long, in which the corse was deposited.

"Puir Maister Macdonald!" said Evan, as he smoothed down the green sods. "He was a leal true Scotsman and a gallant gentleman: lang it may be ere we see his maik again. He was a gude officer, and well was he loed by every ane."

The other officers were all placed in one grave by the Highlanders, who, according to the ancient Scottish custom, piled a large cairn of loose stones over it. It was situated on the left of the road leading from Maya to France, and probably is yet to be seen. So great was the slaughter among the officers, that Stuart, although a very junior lieutenant, obtained a company, and succeeded his friend Seaton in command of the "light bobs." While the troops lay encamped on the Pyrenees, the different corps were soon made up to their proper strength by the return of convalescents from Vittoria, and the arrival of recruits from the depôts or second battalions at home. In about two months the Highlanders began once more to assume the appearance of a regiment; and Fassifern, and other officers who had been wounded in the fatal action of the 25th July, rejoined as soon as their scars were closed.

Along the chain of heights, strong redoubts and block-houses were placed at intervals. The last were composed of horizontal logs, loop-holed for musquetry, and occupied by strong picquets, who were continually on the alert, in case Marshal Soult might again pay them some sudden visit from Gascony. One night in October, Ronald Stuart with his company were on duty in one of these blockhouses, when a sudden attack was made on the position by the enemy. There had been a great fall of snow, and the intense cold by which it was accompanied added greatly to the discomfort of the troops encamped on these bleak and lofty mountains, with no other shelter against the inclemencies of the weather, day and night, than canvas tents. The hills and valleys were completely covered to the depth of several feet, and many sentinels were lost, or found dreadfully frost-bitten when dug out. A path had been made from the Maya camp to the block-house which Stuart was to occupy; and as his company marched along the slippery and winding roadway, they often saw Spanish peasants or guerillas lying dead with shovels near them, showing that they perished with the intensity of the cold whilst engaged on some working or fatigue-party. In some places a frozen grisly head, or shrunken hand, clenched and withered, appeared above the smooth white surface of the snow. Had the view around the block-house been in Greenland or Newfoundland, it could not have presented a more dreary aspect. The whole of the Pyrenean chain, and the plains of Bearn and Gascony

below, were clad in the same white livery. The sky was of the purest, deepest, and coldest blue, showing the most distant summits of the Pyrenean chain, the white peaks of which rose in long perspective beyond each other in an infinity of outlines. The dense smoke from the camp fires was curling up from amidst the dingy-coloured tents, where now and then the beat of a drum rang out sharply into the clear and frosty air.

Although the cold was intense, and the legs of the Highlanders were as red as their jackets, the sun was shining brightly, and the whole surface of the earth and the atmosphere were sparkling and glittering in his radiance. With their musquets slung and a piper playing before them, the light company trod merrily up the ascent, many of them singing aloud to the notes of the pipe and the tramp of their feet, which sounded dull and hollow on the hard and frozen path. A captain of the 34th regiment, whom with his company they relieved, left Stuart a flask of brandy, for which he and his two subs (Chisholm and Evan Macpherson) were very thankful, and they found it a considerable acquisition during a winter day and night in a log-house, where the wind went in and out at a hundred chinks and crannies. The picquet-house was internally one large apartment, in the centre of which the soldiers piled their arms, and huddled close together on the ground for mutual heat, and to avoid the cold blast which blew through the numerous open loop-holes in the four walls of the edifice.

Towards night, a soldier of the 66th regiment, muffled up in his grey great-coat, came toiling up the steep ascent from the valley below, bringing to Stuart a letter, which had arrived from Lisbon in the packet for his corps. An officer of the 66th, who was intimate with Ronald, had despatched it to him forthwith, and he knew in an instant, by the hand-writing and the crest on the seal, that it came from Alice Lisle. Giving the Englishman a glass of brandy, he desired him to lose no time in regaining his quarters, in case of a snow-storm setting in before nightfall.

If any thing would serve to buoy up one's spirits amid all the miseries of campaigning and the dangers of daily warfare, such letters as those of Alice Lisle certainly must have had that effect. After expressing her delight for Stuart's success and safety in a manner and delicacy of style peculiarly her own, she continued thus:—

"And so you are really now a captain, and knight of a military order? O Heaven! I can scarcely believe it, even when your name appears in the army list. How short a time has elapsed since you used to harry the nests of the eagle and owl at Tullyisla, among the dark nooks of the old castle, and gather flowers and berries with Louis and me in Strathonan! You well know, dear Ronald, that no one rejoices more than Alice Lisle at your rapid promotion, but indeed I think it very horrid to owe one's advancement to the death of one's friends, and I see that

a sad alteration has taken place among the officers of the Gordon Highlanders since the battle of the Pyrenees. The joy I now feel in the knowledge of your—alas! only temporary—safety and good fortune, will scarcely counterbalance the agony of mind I experienced when the news of Vittoria arrived, and your name appeared in the list of wounded. Papa concealed the papers from me for some days, but I heard of it from my foster-sister, Jessie Cavers, and until your letters, dated from the "Maya Camp" reached us, my anxiety and perturbation of spirit are quite indescribable. What was thought of your danger by the people up the glen at Lochisla I really know not, but the whole country side was in an uproar in honour of the victory. The banner was displayed from the tower, a huge bonfire blazed on the summit of Craigonan, and the two old cannon on the bartizan were kept booming away the live-long night, greatly to the terror of all the old ladies within ten miles, who supposed that Buonaparte in person had come up the Tay, and landed a host of be-whiskered grenadiers on the Inches of Perth. The noise of the cannon alarmed others, too. The militia, the fencibles, and the volunteers got under arms; many of the chiefs north of this began to muster their people, and the whole country was in a state of commotion. Your father gave a dinner to his kin and tenantry, and dancing, drinking, and piping were kept up, I believe, in the old hall until the morning sun shone down the glen upon them."

Rolled up in his cloak, Ronald sat sipping his brandy and water, while by the light of a streaming candle he conned over the letter, so much absorbed in its contents as to forget every thing around him, until the report of a musquet, fired by the sentinel outside the block-house, caused him to start and leap to his feet as if he had received an electric shock.

"The French, and in this frosty night!" exclaimed Macpherson, leaping up from the ground, on which he had been fast asleep. "Now the devil confound them! they might have chosen daylight for their visit. Come, Stuart, leave your love-letter,—it can scarcely be any thing else, as you have been reading it all night,—leave it, and attend to your command, or Wellington will be issuing such another order anent love-letters as he gave us about the wild-pigs at Alba."

"We receive more reprehensions than rewards from head-quarters, certainly. But where are the French? Among the hills?"

"Close by, man!"

"In force, too!" added Chisholm, a smart little sub, who had been watching them from a loop-hole. "There will be heads broken in ten minutes."

"I believe you, my boy," answered Evan Macpherson, (a tall fellow, with thick black curly hair and a keen dark eye,) as he adjusted his sword-belt. "They are in force enough to put us all to our mettle."

"Stand to your arms, men!" said Ronald; but the order was needless, every man being at his post. "Be bold of heart, my lads!" he added, as he watched the

advancing enemy. "We shall soon be succoured."

"Not likely," said Macpherson bluntly, "with all due deference to you, Stuart. Mina, the guerilla chief, with his followers, is far down the mountains, and General Walker's brigade is scarcely within gun-shot; so we may fight till daylight without aid."

"Or till doomsday," retorted Stuart, "if the logs hold together, and the ammunition lasts. Blow, Macvurich," said he to the piper; "give us '*Roderick Mhic Alpain Dubh*,' and blow till the logs shake around us."

The night was clear, the moon shone brightly, and from their loop-holes they saw the French advancing in considerable force,—probably two thousand strong. Their dark figures, enveloped in loose great coats, were seen distinctly dotting the pure white covering of the mountain-side, up the slippery ascent of which they were toiling with infinite labour.

"They are advancing in extended order," observed Stuart, "for fear of our sending them a cannon-shot, probably."

"Which shows they know nothing about our position."

"Certes," said Chisholm, "they are no economists of their persons, to advance upon us over such open ground. They are chasseurs, probably. The moon shines brightly, yet no appointments glitter about them."

"Soult is a most indefatigable fool," said Stuart. "He causes his soldiers to fight needlessly. Poor fellows! they must obey their orders; but what benefit is gained, even if this solitary picquet is cut off? The actions at the Pyrenees and before Pampeluna might have taught the 'Lieutenant of the Emperor' a little experience."

"I dare say," said Macpherson, "they are within range now."

"Well, then, we will enjoy some shooting with them," replied his captain. "Line the loop-holes,—aim steadily; every bullet is worth its weight in gold to-night. They are twenty to one, but care not for that! Help is at hand."

"Get into yer places, lads," said Serjeant Duncan Macrone, "and mind ye ta level low, and gie them ta cauld kail o' Vittoria het again. Got pless us; but this nicht is cauld eneuch ta freeze ta fery Ness."

The discharge of forty musquets almost shook the frail block-house to pieces; and while those soldiers who had fired withdrew to reload, forty others took their places; and thus a rapid and constant fire was maintained against the enemy, blazing around the redoubt and flashing incessantly from every loop-hole. The summit of the hill was enveloped in clouds of smoke streaked with red fire, and the echoes of the musquetry sounded like peals of thunder, booming through the clear atmosphere and echoing among the surrounding peaks. Deadly execution was done among the advancing foe, whose killed and wounded were seen lying prostrate on the frozen snow, and marking the route up the hill by a

series of black spots. Nevertheless, although their numbers were diminishing at every step, the main body continued to advance with unabated ardour, formed in a wide half-circle at extended order, returning as well as they could the fire of their adversaries, upon whose place of concealment their shot came every instant, tearing away huge splinters or sinking deep into the stockade with a dull heavy sound; but only a single bullet, during a hot contest of two hours, entered the block-house. It passed through a loophole, and wounded a Highlander named Allan Warristoun in the neck, passing through his leather stock, and he sunk on the ground bleeding profusely; but Chisholm attempted to stanch the blood, by dressing the wound as well as circumstances would permit. This was the only casualty that occurred during that night's skirmish, but terrible execution was done among the enemy. They were kept completely at bay, until they became wearied and disheartened by the slaughter made among them. The light-company being excellent marksmen, every shot they fired told fatally on the assailants, at whom they could aim unseen with the utmost coolness and precision. After enduring that sort of work for nearly two hours, they retired with the utmost expedition on perceiving a strong body of Spanish guerillas advancing up the mountains from the village of Roncesvalles. A little further off was seen the brigade of General Walker, which the noise of the firing had summoned to arms; but their appearance was needless, as the conflict was over.

"Here comes Mina,—the king of Navarre!" exclaimed Stuart, as the great mob of guerillas came rushing up the mountains with shouts of "*Viva Ferdinand*! Long live Spain!" &c. "Cease firing, lads, and let the French retreat. Poor devils! we have mauled them sadly. They are lying as thick as blackberries on the hillside." In less than half an hour the French had disappeared, and the block-house was surrounded by the bold guerillas, their appetite for blood and plunder having been keenly whetted by the report of the musquetry.

"Let those who have watches and any loose pesetas in their purses, look well to them," said Chisholm, laughing. "Here come the honest soldiers of General Mina, who is said to be often a little upon the *picaro* himself."

"The licht-fingered loon will be waur than ony warlock, gin he gets his neive into my *sporran molloch*!" said Iverach, clasping the fox's mouth of his Highland purse.

"Or mine," said Sergeant Macrone. "Ta will pe gettin' plenty cauld iron, but no a prass podle frae me, Got tam!"

"The bonnets! the bonnets! Gude guide us, look at the blue bonnets!" exclaimed the Highlanders, astonished at the head-dress of the Biscayan guerillas, who wore flat blue caps, like those of the Scottish peasantry. Daylight had now dawned, and withdrawing the barricading from the door of the picquet-house, Stuart issued forth amidst the guerillas, who were busy stripping the French; and

long practice had rendered their fingers so nimble, that in ten minutes the numerous bodies lying strewed around the position were, like those at Maya, denuded of every article of clothing. Many of the wounded were also stripped, and perished miserably on the frozen snow. Like all the Spanish peasantry, the guerillas were stout and handsome men, from Guipuscoa, Alava, and Biscaya. Nearly all wore the *zammarra*, or jacket of black sheep-skin, knee breeches, and *abarcas*, or shoes of hog-skin tied to the feet like sandals. All wore the broad Basque cap, and were armed to the teeth with musquets, pistols, pikes, poniards, and offensive weapons of every kind, which, with their huge whiskers and moustaches, gave them the appearance of a desperate horde of bandits. Their language, the *Lingua Bascongado*, or *Bascuence*, as the Spaniards name it, sounded strange to the ear of Ronald, who had been accustomed to the pure and sonorous language of the Castiles. That of the Basques, according to their own account, existed before the building of the tower of Babel, and was brought into Spain by Jubal,—an assertion somewhat difficult to prove.

Coming from amidst his plundering followers, the celebrated Mina advanced towards Ronald Stuart. His dress was in no way different from that of his followers, save that a pair of gay French epaulets adorned his sheep-skin jacket, and a black ostrich feather floated from the band of his sombrero over his left shoulder. Pasted upon his shoulder-belt was a picture of the Virgin Mary, and a golden image of the same personage hung round his neck. He was accoutred with sword and dagger, and carried a short carbine in his hand, the ammunition for which was in a cartouch-box on his left side, balanced on his right by a copper bugle for summoning his followers. He had a fine open countenance, of a very mild and prepossessing expression, quite different from what Stuart expected to find in the leader of many thousand guerillas.

The following description (taken from a journal of the period of which I write) will best illustrate his character to the reader. "Espoz y Mina was at this time between twenty and thirty years old, and his frame, both of body and mind, had received the stamp which the circumstances of his country required. When he lies down at night it is always with his pistols in his girdle; and on the few nights that he ever passes under a roof, the door is well secured. Two hours' sleep is sufficient for him. When his shirt is dirty, he goes to the nearest house, and changes it with the owner for a clean one. He makes his own powder in a cave among the mountains, and has his hospital in a mountain village, which the French have repeatedly attempted to surprise, but always unsuccessfully, for the hearts of the whole country are with Mina. He receives intelligence of every movement of the enemy, and on the first tidings of danger the villagers carry the sick and wounded upon litters on their shoulders into the fastnesses, where they remain in perfect security till the baffled enemy retires. The alcaldes of

every village, when they are ordered by the French to make any requisition, must instantly inform Mina; if they fail in this duty, he goes himself in the night, seizes them in their beds, and shoots them."

Although not above five-and-twenty, the hard service he had seen, in this irregular mode of warfare, made him seem much older. Mina was the idol of the Spanish people, who styled him the king of Navarre, and extolled his deeds beyond those of the Cid, or the most famous knights of Spanish chivalry and romance. Mina was a true patriot, and the Hoffer of the Spaniards. Although his guerillas were well drilled, and consisted of ten or twelve battalions, which he ruled with a rod of iron, he never restrained them from plundering the French. On his approach, Ronald raised his bonnet in greeting the great guerilla chief, for though he was originally but a humble farmer of Pampeluna, yet Francisco Mina had the heart of a hero, and was brave as a lion.

"*Senor Capitan*," said he, bowing profoundly, after the most approved Spanish manner, "we have been somewhat late in coming to your rescue; but the fire of your soldiers has told superbly, and the base *ladrones* lie here pretty thick. The old proverb should be changed to—"the more French, the more gain for us."[*] However, I never put my own hands to a man after he is dead: the plunder I leave to my followers,—'tis all their pay, poor fellows! and Our Lady del Pilar knows that they earn it hard."

[*] A very old Spanish proverb, still universally current in Spain, says, "The more Moors, the more gain."

"A mode of payment I very little admire," said Stuart with a smile. "But I trust, Senor Francisco, that your people will see them buried after this unharnessing is over?"

"*Satanas* seize us if we bury a hair of their heads!" exclaimed the guerilla vehemently. "Pho! Senor Cavalier, you forget yourself. They are only Frenchmen; and what say the priests every day,—'Love all mankind *but* Frenchmen, who are the spawn of hell!' They lie under the ban of his holiness the Pope, and with this excuse three hundred unfrocked friars serve in my band,—and brave fellows they are as ever grasped hilt! But as for the soldiers of the Corsican tyrant, they may feast the wolves of the mountains or the birds of the air, for aught that Mina cares about the matter."

He now unslung a huge leathern flask of *aguardiente* from his sash, and after giving Stuart and his subs each a draught, he handed the rest to Sergeant Macrone, to distribute among the light company. Macrone gave his best bow

and carried off the flask, with many a wish that "Got might pless her honour's ainsel, and gie her lots o' ta sneeshin and ta gude Ferintosh!" To the good wishes of Macrone, Mina replied only by a stare, without comprehending a syllable. He next gave some cigars to each of the officers, saying, at the same time, it was no compliment to present them with what cost him nothing, one of his guerillas having found them in a Frenchman's havresack.

"But they are prime cigars, senores, and from the manufactory at Guadalaxara, in Mexico," said he, lighting one adroitly by means of flashing powder in the pan of one of his pistols. "Excellent!" continued he, puffing away with an air of satisfaction, which would have driven the royal author of the 'Counterblaste' to his wit's-end. "Excellent indeed, *par Diez*! And I ought to be a judge, senores, having smoked some hundred thousands in my time, and though but a poor peasant who dug the earth and planted cabbages at Pampeluna, I am descended in a direct line from the noble cavalier Don Hernandez de Toledo, who in 1559 introduced the famous leaf into Europe, from the province of Tabaca in San Domingo."

"Truly, Senor Espoz y Mina, your worthy ancestor deserves the gratitude of his countrymen," said Chisholm, in a tone of raillery. "He contrived a very agreeable amusement for them. From day-dawn till sunset they do little else than draw smoke into their mouths, and watch it curling out again."

Mina fixed his keen dark eye with a glance of displeasure upon Chisholm's good-natured countenance, but made no reply to him.

"Juan de la Roca!" cried he, in a voice like thunder, while he struck his foot impatiently on the frozen snow.

"Senor?" answered a childish voice; and a tall Spanish boy about sixteen years of age stood before him. This mere child fought in the band of Mina.

He was esteemed the bravest among them and always led their advanced guard, and his name had been blazoned forth in all the *Gacetas* of the country.

"Bring the spy before us."

The boy, Juan de la Roca, who was armed like his comrades with pistols and carbine, dragged forward a peasant, whose arms were bound with cords behind him. The poor wretch trembled violently when the proud stern eye of Mina fell upon him.

"This is a notorious spy, senores," said he, "whom we captured on our way up the mountains. Now, *Senor Picaro*, what have you to say that you should not die?"

The spy never raised his eyes, and maintained a dogged silence.

"Brand him, Juan!" exclaimed Mina. "Place the mark of Cain upon his forehead, that every true Spaniard may shun, abhor, and shrink from him!"

The young savage, whom practice had rendered expert at the operation,

unsheathed his dagger, and cut off the ear of the captive, from whom a deep imprecation escaped. Juan then thrust into the picquet-fire in the block-house, an iron brand, just such as those used for marking barrels, &c. It bore the words "VIVA MINA!" in letters half an inch square. Four powerful guerillas grasped the head of the spy, holding him so that it was impossible he could move. When the brand was red-hot La Roca pressed it upon his brow, the flesh of which was roasted and scorched, under the terrible operation, in a moment. The miserable being writhed and shrieked in agony. He burst from his torturers, and buried his face in the snow; then starting up with the yell of a fiend, he rushed down the mountains like a madman, and disappeared.

"Now, senores," said Mina, "I have inflicted upon him a punishment worse than death, because these marks can never be effaced. I mark every traitor thus, that my countrymen may know and despise them. Those who are thus branded are ashamed to look a Spaniard in the face, and, being compelled to dwell in solitary places, are often found dead of want among the mountains. But I must now make my adieus, and return to Roncesvalles, where my five thousand followers are to be reviewed to-day by Lord Wellington and General Morillo."

He blew a blast on his horn to collect his people, and taking farewell of the *Capitan de Cazadores* (as he named Stuart), withdrew in the direction of the famous pass of Roncesvalles, leaving the bodies of the French lying stripped to the skin amidst the snow. As soon as they had departed, Stuart ordered out the light company with shovels, to entomb the bodies; but so deep was the snow, that temporary graves in its frail substance only could be given, as there was not time to dig down to reach the earth. Many were found on the point of death, the intense cold finishing what the bullet had begun, and their grave-diggers had to await, shovel in hand, the moment of dissolution; after which they buried, and heaped the snow hurriedly over them. But a thaw came a short time before the position on the heights was abandoned, and the remains of the unfortunates were again exposed, and at a time when no interment could be given them, as the British forces were on the march to invade the "sacred territory" of *la belle France.*

The success of Sir Thomas Graham at San Sebastian, which he boldly won by storm on the 31st of August, the fall of Pampeluna, which on the 31st of October surrendered to Don Carlos de Espana, and the successful passage of the Bidassoa, infused the highest ardour into the heart of every soldier in the allied army, and every regiment longed to unfurl its triumphant banners to the winds of France. Although the French maintained their ancient renown in arms by fighting to the last, yet they were driven from all their intrenched camps on the Lower Pyrenees, and combating every rood of ground, retired on the 16th of November to the left bank of the Nive, and there encamped, after blowing up the bridge to

prevent the British crossing the river, which at that time was swollen to thrice its usual size by the melting of the snow on the hills, and by a long continuance of rain.

The allies encamped on the Spanish side of the river, and hostilities ceased for a time. The Gordon Highlanders occupied the French village of Cambo, in the department of the Lower Pyrenees, and close to the river Nive. Its inhabitants had all fled on the advance of the allies, crossing to the left bank with the retiring forces of their emperor. The camps and bivouacs of the French lay close to those of their enemies, divided only by the narrow space of the river, and the sentries on each side were but ten or fifteen yards distant from each other. From dawn until sunset the French Serjeants were heard continually drilling their squads of conscripts, twenty thousand of whom Buonaparte had dragged away from their quiet homes, and marched to the Nive to be drilled in the view of that veteran army, which had driven the flower of the soldiers of France from one end of the Peninsula to the other. Day after day the French non-commissioned officers were seen, cane in hand, getting the poor peasant-boys into some state of discipline. The British used to crowd to the river's edge to view the novel sight of French regiments on their parade, and beholding them go through the *maniement des armes*, or manual exercise, with all the minuteness common to the French,—the adjutant giving, after every word of command, the continual cautions, "*un, deux, trois, quatre!*"

At one part where the river was very narrow, a soldier of the 3rd Buffs, when on sentry one day, found himself immediately opposite to a French grenadier, placed on the same duty on the left bank of the river. The Gaul was a rough-whiskered fellow, wearing the usual service-like great coat, red epaulets, and high fur cap of the Imperial Guard. The sentinels had been staring steadily at each other for some time, and the Buff who had begun to imagine the face of the Frenchman was not unknown to him, was considerably astonished to hear him ask the question,—

"Well, Tom, old fellow! How are the dirty old Buffs coming on?" This rogue was a comrade of his own, who, a year or two before had deserted to the enemy, and had the cool impudence to hail his old friend thus from the French side of the Nive.

On the evening of the 8th of November, the weather being remarkably fine, the French officers sent their bands to the river-side to play for the entertainment of the British, and many courtesies were interchanged; flasks of wine and bunches of fruit were tossed over by the French, who, avoiding military topics, conversed with soldier-like frankness on other subjects. Ronald took the opportunity to inquire after his old acquaintance, Captain de Mesmai, and was informed that his regiment, the 10th Cuirassiers, was stationed at St. Jean de Luz,

near Bayonne. A young officer of *chasseurs à cheval* said he hoped the British passed their time pleasantly amid the gaieties of Cambo, and with the fair dames of that beautiful city. Stuart replied in the same tone of raillery, that the French ladies had all retired with their countrymen, at the sight of the scarlet coats; an answer which evidently piqued monsieur.

In exchange for some London newspapers, containing the despatches of Lord Wellington, detailing the victory of Vittoria, an old major, wearing a dozen medals on his breast, threw across the river a bundle of Parisian *Moniteurs*, containing the false and very contradictory despatches of King Joseph on the same affair. Some Spanish Journals, the *Gaceta de la Regencia*, and the *Gaceta de Valencia*, they refused to receive, and politely returned. Between deadly enemies, intercourse such as this renders war at once noble and chivalric. By it the heart of the sternest soldier becomes again humanized, and the barbarities incident to his profession are lessened and mitigated.

On the same evening a remarkable circumstance occurred, about a mile above Cambo. A French guard were about to kill a bullock for their rations; but the animal broke loose, and plunging into the stream, swam to the British side, and fell among a picquet of the Gordon Highlanders, commanded by Chisholm; by them it was instantly shot, flayed, and cut up, and all were rejoicing in expectation of a savoury meal, when a French soldier, with a white handkerchief displayed on the point of his sword, forded the river; advancing to the picquet, he craved in the name of his comrades, that the flesh might be divided, adding that surely *les Ecossois* would not deprive brothers of the sword of the only meal chance had given them for two days. It was impossible to refuse. Two other soldiers arrived, and they were sent back laden with half the carcase, and their canteens filled with wine, for which the poor fellows seemed very grateful; and one returned, presenting the thanks and compliments of their officer to Chisholm for his kindness.[*] The officers of each army spent the evening in conversing across the river, laughing and jesting like old friends; and when it grew dark, with many adieus they parted,—to meet on the next morning with their swords in their hands.

[*] An occurrence almost the same as here stated happened with the same regiment at the lines of

Torres Vedras, in 1810.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHÂTELET.

”They sought her baith by bower and ha’;
The ladye was not seen!
She’s ower the border, and awa’
Wi’ Jock o’ Hazeldean!”
Scott.

I must now present the reader with a change of scene, or at least of adventures, in describing those of Louis Lisle; who, after having been severely wounded in the arm by the sword of De Mesmai, was carried off a prisoner from the skirmish of Fuente Duenna. With a few hundred other captives, gleaned up on different occasions, he had been confined within the strong fortress of Pampeluna until the French army retired beyond it, when, with his comrades in misfortune, he was sent into France and placed in a solitary strong-hold on the left bank of the Nive, a few miles from the village of Cambo. This was a gloomy old feudal fortress, the property of the Duke of Alba de T——, who has already figured in preceding chapters. It consisted of a high square keep, a few flanking towers, and a high wall, embattled along the top; and every means had been taken to strengthen the place by stockades, loop-holes, cannon, &c. The garrison consisted of two or three companies of the 105th French regiment of the line. Louis, who had been heartily tired of his residence in Pampeluna, was but little pleased when he beheld the gloomy château, as the body of prisoners, with an escort of French lancers, marched up the ascent leading to it.

It was on a dark and louring November morning, when the black towers, the grey palisades, the gloomy court, and muffled-up sentinels appeared more sombre in the dull red light of the sun, which, like a crimson globe, seemed resting on the eastern summits of the Pyrenees, and struggling to show its face through the masses of dun clouds which floated across the sky. The tri-coloured standard of the emperor was drooping on the summit of the keep, and the guard were under arms as the prisoners entered the gate. These consisted principally

of Spaniards and Portuguese; there were a few British soldiers, but Louis was the only officer,—and a very discontented one he seemed, as he looked forward with considerable repugnance to a long imprisonment in France.

As they halted and formed line in the court of the fortress, Lisle was somewhat surprised to hear himself accosted in Spanish by an officer, who, muffled in a large military cloak, came from the keep. He recognised his friend of Aranjuez, the father of Donna Virginia,—the same traitorous Spanish noble who now openly served Buonaparte; and as commandant of a French garrison wore a staff-uniform embroidered with oak-leaves. Lisle thought of Virginia,—indeed he never thought of aught else: and veiling his dislike to the duke, he answered him as politely as possible. He would fain have asked after the fair donna, but feared to arouse the keen and ready suspicions of the proud and pompous Spaniard, while so completely within his power. The duke behaved to him coldly but courteously; and, after receiving his parole of honour that he would not transgress the bounds of the châtelet, invited him to dinner, and retired.

Louis was now his own master, with leave to perambulate as much as he chose the court-yard and palisades of the out-works, while the sentries from every nook and corner kept sharp eyes upon him, and often, when he attempted to pass their posts, barred the way with ported arms, and saying, "Pardon me, monsieur, you must not pass;" but with a softness of tone and politeness of manner, very different from what those of a British sentinel would be on a similar occasion.

The hours passed slowly away, and Louis began to feel very disconsolate, and very impatient of the monotony and restraint of a prisoner's life, forming as it did so strong a contrast to the heart-stirring excitement of campaigning. As it was contrary to their orders, the sentinels could not converse with him, and in truth his French was none of the best; so he passed the time in sauntering dismally about until the sun began to verge westward, and he knew that the dinner-hour was approaching. In the mean time, he wiled away the hours as well as he could, by whistling a march, humming a waltz, or tossing pebbles and fragments of lime from the ramparts to raise circles and bubbles in the Nive, which swept round an angle of the rocks on which the fortress stood. These employments he varied by watching with an intense interest the distant Pyrenees, in hopes to see the far away glitter of arms announce the approach of the allies, whose troops he knew to be in that direction. The eagerness of his glance towards Spain did not escape the observation of messieurs the sentries of the 105th; and they twirled their moustaches and regarded each other with a truly French smile of hauteur and complaisance, as they strode briskly to and fro on their posts; and one young man, pointing towards the Lower Pyrenees, remarked to him significantly with a smile, "*Ce pays sent lapoudre à canon, monsieur!*"[*]

[*] Literally, "this place, or country, smells of gunpowder, sir."

About four o'clock in the afternoon (an early hour in 1813) dinner was announced, and Lisle was ushered into an ancient hall, roofed with oak and floored with stone, but in no way very magnificent. There he was received by the duke and his daughter, Virginia, who, having heard of her *friend's* arrival, was dressed with unusual care to receive him; her woman had been occupied two good hours in arranging the massive braids of her glossy hair in a way to please their coquettish owner. A few officers of the French regiment were present, and Louis could have dispensed with their presence very well. He felt jealous at the very sight of them, as they were all handsome fellows, chevaliers of the Legion and many other orders. Besides, a Frenchman makes love as no other man does, and a douce Scot is certainly no match for him in volubility of words and laughter. There was a Spaniard present, who, although not greatly gifted with personal attractions, appeared to pay so much attention to Virginia, that Lisle cursed him in his heart for his impudence, and began to form plans for calling him to a severe account for his presumption.

Like the duke, this unworthy hidalgo was a renegade, and had been created by Joseph Buonaparte Count of Aranjuez, and Colmenare de Orija, and knight of the Stole,—an ancient order instituted by the kings of Arragon. He greeted Lisle coldly enough. They had met before at Aranjuez, where he bore the name of Felix Joaquin, of the order of Calatrava; for true Spaniards refused to acknowledge the titles he bore from the usurper's hand. The donna behaved with the same affability to him as to the other guests, being unwilling to let him perceive that she understood his attentions; but the delight of Louis at again beholding her and conversing with her, was clouded by chagrin and anger. He soon became aware that the open and intrusive attentions of the *ci-devant* condé were licensed by the approbation of the old duke.

The dinner passed over quietly enough. Military matters were avoided by all but one little Gascon major, who found it impossible to refrain from detailing to Lisle, with evident exultation, an account of Soult's forcing the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles on the 25th July,—affairs from which, if the numerical force on each side is considered, but very little honour accrues to France. Encouraged by the applause of his own officers, who were evidently quizzing him, the little Gascon entertained the company with an account of his own particular exploits at Maya, where, by his own tale, he had three horses shot under him. One anecdote did not fail to interest Lisle. He stated, that on a party of a Scots regiment, (*sans culottes*,) who hurled large stones on the 105th, he took terrible vengeance, by mounting the rock, which they possessed, and putting them to death with his

own hand!

"*Sacre!*" said he, as he concluded, "*Sauve qui peut* was the word; but not one of the fierce *sans culottes* escaped!"

Donna Virginia said she would excuse the major his ungenerous triumph, as she believed these were the greatest victories the French had ever won in Spain. The duke frowned; the count would have done so too, had gallantry permitted him; the little major looked big, and twirled up his moustaches; while his subs, like well-bred cavaliers, laughed as in duty bound at the young lady's retort. On Lisle inquiring for Donna Olivia, Virginia blushed, and tears glittered in her dark eyes; while her father replied coldly that she had retired to a convent in Galicia, but did not add that it was to the *monasterio de los Arrepentidas*, he had so ruthlessly consigned her.

As soon as dinner was over, Virginia withdrew, and cigars, wine, and gaming-tables were introduced. The duke and his intended son-in-law sat down to chess, at which they were as great enthusiasts as the celebrated Don Pedro Carrera[*] himself, while the Frenchmen took to trictrac, and quickly became absorbed in all the mystery of *tour à bas—tour d'une*, &c. &c.; but Lisle, who had neither money nor inclination to gamble, begged to be excused, and withdrew, receiving as he retired a keen glance from the count, to whom he replied by another of contempt, for rivals soon discover each other. Louis again returned to his solitary promenade on the lower works of the fortress, and continued to pace among the cannon and pyramids of shot which lined the stockades, until he heard his name called, and by a voice which he should have known amongst ten thousand. "Luiz! Don Luiz!"

[*] A Spaniard, who in 1617 published a treatise on the origin of chess, carrying its antiquity back to the era of the Trojan war.

"Virginia!" cried he; and springing to the grated loop at the base of the keep, he kissed the little hand she extended towards him.

"Retire now, senor," said she.

"Ah, why so soon?" said Louis. "But you must not senor me,—it sounds so distant."

"*Mi querida*, then."

"Ah! that is better. Dear Virginia!" and he kissed her hand again. It was indeed such a hand as one would never tire of holding. So tiny, and so delicate,—and set off by the handsome black bracelet round the slender wrist. "Why would you leave me so soon, Virginia?" said he, gazing on her beautiful Spanish features.

"It is long,—very long since we last met!"

"Only a few months, Luiz; and yet the time does appear very long. But we may be observed; these sharp-sighted French *soldados* keep guard on every nook and corner, and my father may hear that I have met you."

"He is busy over the chess-board; and no Frenchman would spoil pleasure such as ours."

"I must indeed leave you. Alas! I am not so free here as at pleasant Aranjuez."

"Hear me, before you go,—but one word, Virginia?"

"Well, then,—one only."

"Who is this Don Felix,—this Count of Aranjuez?"

"You have spoken a dozen, and broken your covenant."

"Who is he?"

"One of whom we had better beware. He is no more a Count than the *tambour* passing yonder with his drum on his back; but he is as false at heart as ever was Rodriguez, or the Counts of Carrion."

"He is very attentive to you."

"He is very troublesome,—*Santa Maria!* a perfect nuisance. But my father favours him, and as his wrath is terrible, I am forced to dissemble. But, ah! retire now, Don Luiz, I beseech you!"

Don Luiz was too much enraptured and bewildered to obey; and putting in his arm, he encircled and drew her close to the bars of the loop-hole, through which he pressed his glowing lip to her own. She yielded to him passively.

"O senor!"

"Senor again! Ah! these infernal bars, Virginia," he exclaimed. But releasing herself from his grasp, she glided away with the lightness of a fairy, and he saw her no more that night. But there was something so delightful in being near Virginia, and living under the same roof with her, that his feelings underwent an entire change before night closed in, and he looked less anxiously towards the distant positions of Lord Wellington's army on the Pyrenees, and the aspect of his prison appeared less dismal and desolate. The presence of Virginia cast a halo over every thing; and new feelings of love, hope, and pleasure began to dawn in his heart.

They met daily, almost hourly indeed, because in the narrow compass of a fortress or barrack, people encounter each other at every turn and corner; and some weeks passed away with a pleasure to Louis, which nothing seemed to cloud but the chance that Marshal Soult might order the prisoners in the château to be conveyed farther into the interior of the country, as vague rumours were afloat that the allied army was about to descend from the mountains and invade France. It was only from the casual observations of the French officers, at whose mess

he often dined, that Lisle was able to gather any political intelligence, but that something warlike was expected appeared evident. The garrison of the château was strengthened by a company of chasseurs, additional works were erected, and scarcely a day passed without French troops being seen on the march southward; and it was only when Lisle beheld the clouds of dust and flash of steel appearing on the distant roads, that he felt himself indeed a prisoner, and all the disagreeable nature of his situation came vividly upon his mind. But again he thought of Virginia, and remembered that a single smile or a soft word from her were well worth all the gloss and glitter of parade, the enthusiasm, the excitement, and the glory of warfare.

Being the only officer among the prisoners, he always dined with the duke, or at the temporary mess of the French. He preferred the former, to be near Virginia, upon whom the *ci-devant* count kept a jealous eye,—the penetration of which it required all the young lady's art to baffle; while, at the same time, it required all her politeness and good-nature to enable her to submit to his attentions, which were now becoming, as she often declared to Louis, 'quite odious and insufferable,' Her cavalier longed to horsewhip the Spanish traitor for his presumption, and on more than one occasion would have given him a morning's airing,—in other words, have 'called him out,' but for fear of an *exposé*, which he would rather avoid.

Besides, he had a deeper plot laid,—and another object in view. He knew that Virginia dreaded the duke for his stern austerity, as much as he himself despised him for his treason and falsehood to his native country; and he hoped by overcoming her scruples, and prevailing upon her to consent to a secret marriage, at once to free her from the insolent perseverance of Don Felix Joaquin and the authority of her father. He had resolved to await some change of circumstances, such as the removal of the whole garrison further into France, or its being strengthened by the arrival of more troops, as the revengeful dispositions of the duke and Joaquin were to be dreaded while he remained so much at their mercy as his situation of prisoner within the narrow limits of the châtelet placed him. The near approach of the allies had rendered the extension of his parole impossible; but he soon learned that farther delay with time or circumstances was fraught with danger, and that if he did not at once secure the hand of Virginia, he might lose it for ever.

With a countenance indicative of much discomposure, and eyes red with weeping, she appeared one evening at the grated loop-hole, where they usually had a meeting alone after dusk. She had just come from an interview with the duke, who being resolved to carry to the utmost the authority assumed by Spanish papas, had abruptly commanded her to come to a final arrangement with the mercenary condé, or prepare to join her sister in the *monasterio*. Louis, who had

been long wavering in his plans, was at once decided by this information. He prevailed upon her to consent to an elopement, and have that ceremony performed which would place her beyond the power of her father and the views of Don Felix.

To taking such a step, a Spanish damsel has always felt less scruples than a British, and with abundance of tears, fears, agitation, &c., the donna gave her consent, and Lisle retired to arrange matters. The greatest difficulty was the confounded parole of honour, which tied him to the château.

In this dilemma he applied to his rival, the count, requesting him to procure leave for him to visit Saint Palais for a day or two, pledging himself solemnly to return within the given time. The Spaniard, although detesting Louis Lisle in his heart, offered readily to befriend him on this occasion—having two ends in view; first, to remove Lisle from the presence of Virginia; and secondly to do so effectually, by sending him to his long home by means of some of those continental assassins, whose daggers are ever at the service of the highest bidder. Through his interest the duke granted the leave, and long before break of day Louis and the donna were clear of the fortress,—the duke's written order satisfying the scruples of the sub commanding the barrier-guard. At a village-inn hard by they procured horses, and took the road direct for Cambo, where they hoped to find the *curé* of the village. The wily count had previously despatched two of his own servants, Valencians,—rogues who would have sold their chance of salvation for a maravedi,—to post themselves in ambush on the road leading to Saint Palais, whither he believed Lisle to have gone, with orders to shoot him dead the moment he appeared.

So full of joy was Don Felix at the expected revenge, that he found it impossible to retire to rest, and continued to pace his chamber all night. With the utmost exultation he heard the noise of his intended victim's departure in the morning, while it was yet dark, and long ere gun-fire. As the challenge of the sentinels and clang of the closing gate echoed through the silent fortress the satisfaction of the Spaniard increased, and he already imagined himself the master of Virginia's broad lands on the Nive, and her rich estates in Valentia, *la Hermosa*; and long he watched the road to Saint Palais, in hopes of seeing the death-shot gleam through the darkness.

An hour elapsed, and he felt certain that the victim must have fallen into the deadly snare; but his anxiety to behold the completion of his plot would not permit him to delay an instant longer. Ordering a soldier of the guard to saddle his horse, he stuck his pistols into his girdle, drew his hat over his eyes, and muffling himself in his mantle, he rode forth,—feeling the exhilarating influence of a gallop in the breezy morning air infinitely agreeable, after a night of feverish excitement and drinking in his close chamber. As he approached the spot where he had

placed the assassins in ambush, he hid his face in his mantle, and rode more slowly forward, with a beating heart, scanning the roadway in expectation of seeing the corse of his rival stretched upon it. But he looked in vain! The winding road between the thickets was clear, and appeared so for many a mile beyond. Enraged to a pitch of madness at the idea of his escape, he dashed the rowels into his horse and galloped on; when lo! two carbines flashed from adjacent thickets,—one on each side of the way. A sudden exclamation of rage and agony escaped from him; his horse reared up wildly, and pierced by a two-ounce bullet the worthy Count of Aranjuez and Colmenare de Orija, knight of Calatrava and the Stole, &c. &c. fell to the earth, and almost instantly expired.

While Don Felix fell thus into his own snare, his more fortunate rival, with Donna Virginia, galloped along the bank of the Nive, pursuing the road to Cambo, where they arrived about sunrise, and sought without delay the house, or rather the cottage, of the village pastor. There fresh obstacles arose, as the reverend gentleman pretended to have many conscientious scruples about wedding a Catholic lady to a Briton and a heretic. But a few gold Napoleons overcame his qualms, and he consented to perform the important ceremony, with a description of which it is needless to tire the reader. Louis had no ordinary task to accomplish, in soothing the hesitation and terrors of Virginia, who was—

> "Crimsoned with shame, with terror mute,
> Dreading alike escape, pursuit;
> Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
> Hid fears and blushes in his arms."

There were no witnesses to the ceremony, so important to Louis and his bride, save a stout villager and his wife, who declared that Donna Virginia's black veil and velvet mantilla were contrary to all rule and established custom, as white drapery, pure as the virgin snow, and a coronet of white flowers and orange-buds, formed the bridal garb in France. But there was no help for it, and the donna became the Honourable Mrs. Lisle, in her high comb, braided hair, and long black veil, which swept the ground. Louis now remembered his father, whose existence he had almost forgotten in the excitement of the elopement; but he well knew that his indulgent relative would pardon the hasty union, considering the circumstances which urged it, and he longed for the time when he should present to him, and to his sister Alice, his beautiful Virginia, who, although the daughter of a traitor, was descended from one of the noblest houses in Old Castile.

The bride was too much agitated to return immediately to the château, and to encounter the wrath of that terrible old don her father, and so they remained

that night at the cottage of the pastor of Cambo.

Early next morning Louis was aroused from the couch of his bride by the sound of French drums, near the village. He heard them rattling away at *la bats de la rétraite* (the retreat); then succeeded the "long roll," a sound which never fails to rouse a soldier. The noise of distant firing was heard, and he sprung from the side of the blushing and trembling Virginia, and threw open the casement. It was a beautiful morning: the sun shone brightly, and the birds chirped merrily; the dew was gleaming like silver from the branches of the leafless trees; the sky was clear and blue, and the bold outlines of the Pyrenees were seen stretching far away in the distance towards Passages and Bayonne. Dense columns of French infantry were crowding in confusion along the road which led to the bridge of Cambo, while the sharp-shooters of the advancing allies, hovering on their rear and flanks, kept up an irregular but destructive fire, which their chasseurs, who lined every wall and hedge, endeavoured to return.

Lisle saw that there was no time to be lost, if he would return to the château. The discomfited French were pouring across the bridge of Cambo, where a detachment of *sapeurs* were busy at work, undermining one of the piers. The main body of the allies were already in sight. The green and scarlet uniforms of the light infantry were seen at intervals, appearing and disappearing as they leaped from bush to hedge, and from hedge to wall, firing, and then lying flat on their faces to reload, and avoid the fire of the enemy. Mingled with other sharp-shooters he beheld the light company of his own regiment, and knew their tall green and black plumes as they floated on the morning wind. Wistfully did Lisle look towards them, and it was with no ordinary feelings of chagrin that he beheld his friends so near, and yet found himself under the disagreeable necessity of returning to the château, where he should be exposed to the insults and vengeance of an intractable old Spaniard, to whom he now stood in the relation of son-in-law.

Virginia, who was excessively terrified by the noise of the firing, which was now heard around Cambo on all sides, and not less alarmed at the rage and disorder which prevailed among the retreating French, with tears and caresses besought Louis to remain unseen in the little cottage of the curate, until the allies gained possession of the village. But that resolve was impossible. His word was pledged to her father, and he must return—even at the risk of certain death. He prepared without delay to cross the river. On entering the stable to caparison their horses, he found that the worthy pastor had decamped in the night, taking them with him, and every thing of any value,—leaving only a stubborn old mule. Venting a bitter malediction on the thief, Lisle tied a halter to the long-eared steed, and led him forth into the yard, just as the gate was dashed open by the French, whose rear-guard had commenced plundering and destroying the houses,

to leave no shelter to the allies, who were now become invaders of France.

On beholding his red uniform and plumed bonnet, two charged him with their bayonets, which he had barely time to parry with a hay-fork that he hurriedly snatched up. They called upon him to surrender, and he found himself in imminent peril. Virginia was crying aloud from the interior of the cottage for aid, which it was impossible to yield her, as he was hemmed against the bayonets of a dozen soldiers. From this disagreeable predicament he was relieved by the interference of an officer, who exclaiming, "*Redressez vos armes, messieurs!*" struck down their bayonets with his sabre, and compelled them to retire. He then asked Louis sternly how he came there? Louis informed him, as briefly and as well as his imperfect knowledge of French would permit, that he was a prisoner of war on his parole of honour, and was only desirous of crossing the Nive with the French forces. He prayed the Frenchman, as an officer and *gentilhomme*, to rescue the lady, who was now crying aloud for assistance. The officer sheathed his sabre, and rushing into the cottage among the soldiers who thronged it, returned in a minute with Virginia, who was all tears and agitation, leaning on his right arm, while, with true French politeness, he carried his weather-beaten cocked-hat under his left. He relieved poor Lisle from a state of dreadful suspense, by placing her under his protection. She was nearly terrified out of her senses, and that she might not be subjected to farther insult, the officer ordered a *caporal bréveté* with a file of soldiers, to attend them as a guard.

Under their friendly escort, Louis at once prepared to leave the village, which was now enveloped in flames and smoke, and involved in tumult and uproar, while the bullets of the British riflemen came whistling every second among the crowded streets and blazing rafters. Placing Virginia upon the mule, which the honest curate had left behind him as worthless, Louis led it by the bridle, and pressing into the ranks of the French crossed the bridge, which was no sooner cleared, than the sapeurs sprung the mine and it was reduced to ruins in a moment. The firing now ceased, the rapid and swollen state of the Nive rendering pursuit impossible, and Louis, as he looked back towards Cambo, beheld his own brigade leisurely entering it,—marching along the highway, in close column of subdivisions; but they were soon hidden in the smoke of the village, which was enveloping in a white cloud the whole southern bank of the river. Continuing to lead by the bridle the mule upon which Virginia rode, Louis returned to the château, where all was bustle and warlike preparation. The works were bristling with bayonets, the guns were all shotted, and the lighted matches smoked beside them. The chasseurs and the two companies of the 105th were under arms, and the little major was bustling up and down, ordering, directing, and quarrelling with all and each; while his commandant, the duke, looked sullenly around him, scanning through a telescope the advance of the allies.

The death of the count was as yet unknown, the assassins, on discovering their mistake, having plundered and concealed the body; after which they absconded, and were no more heard of for a time. Such was the posture of affairs when Lisle entered the court of the place, where cannon-shot, bomb-shells, and casks of ammunition lay strewed about in confusion. He had scarcely reached the spot, when he became aware that a scene of high dramatic interest was about to be enacted. He was rudely seized by two soldiers with their swords drawn, while the duke at the same moment violently dragged his daughter from her saddle, ere Lisle could raise a hand to free her from his grasp. So bitterly was he enraged, that the stern reproaches he hurled against the affrighted and sinking Virginia, and the fierce menaces against Louis, were for some time totally incoherent.

"False *picaro*! I will have your heart thrown to my dogs for this!" he exclaimed, gazing at Louis with an eye of vindictive fury. "And as for *you*, most *gracios senora*, you shall join your sister in the monasterio at Galicia."

"Stay, my lord!" interposed Lisle, becoming violently excited; "you somewhat over-rate your authority in this matter. She is no longer under your control, and so unhand her instantly! Come to me, Virginia! You are my wedded wife, and no human power can separate us now." The reply of the fierce Spaniard was a deadly thrust at Louis with his sword. Some fatal work would have ensued, had not the little major struck aside the blade, and desired him to remember that the laws of war must be respected, and that Monsieur Lisle was a prisoner of France. Louis's blood boiled within him, while poor Virginia covered her face with her hands, and shrieked aloud to behold her husband and father glaring at each other with eyes of fire, until by the command of the latter she was borne away to her chamber in the keep.

"*Demonios!* major, how did you dare to stay my hand?" asked he, turning furiously to the Frenchman.

"*Parbleu, monsieur le duc!*"

"Do you suppose I will ever permit the honour of my long-descended house to be stained by the pretensions of a base and degenerate fool? a nameless Briton, *par Diez*!"

"Proud Spaniard!" replied Louis, resentment glowing in his cheek and kindling in his eye; "my ancestry were not less splendid than your own; but mine is the degradation, in allying myself with a traitor like you, who has abandoned his king and country to serve under the banner of a savage invader! But the virtues of such a woman as Virginia might redeem your whole race from perdition."

"*Parbleu!*" said the major again.

"And recollect, gentlemen and soldiers," continued Lisle, "that if I am maltreated by any within these walls, you may all smart for it yet. See you, sirs, the allies are close at hand, driving the boasting soldiers of the Emperor before

them as the wind drives the mist, and the whole of Gascony will be theirs before another sun sets."

"*Présomption et vanité*!" said the major, turning up his eyes and shrugging his shoulder. "*Aha! Les François sont au fait du métier de la guerre de terre!*" And many officers of the 105th, who crowded round, laughed heartily, and observed, that probably in a week or two the allies would be flying for shelter across the Pyrenees. Lisle blessed his stars that the garrison was not composed entirely of Spaniards; for, assuredly, the duke would have slain him on the spot but for the firm interference of the French officers. He was, however, put under close arrest, and a sentinel placed over him. The place in which he was confined was a projecting turret of the outworks, and there he was left to his own reflections, which were none of the most agreeable. He found himself acting the part of a romantic hero, but certainly little to his own satisfaction. In the same turret was confined a genuine Teague, a soldier of the 88th regiment, who had been placed in durance for two desperate attempts to escape when the allies appeared in sight. Mister Paddy Mulroony was seated very composedly in a corner, smoking a black pipe about an inch long, while in his cunning but good-natured face was seen that droll curl of the mouth and keen twinkling of the eye, which are so decidedly Irish.

"Och, tearin' murder! this is a poor case indeed," said he, springing up to attention. "Bad luck to the whole boiling of them! and is it a gintlemin like yer honner that they are afther traitin' this way? Never mind, sir; the allies—the hand iv Saint Pater be over thim!—are in sight, and may be they will be stormin' this rookery some fine morning, whin, wid the blessin' ov God, we'll see every throat in it cut."

Lisle was boiling with rage at the treatment to which he was subjected; but that was a slight affair when compared with his anxiety for Virginia, who was now entirely at the mercy of her father, of whose ferocity and remorseless disposition he had seen several examples. For some time he remained immersed in thought, while he strode hastily backward and forward in the narrow compass of their prison; and it was not until Teague's maledictions became very vehement, that Lisle found he had a companion in misfortune.

"Well, friend; and what brought you here?"

"Eight French spalpeens, sir, and my fortine or misfortine, and that little baste ov a major, bad luck to him! I was nigh out ov their claws this very mornin', clever and clane; but they clapped me up here, the ill-mannered bog-trotters! And sure, it 'ud vex ould Moses himself to see the rid coats across the river yonder, and yet be caged up here like a rat in a trap."

"To what regiment do you belong?"

"The Connaught Rangers, yer honner,—the boys that gave Phillipon, the

ould scrawdon, such a fright at Badajoz."

"A brave corps. And your name?"

"Pat Mulroony. I come from one side of Dublin, where my father has a beautiful estate, wid deer-parks such as ye never saw on the longest day's march. And though it is meself that siz it, there was not a smarter fellow than me in the whole division, from right to left; no, not one, yer honner! If you plaze, sir, we may yet give the French—bad cess to them! the slip; and by the mortal! I'll stand by yer honner like steel, for shure I'd do it for love if for nothin' else; for the Scots and Irish were one man's childer in Noah's day. In ould ancient forren times, the blessed Saint Patrick himself was a Scotsman, until his bad-mannered countrymen, in a fit of unkindness, cut off his head, and he swam over wid it under his arm to Donaghadee, and became a good Irishman. Often I have heard ould Father O'Rafferty at Dunleary tell us of that, when I used to take him home from Mother Macnoggin's wid a dhrop in his eye. He was the broth of a boy, that ould O'Rafferty, and a riglar devil among the girls, for all that he was a praste; and whin the craytur was in, it's little he'd think of giving the best man in his flock a palthog on the ear. But perhaps it's inthrudin' on yer honner I am?" Louis, though pleased with the fellow's humour, was not in a talking mood. "May my tongue be blisthered if I spake any more to ye, or bother ye in the midst of yer throubles!" said Pat in conclusion.

Anxiety and fear for poor Virginia plunged Lisle into deep despondency, and not all the attempts of honest Mulroony could wean him from his melancholy reflections. He could scarcely be in any other than an unpleasant mood, as it was rather annoying for a newly-married man to spend the time immediately succeeding his nuptial-day in a stone turret, measuring eight feet by six. Two or three days passed away, and Louis found considerable satisfaction in the knowledge that Virginia was yet near him,—that the walls of the fortress still contained her. He had acquainted his humble friend with his story, and Paddy became more eager than before to serve him; and vowed, for his sake, to face "either man or devil, if he had only an opportunity, bad luck to it!" The place in which they were confined was an *échauguette*, or small turret, built on an acute angle of a bastion close to the gate of the fortress, and from the loop-holes Louis and his friend kept by turns a constant watch, so that it was impossible for Virginia to be carried off without their knowledge; and Lisle would probably have become frantic had he seen her departure, which he hourly expected would take place. One night Mulroony was on sentry at the loop-hole, watching the gateway, while Louis slept on the floor. The night was intensely dark,—"one on which ye couldn't see yer nose fornenst ye," as Mulroony himself said.

"Blistheration and blackness be on the day I ever saw ye!" soliloquized he, as he scanned the castle and its defences. "Shure it ud vex Mister Job, let alone a

Connaught Ranger, to be caged up here shaking at ivery puff of wind, like a dog in a wet sack. Bad cess to them, the spalpeens ov blue blazes! Och! how long is this to last at all at all."

"Senor,—Luiz!" said a soft voice, close beside the loop-hole.

"Hubbuboo, tearin' murther! who are you, misthress?" said Mulroony, starting back in dismay as a dark figure, muffled in a hooded mantilla, appeared at the loop-hole. "Is it me you're looking for, darlint? Well thin, honey, it's just right you are, for there is not a smarter man in all the Connaught Rangers than Pat Mulroony,—damn the one from right to left! Ye've jist come to the right shop, honey; for, at wake or wedding who was the jewil ov the young ladies like Mr. Mulroony?"

"*O madre Maria!*" said poor Virginia, shrinking back in astonishment and grief. Understanding that Louis occupied this turret, she had resolved to pay him a visit, favoured by the darkness of the night and the inattention of her father and the duenna, who were both at that time engaged,—the former at the chess-board with the major, and the latter with her mass-book and brandy-bottle. Trembling with affection, fear, and the chill night-wind, which blew roughly on her delicate frame, she sought the place of Lisle's confinement; and great was her dismay at Mulroony's reply, which, although she did not understand, she well knew to be the voice of a stranger: but she implored him in Spanish, *por amor de San Juan de Dios*, to say where Don Luiz was confined.

"Don't be in such a flustheration, honey," said Mulroony, putting out his arms to embrace her. The lady shrunk back indignantly, and it now occurred to the egotistical gentleman to awaken Louis, thinking the visit might be intended for him.

"I say, sir! here's something wantin' to spake wid ye. I can't tell what it says, becase it spakes like naythur Frinchman nor devil, God bless us!" Louis sprung up.

"Virginia!" said he, and gave her his hand through the loop-hole. But she made no reply, save pressing it to her throbbing breast: her heart was too full to permit her to utter any thing.

"Virginia! have you any new distress to tell me of?"

"O Luiz!" said she, sobbing as if her heart would burst, "we meet for the last time."

"How!" he exclaimed in distress and alarm, encircling her with his arm as if to keep her with him. "Who will dare to separate us now?"

"My father. To-morrow I go from this; but whether to Paris or Galicia, I know not. O Luiz! his hatred is terrible. But for the intercession of the major, you would have been in eternity by this time." The challenge of a sentinel at the other angle of the bastion, and the tread of a foot, now alarmed them.

"Retire, Virginia, for a moment; 'tis only the patrol, or some affair of that sort. I would not have you discovered here for the world." She had only time to shrink into a corner, and conceal herself behind the carriage of a piece of ordnance, when a man approached the turret. It was the corporal of the guard, who usually came every night before the drums beat, to see that the prisoners were all right. The door was of massive oak, studded with iron nails, and while the corporal was undoing its ponderous fastenings, a sudden thought occurred to Lisle. "Be on the alert, Mulroony," said he; "I will now endeavour to escape, or die in the attempt!"

"Right, yer honner! I'm yer man. Lave me to dale wid that spalpeen ov a corporal, and by the holy Saint Peter! I won't lave a whole bone in his skin."

"Hush! let us only compel him to give up the watchword, and then we will gag and bind him hard and fast. I need keep faith no longer with those who doubt my parole."

The unsuspecting Frenchman opened the door and looked in, merely to assure himself that the prisoners were in their cage. "Come in, corporal dear," said Mulroony, grasping him by the throat, and dragging him into the chamber.

"*Sacre—diable!*" growled the astonished Gaul, struggling with his athletic adversary, who tripped up his heels, and in a twinkling laid him on his back, and pressed his knees upon his breast.

"Och, honey! don't be in such a divel ov a flustheration! Give but the smallest cry in life, and it's yer neck I'll be dhrawin' like a pullet's!"

"*Merci, monsieur! Ah, miséricorde!*" gasped the half-strangled soldier.

"Come, *monsieur caporal*!" said Louis fiercely; "surrender the countersign, or expect such treatment as desperate men may yield you. Mulroony, take your hand from his throat. Answer, Frenchman, at your peril!"

"MARENGO!" replied the other, and commenced immediately to bellow aloud for his comrades; but his cries were drowned in the singing of the wind and noise of the Nive, which rushed over a steep cascade below the bastion.

"Och, murther! it's all over now; he'll bring the whole pack on us wid his schreechin',—the devil dhraw the tongue out ov ye! Tunder an' oons! Thurf and blazes! what's this he is after now?"

Paddy soon discovered that, and to his cost. The corporal, on getting one hand free, drew his bayonet, and plunged it into the arm of his antagonist, who no sooner found himself wounded, than he broke into a tremendous storm of passion. Thundering out one of those formidable curses which come so glibly from an Irish tongue, he wrested the weapon from the Frenchman, and buried it twice in his breast. All this passed in less than a minute, and the Frenchman expired without a groan.

"Mulroony, have you killed him?" asked Louis, considerably excited.

"Deed have I, sir,—the murderin' villyan!" answered the other composedly.

"Poor fellow! I had no intention that he should be slain. He was but doing his duty."

"A purty thing, to make sich a moan for a spalpeen iv a Frencher," answered the Irishman testily.

"Our lives are now indeed forfeited, if we cannot escape. Virginia!" He went from the turret to where she sat in a sort of stupor with cold and terror, and in a few words informed her that they must escape now, or be for ever lost.

"Blue blazes, sir!" bawled Paddy from the turret door; "is it the wimmen ye're afther? Is this a time to go making love? Musha! musha! sure there's always mischief where they are."

"Quick now, Mulroony,—follow us!" said Louis, who encircled Virginia with his arm to support her. "We have not a moment to lose. Heaven grant me firmness now!"

Armed with the bayonet, and grumbling curses at the blood which was flowing freely from his arm, Mulroony followed Lisle and the lady to the barrier-gate, where two sentries were posted. The night was dark and black, and a dismal wind howled between the works and embrasures. The sentinels kept within their turrets, and every thing seemed favourable to their escape.

"*Qui vive?*" challenged one fellow at the gate. Louis hesitated a moment,—and the British reply "Friend," almost escaped his lips.

"*Belzebub! Qui va là?*" cried the gate-ward, again striking the butt of his firelock on the sentry-box floor.

"Make some answer, or we are undone," whispered Virginia, as she clung in terror to the arm of Louis, who, still advancing towards the gate, replied in a feigned voice,

"*Caporal, hors de la garde.*"

"*Aha!*" replied the sentinel, coming from his box. "*Avance, qui a l'ordre.*"

"MARENGO," replied Louis.

"*Passe, mon ami,*" replied the soldier, returning to his box. His suspicions were lulled, and they gained the gate without further molestation, the darkness of the night rendering their figures so indistinct, that it was impossible for the sentinels to discover them. The barrier was composed of strong planks, through which a little wicket was cut.

"How fortunate!" said Lisle; "the passage is open, and the draw-bridge down. We are free, and shall soon be safe among the British troops."

"Huisht, plaze yer honner; its hearin' us they'll be! Be aisy. Help out the lady: will you lane on my arm too, mem?"

"Senor?" She did not understand him.

An exclamation in Spanish caused them all to start. "*Dios mio!* my father!"

shrieked Virginia, as an officer outside the gate sprung forward and drove his sword through the body of the brave Mulroony, who fell mortally wounded, while the guard and sentries came running from all quarters to the spot. Louis found himself again a prisoner, and when on the very brink of freedom.

"Bring a lantern!" exclaimed the duke, whom Lisle's evil genius had brought to the gate, but on what errand he never discovered, "Bring a light, and let us see what soldier of the Emperor is base enough to assist prisoners to escape. I surely heard French spoken by some one."

The drummer of the guard held a lantern to Lisle's face, and his scarlet coat, when it appeared in the light, caused every brow to lour. The countenance of the duke turned pale when he beheld him. His eyes glistened like those of a serpent, as he gazed alternately upon him and Virginia, who in an agony of horror sunk down at his feet, close to the body of the gallant Irishman, whose features were now becoming rigid in death. He had expired almost immediately after receiving the thrust of the Spaniard's sword.

At that moment a soldier came hastily forward, saying that the corporal of the guard lay murdered in the turret from which the prisoners had escaped, and a volley of threats and execrations broke from the men of the 105th, who crowded round.

"Aha!" said the Gascon major, pressing forward. "Is it thus you slay the soldiers of the Emperor? You shall smart for this night's work, *Monsieur Ribaud*!"

"Do you dare to apply such an epithet to me?" replied Lisle furiously, spurning the Gascon with his foot, and struggling to free his arms, which were tightly grasped by the soldiers.

"Bind up his eyes, some of ye, and let him be instantly shot! Give not a moment for prayer or supplication. We will have life for life,—blood for blood!" cried the Spaniard.

"Base renegade! I scorn your malice, and defy you to terrify me," cried Louis, regardless of all consequences, and from despair gathering a courage which gained him the admiration of the French, though it won from them no mercy. The little major was foaming with exasperation at the insult he had received, and made no longer any intercessions. The private soldiers, who were enraged at the death of their comrade, eyed him likewise in malignant silence. Virginia was borne away senseless, and Lisle gazed sadly after her, until he was startled by the sharp words of command given coolly by a Serjeant to six soldiers, who were picked out to become his executioners. For a moment his heart grew sick and sunk within him, when he thought of his home and of those brave comrades who were only a few miles distant. But he scorned to ask mercy from the duke, from the father of Virginia, who by the light of a huge lantern (which cast a dull flickering light on the dark groups of armed soldiers, and still darker walls

of the fortress) watched the preparations made by the firing-party with steady gravity and coolness.

"*Chargez vos armes!*" cried the serjeant. "*Prenez la cartouche! Amorcez! L'arme à gauche!*" &c. and the noise of the steel ramrods ringing in the barrels as the cartridges were rammed home, fell like a knell upon the ears of Louis. He certainly grew pale, but his heart never quailed as he looked upon the loading of the musquets. He resolved to die with honour to his character and the garb he wore. At that moment, so critical to him, a French cavalry officer, on a panting horse, dashed up to the gate at full gallop, inquiring with all the hurry and importance of an aide-de-camp for the commandant of the place.

"*Monsieur le Duc*," said he, "the allies are in motion: their troops have begun to cross the Nive, and Marshal Soult desires that you will be on the alert, and defend the ford, under the guns of this château, to the last." Without waiting for an answer, he wheeled round his horse and galloped out of sight in a moment. The clatter of the hoofs had scarcely died away, before two of the sentinels, posted on the bastion over-looking the ford, fired their musquets. A volley replied, lighting up the whole fortress for an instant, and all became hurry and confusion. Louis was thrust into his old place of confinement,—the castle-gates were secured,—the bridge was drawn up, and in five minutes every man was at his post. From the inmost recesses of his heart Lisle thanked Heaven for his narrow escape; and while in the close compass of his prison he listened to the booming cannon and musquetry, which shook the ancient fabric to its foundations, he earnestly prayed that the attack would be successful; and he well knew, by the hearty British cheers which from time to time came ringing on the wind, even above the noise of the conflict, that his comrades were carrying all before them.

CHAPTER XI.

PASSAGE OF THE NIVE.

"The bayonet pierces, and the sabre cleaves,
And human lives are lavished everywhere,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves,
When the stript forest bows to the bleak air."
Byron.

An order having been issued for a general attack on the enemy's position at the Nive on the morning of the 9th of December, an hour before day-break the allied army got under arms, in high spirits and glee at the prospect of fighting monsieur on his own ground, and prosecuting their victorious career still farther into France. But as it is not my purpose to give an account of that brilliant affair, I will confine myself to the adventures of our friends. In Stuart's quarter, or billet, a miserable and half-ruined cottage, the officers who were to be under his command on a certain duty, sat smoking cigars and carousing on the common wine of the country, until the signal "to arms" was given. The party consisted of his own subs,—of Blacier and a Spanish captain, Castronuno, a tall and sombre cavalier, lank, lean, and bony, and who might very well have passed for the knight of La Mancha. Their supper consisted of tough ration *carne* (beef), broiled over the fire on ramrods, and eaten without salt,—an article which was always so scarce, that a *duro* would have been given for a tea-spoonful. This poor fare Blacier improved by swallowing an ample mess of chopped cabbage and vinegar, and by puffing assiduously at his meerschaum. After having stuffed himself until belt and button strained almost to starting, he deposited in his havresack a quantity of spare bread and meat for his breakfast. Castronuno, who had been observing his gluttony with quiet wonder, recommended him to eat his breakfast then, as it would save trouble on the morrow. This advice Stuart enforced by adding, that he might be knocked on the head before day broke, and perhaps all his good provender would go to swell some other man's paunch.

"*Mein Gott!*" groaned the German, "vat you say is right. I veel eat vile I can. *Hagel! mein Herr*, you hab gibben de soond advice." And he commenced a fresh attack on the viands, and quickly transferred them from the havresack to his distended stomach. He had scarcely finished, and let out four holes in his sword-belt, before the sharp Celtic visage of Serjeant Macrone was seen peering through the clouds of tobacco-smoke, as he informed Stuart, "Tat ta lads were a' standin' to their airms on the plain-stanes."

It was then an hour before day-break, and the sky was dark and gloomy. Stuart noiselessly paraded his troops,—the "light-bobs," Blacier's riflemen, and Castronuno's Spaniards, and moved up the banks of the stream to execute the duty assigned to him. This was to carry by storm the castle of the Nive, that the troops in its immediate neighbourhood might be enabled to cross by the ford, the passage of which was swept by the guns of the fortress. The day preceding the projected assault, Ronald and Blacier made a reconnoissance of the place, and found that there was no other method but to ford the river below the neighbouring cascade and carrying the outer defences by storm, trusting to Heaven and their own hands for the rest, as the tall keep might be defended against musquetry for an age, unless a piece of cannon was brought to bear upon it.

At the time mentioned, an hour before dawn, the whole of the troops in and about Cambo were under arms, and the signal to cross was to be the storming of the château. The companies destined to effect this dangerous piece of service, marched up the bank of the Nive a few miles, and favoured by the intense darkness, halted immediately opposite to the scene of action among some olive-trees, which were, however, bare and leafless. There a consultation was held, and it was determined to proceed forthwith. All appeared still within the château. The sentries on the bastions and palisades were seen passing and repassing the embrasures, but the noise of their tread was drowned in the rush of the cascade, which poured furiously over a ledge of rock a few yards above the fort and plunged into a deep chasm, from which a constant cloud of spray arose. Desiring Evan Bean Iverach to keep close by his side, Ronald, with a section of twelve picked Highlanders carrying three stout ladders, led the way. Under the command of Evan Macpherson, the rest of the company followed close upon his heels, with their bayonets pointing forward, and every man's hand on the lock of his musquet. Old Blacier, who was as brave as a lion notwithstanding all his oddities, prepared to mount the works by escalade a little further up the stream, where his riflemen were in imminent danger of being drenched by the spray of the waterfall. Two companies of the 18th Spanish corps of the line were to form a reserve, under the command of Don Alfonso de Castronuno.

"Now then, lads," said Ronald, while his heart leaped and his breath came thick and close, for the moment was an exciting one, "keep up your locks from the stream, and look well to your priming,—though we must trust most to butt and bayonet."

"*Qui va là?*" challenged a sentinel.

"You'll soon find that out, my boy," cried Stuart, brandishing his sword. "Forward! Gordon Highlanders. Hurrah!"

"*Demeurez là!*" cried the Gaul in dismay, while he fired his piece in concert with three or four others. A Highlander fell in the stream wounded, and was sucked into the linn, where he perished instantly. His comrades let fly a rattling volley, and pressed boldly forward. The water rose nearly to their waists, but the Celts had an advantage over their comrades in trowsers. Raising the thick tartan folds of their kilts, they crossed the river, keeping all their clothing, the hose excepted, perfectly dry.

The Nive, at the place where they crossed, was several yards wide, and the current, on the surface of which some pieces of thin ice floated, was intensely cold; but the hardy Highlanders pressed onward, grasping each other by the hand, and crossed safely, but not without several unlooked-for delays. The bed of the river was pebbly, slippery as glass, and full of holes, which caused them to stumble every moment, and a scaling-ladder was nearly carried away by

the stream. The rocks were steep and precipitous, rising to the height of several yards abruptly from the water. The ladders were planted among the pebbles, and when one point of the rock was gained, they had to draw them up before they could reach another, and so arrive at the foot of the sloping bastion which was now bristling with bayonets. By the time the escalade approached the outworks, every soldier in the château was at his post, and the cannon had begun to belch their iron contents, which, however, passed harmlessly over the heads of the assailants. The fierce northern blood of the latter was now roused in good earnest, and their natural courage seemed only to receive a fresh stimulus from the din of war around them.

Accustomed from infancy to climb like squirrels, the Scotsmen clambered up the rocks, grasping weeds and tufts of grass,—finding assistance and support where other men would have found none; and in less space of time than I take to record it, they were all at the base of the bastion.

"Up and on! Forward, my brave Highland hearts!" cried Ronald Stuart, springing recklessly up the perilous ladder, waving his sword and feeling in his mind the wild—almost mad, sensations of chivalry and desperation, which no man can imagine save one who has led a forlorn hope. "Death or glory! Hurrah! the place is our own!" At that moment a twenty-four pounder was run through the embrasure and discharged above his head. It was so close, that the air of the passing ball almost stunned him; he felt the hot glow of the red fire on his cheek, and the deadly missile whistled over his bonnet, and boomed away into the darkness. Several fire-balls were tossed over the works by the French. These burned with astonishing brilliancy and splendour wherever they alighted,—even in the middle of water, where they roared, sputtered and hissed like devils, but would not be quenched until they burned completely away.

Those which fell upon the rocks, served to reveal the storming-party to the deadly aim of the defenders, and at the same time added to the singularity, the picturesque horror of the scene, by the alternate glares of red, blue, and green light which they shed upon the castled rock, the bristling bastions, the rushing river, the gleaming arms, and the bronzed features of men, whose hearts the excitement of the moment had turned to iron. Unluckily, the first ladder planted against the breast-work broke, and the men fell heavily down.

Enraged at this discomfiture, Stuart leaped up the rocks again, though drenched with water,—but blows had been already interchanged. A second ladder had been planted by Macpherson, who leaped into an embrasure at the very moment a cannon was discharged through it, and he narrowly escaped being blown to pieces. With charged bayonets the resolute Highlanders poured in after him in that headlong manner which was never yet withstood, and a fierce conflict ensued, foot to foot, and hand to hand. From their lack of muscular power,

the French are ever at disadvantage in such strife; and although many of the assailants were forced over the parapet and slain, the outworks were entirely captured in a few minutes. The Germans under old Blacier, who led them on with his sabre in one hand and his meerschaum in the other, effected an entrance at one angle, while the Spanish officer commanding the reserve bravely carried another, finding it impossible to restrain his soldiers, whose triumphant shout of "*Santiago y España! Viva!*" struck the French with dismay. Finding themselves attacked successfully on three points, they became distracted, and were driven tumultuously from bastion and palisade; after which their own cannon were wheeled round on them. Nevertheless they fought with the chivalrous courage of old France. The top of the keep was lined with chasseurs, who madly continued to pour down an indiscriminate fire of musquetry on friends and foes, and the barbican was full of blood and corpses in five minutes. Brilliant fire-balls were also cast over, and the glare thrown by them on the bloody earth, the flashing weapons and powder-blackened visages of the combatants, produced an effect never to be forgotten by a beholder.

Poor Blacier, who had been shot through the lungs at the moment he entered the court, hurled his sabre among the enemy and crawled away into a corner, where he smoked composedly as he bled to death,—or at least appeared to smoke. The Gascon major of the 105th was encountered by Alfonso de Castronuno, who at the second blow laid him dead at his feet, but almost at the same moment the Spaniard himself expired: a shot had passed through his heart. Remembering Louis Lisle, and animated by a bitter hatred against all who wore the same garb, the duke, with his cloak rolled round his left arm and accoutred with sword and dagger, leaped among the Highlanders, calling on the French to follow; but no man obeyed. He would have been instantly bayoneted but for Ronald, who was the first man he encountered, and who ordered the soldiers to leave them hand to hand. In avoiding the duke's stiletto, Stuart stumbled over the corse of Castronuno, and would have been instantly dispatched, but for the crossed bayonets of a dozen soldiers.

"Save him!" cried Stuart. "Macpherson! Evan Bean! take him alive."

"Haud!" cried Iverach sternly. "Stand, ye black son o' the devil! Back—back; or my bayonet's through ye in a twinkling." But the furious Spaniard spat upon him in the bitterness of his fury, and the next moment his blood was reeking on Evan's weapon. He fell prone to the earth, and even while he lay choking in blood he continued to curse and spit at the conquerors, until the Spaniards destroyed him by trampling him to death. The moment he fell the French surrendered, after being hemmed into a corner, and finding it impossible to maintain the conflict longer. On both sides the slaughter was very great, and upwards of two hundred lay killed in the court or barbican. The chasseurs on the top of the keep did not

yield, until threatened that the place would be blown up; on which they laid down their arms, and joined the other prisoners, who formed a sullen band, ranked in a corner and guarded by the Spaniards, for whom they showed their scorn and contempt so openly, that three or four were killed.

Many of the captives were mere boys, poor conscripts, who only a month before had been compelled to resign the shovel for the musquet; and some were the old and high-spirited soldiers of the Emperor,—stern fellows, with bronzed and scarred cheeks, rough moustaches, and mouths black with the cartridges they had bitten. They looked around them with an air of haughty pride, defiance, and nonchalance, which only a Frenchman can assume under such circumstances. When daylight dawned, Blacier was found lying dead. When last seen alive, he was sitting philosophically watching the pool formed by his blood; and thus he expired with his pipe in his mouth, an inveterate smoker to the last.

"Keep order among the prisoners!" cried Stuart, on the occasion of a brawl ensuing between them and the Spaniards. "Your fellows must restrain their national animosity,—just now, at least," added he firmly, to the Spanish lieutenant commanding the escort.

"*Bueno!* but how am I to do it? See you, senor," said the Spaniard, "how the Frenchmen spit upon and upbraid them, as if they were so many Moors or Portuguese? *Virgin del Pilar*! I would hew them down to ribbons, but for the contrary order of senor the great *Capitan Général*,—the Duke of Vittoria."[*]

[*] Wellington's Spanish title.

"Stay, senor," said Stuart; "one should treat with generosity a conquered enemy."

"On my honour, *capitan*," replied the other, "old Cuesta would have had them all swimming down the Nive, had he commanded here."

"Holloa, Stuart!" cried Macpherson; "come this way! Here is another uproar. Never mind the prisoners; one might as well sing psalms to a dead horse, as speak of generosity to a Spaniard."

Their attention was arrested by the report of a musquet; and hurrying to where the sound came from, they found several Highlanders engaged in beating down the door of a turret. This operation Iverach shortened, by applying his musquet and blowing the lock to pieces,—a perilous exploit for the inmate, who narrowly escaped being shot through the body. Evan next applied his shoulder to the shattered barrier, and burst it open.

"Maister Lisle o' the Inch-house! Hurrah! How happy I am to see you. Od, this dings a'! he exclaimed in breathless astonishment, as Lisle issued from his

place of confinement.

"Ha! Louis," cried Stuart, grasping his hand in wonder. "Is it possible that they treat you in this unworthy manner, caging you up in a place like a dog-kennel? I thought you were enjoying yourself on parole in France?"

"No, faith! I have been locked up like a jailbird in Pampeluna, and other infernal places, ever since that unlucky affair at Fuente Duenna; and yet, after all, I do not regret it."

"Indeed!"

"Why, you have yet to learn. But where is Virginia,—Virginia de Alba?"

"How on earth should I know, Louis? 'Tis an odd question; but her father's blood, the fierce old villain! is yet red on Evan's bayonet."

"What is this you tell me?" said Lisle frowning. "Was the duke slain?"

"He fell in the assault," replied Macpherson, "and thus escaped the axe, the *garrote*, or a volley through the back,—all of which he so well merited."

"Stay, Macpherson!" interrupted Lisle, so angrily that the other was indignant. "I will not hear him spoken of thus. He has gone to his last account,—so rail against him no more. Truly, he deserves little pity from me, for I have suffered much at his hands; but that you will all know another time. Virginia! Virginia! for Heaven's sake tell me something about her!"

"I never heard aught of the lady since we were last at Aranjuez; but I hope the *ci-devant* abbess is well, notwithstanding the demerits of her fierce and treacherous father. Your hand again, Louis! My dear fellow, I congratulate you on your freedom. All are well at Inchavon, and—but mean time duty must be attended to." And, ignorant of the cause of Lisle's deep anxiety, he turned away, crying, "Holloa, Macrone! Where is that confounded old humbug loitering? In the spirit-store, likely. Ah! get the company under arms, and let the piper blow the gathering."

"I trust in Heaven that the tower yet contains her!" exclaimed Lisle. "I will find her, or be guilty of some desperate thing. Follow me, Evan, and some of you, my true old comrades! The keep is full of Spaniards and Germans, who are wont to be unscrupulous enough, when heated by the fury of an assault. Forward, Highlanders! We will ransack the prison-house, and a score of dollars shall be his who finds the lady!"

He snatched up the sword from the dead hand of Castronuno, and, followed by a few soldiers, rushed up the stairs of the keep, and sought at once the boudoir or apartment of Virginia, whom he found in the act of surrendering her bracelets and rings to a *cazadore*, who had terrified her to extremity by his oaths and menaces. The Spaniard was a powerful Asturian, but Louis grasped him by his black cross-belts, and hurled him down stairs like an infant, for rage supplied him with unusual strength, Virginia clasped him in her arms, and hung weeping

and sobbing bitterly; while Ronald Stuart and his lieutenant—Evan Macpherson, who had followed Louis up stairs, stood for a few moments at the door, unwilling to intrude upon them.

As she hung thus drooping on Lisle's breast, although less gaily attired than when at the Aranjuez ball, Virginia yet looked surpassingly beautiful. She had no veil or comb, and the massive braids of her dark-brown hair hung free and loose over her pale cheek and delicate blue-veined neck, of which rather more than usual was displayed, in consequence of the disorder of her dress. Her attendant had been preparing her for bed at the moment the assault took place; and want of sleep, together with the terror and anxiety under which she had been labouring, rendered her paler than usual. Tears were rolling fast from the long lashes which shaded her light hazel eyes, but they only made her more bewitching.

An exclamation of surprise, which Ronald found it impossible to restrain, caused her to start and blush deeply, for her arms, feet, and ankles were bare, and her graceful attire was all in disorder: but she threw her veil and mantilla instantly around her.

"There are none here but friends, Virginia," said Louis, to reassure her; and he introduced her to Ronald and Macpherson as "the Honourable Mrs. Lisle."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Stuart. "How fortunate—how happy! I have a thousand pardons to ask, Louis, for treating your anxiety so lightly. Allow me to congratulate you—"

"And me too, Lisle, old fellow!" added Macpherson. "I wish you all joy, but I cannot pay my respects to the donna, because my Spanish, which is none of the best, always turns into Gaelic, and never comes glibly to my tongue until after sunset."

"O senores!" said the lady, "such a night of horrors this has been! I heard all the dreadful conflict above, beneath, and around me,—and, Holy Mother Mary! I shall never forget it. I looked but once from my window, and the scene of the night assault will never be effaced from my remembrance. O 'tis a fearful thing to see men fighting for death and life, and destroying each other like wild beasts or demons! But where is the duke? Have not you seen him, senor cavaliers? Oh, search for my father, and bring him instantly to me, that I may be assured of his safety."

"Alas! senora," answered Stuart, "I regret—I fear we cannot gratify you in this matter—"

"Holy Virgin!" she faltered. "*Caballero*, you mean not to tell me that my father is no more,—that your *soldados* have slain him?" She spoke in a voice of exquisite tenderness, and laid her fair hand on Ronald's arm, grasping it tightly, and he gazed on her with some confusion. Her bright eyes were full of fire, and seemed to search his heart for an answer, while her half-parted lips displayed a

fair set of brilliant teeth. "*Noble Oficial!* tell me if my father lives," she added, bursting into tears.

"I fear the duke has escaped," replied Ronald, unwilling to afflict her by revealing the truth; for, notwithstanding the duke's sternness and severity, she had always tenderly loved him. "He must have escaped, senora, as I have not seen him since the place was stormed. He must have fled."

"No, cavalier. My father would perish rather than fly," said the young lady indignantly. "He comes of a race whose blood has fallen on a thousand fields, but never from the veins of a coward."

"Pardon, *gracios senora*; I meant not to say that he had fled, but only retreated," said Stuart. "But pray excuse me for a moment, as my presence is required below." He retired with the intention of ordering the body of the ignoble duke to be looked after, that it might not shock the eyes of his daughter; but the soldiers of Alfonso de Castronuno had before-hand disposed of it in a summary manner. In the intensity of their hatred, they tied a few cannon-shot to the body and tossed it into the chasm at the bottom of the cascade, where it could never be found again. The troops engaged in the capture of the château remained there for the ensuing day, during the whole of which firing was heard along the line of the Nive. With their usual success the allies crossed the river in triumph, and drove the troops of Soult before them pell-mell.

After his horse had been shot under him, Fassifern fought on foot, and four times led his victorious Highlanders on to the charge, sword in hand, and four times successively the stubborn masses of the enemy gave way before them. But the Celtic impetuosity was not to be resisted. Their black plumes were seen dashing on through bayonets, blood, and smoke, as they hurled the columns of the French before them as clouds are driven by the gale. Every regiment distinguished itself, and many charged desperately with the bayonet.

Even old Dugald Mhor, animated by the gallant example of his master, forgot his white hairs and failing powers, and distinguished himself by his prowess, and by the address with which he unhorsed and captured a French staff-officer.

But as this volume is drawing to a close, the historical part of it must be abridged as much as possible.

On the 27th of February, 1814, the allies gained the battle of Orthez, a victory which was succeeded by the passages of the Adour and Garonne, and by the most signal defeat of the Duke of Dalmatia before Toulouse, on Easter Sunday, the 10th of April.

Many of the British regiments suffered severely. The gallant 61st were reduced to scarcely fifty men, I believe; and the Gordon Highlanders were also

roughly handled by the enemy. Stuart was wounded, and he lost many of the friends who survived the fatal battles of the Pyrenees, and among them was Evan Iverach, the faithful and affectionate young fellow who had become a soldier for his sake, abandoning his home, his sweetheart, and his aged father, and who had followed and served him with the love of a younger brother, the respect of a vassal, and the disinterested devotion of a Highlander.

The light companies had been thrown forward as skirmishers, and Stuart's fell into a sort of ambush formed by the enemy, who poured a destructive fire upon them. Lieutenant Evan Macpherson was killed, and a ball passed through the breast of Iverach, which laid him prostrate on the turf. He had previously been wounded in the left knee, but he had refused to retire from the field, protesting that he would fight while he had breath left in his body. Thrown into disorder by this unexpected volley, the company retired, and Ronald, as he staggered about confused by the concussion of a rifle-ball which grazed his left temple, heard the deep moans of pain which were uttered by poor Iverach. Regardless of the French fire he rushed forward, and raising him in his arms, bore him off in the face of the foe, who suspended their firing on witnessing the action, which gained Ronald the love and esteem of every soldier who beheld it. Two Highlanders soon relieved him of his burden, and carried Iverach, who was enduring great agony, to a place which was secure from the bullets of the enemy's riflemen. He was laid at the back of a stone wall, which formed the boundary of a meadow or field. The first thing he cried for was water; and Stuart, filling his canteen in a muddy ditch, the only place from which he could procure it, held it to the hot quivering lips of the sufferer, who, after he had drunk greedily, expressed much more concern to behold blood trickling from Ronald's temple, than for the probable issue of his own wound. Whenever he spoke, he was almost suffocated with his own blood; and ceasing the attempt, he leaned his head against the wall, and while tears trickled over his face, gazed with an eye of intense affection upon his master, who knelt down beside him, and as gently as a mother would have done, unclasped his accoutrements and opened his coat, that he might breathe more freely.

Stuart, the assistant-surgeon, who had been sitting opportunely on the other side of the wall, ready for action, with his case of instruments displayed around him like a pedlar's wares, whispered in Ronald's ear with most medical composure, "It is all over with him, poor fellow! Rejoin your company before Cameron misses you: Iverach will die in ten minutes."

"I cannot leave him," said Stuart, deeply distressed. "Oh, cannot you do something for him? I would yield all I possess on earth to save Evan's life!"

"He is bleeding more internally than outwardly, and were I to attempt to stop the discharge of blood from his mouth and breast, he would be instantly

suffocated."

"D—nation, Dick!" said Ronald angrily, "and will you leave him to die?"

"He will die without my assistance: on my honour, I can do nothing! He is past my skill, and I have other work on hand. See how the wounded are pouring down from the height! I must indeed leave you."

He snatched up his box, and ran to where four soldiers of the 61st had laid down Coghlan, their eccentric old colonel, who had received a shot which entered the top of his left epaulet and came out at his right side. But he, too, was past Stuart's skill, and died instantly.

Evan heard not what passed, but learned the doctor's opinion from the sad expression of his master's face.

"O sir! and sae he has gien me ower," said he, speaking in a broken and difficult manner, while the blood continued to gurgle incessantly in his throat. He held out his hand, and Ronald, taking it in his own, knelt down beside him. "And sae, sir, he has gien me ower. I thocht as muckle, but he micht, he micht hae tried to save me. But na, na! it's a' ower noo. I ken my weird mon a' be fulfilled; I kent I wad fa' the day. There was an unco sooghin' in my heart a' the last nicht. Something seemed aye whispering in my lug it was the last I was doomed to see. Oich, ay! it will be sair news to auld Donald Iverach, whan he hears that Evan Bean—his Evan with the fair hair, Evan that he was aye sae fond o', has de'ed in the land o' the foe and the stranger. But, O dear maister Ronald! ye'll tell him,—ye'll tell a' the folk in the bonnie glen, whan ye gang hame to Miss Alice, that I died as became me,—with my bonnet on my brow, and my face to the enemy."

"I will, Evan, I will," groaned Ronald.

"I have always dune my duty, sir, to you and to my cuintry."

"You have, Evan,—bravely and nobly."

"Thanks, sir, thanks! Ye'll say that Evan, the son of Iverach, never flinched in the dark hour o' trial and danger!" said he, while his eyes lighted up with Highland enthusiasm. "Tell them this,—that the auld folk may remember me in their prayers, when the coronach is sung for me in the clachan at Lochisla."

"My poor Evan, you will exhaust yourself."

"My time is short noo," he replied in a moaning voice; "but, oh! this will be sad news to my auld faither. My death will bring sorrow and dule on his grey hairs. And then there is Jessie—Jessie Cavers o' the Inch-house, at Avonside!" He began to sob, and his tears mingled with his blood. He sunk back exhausted, and lay still for a short time, during which he muttered to himself,—"The gowden braid—her lock o' hair! An ill omen,—cut in twa by a sabre at Orthez. O Jessie! my sweet wee love, maun we never meet mair?"

"Maister Ronald!" said he, in a quivering voice, "see that Jessie gets a' my

back pay. There's three months o't gane, come the neist Lord's-day. Let her put it to her tocher,—'twill help her to get anither love. I release her frae the troth she gaed to me. Alake—" And his voice died away in a gentle wail.

"Evan, this money,—hear me; this pay you speak of,—shall I not give it to your father, rather than this Jessie Cavers, who may, perhaps, have forgotten you?"

"She never will forget me!" cried Iverach, with an impetuosity which caused the gore to rush from his wound and mouth fearfully. "If I thocht she had proved fause to her plichted aith, I wad haunt her till her dyin' day. Yird an' stane wadna' haud me! But my faither,—gie him this, sir; for he wad fling siller into the loch, as if it burnt his hand."

He undid from his bonnet the regimental badge which fastened the black cockade and upright green feather. It was a wreath of thistles, encircling a Sphynx, and the word *Egypt* stamped in brass. "Gie—gie him this: he will wear it for my sake,—the sake o' his Evan Bean. And now, Heaven bless ye, Maister Ronald, and grant that ye may live lang and happily after I'm gane to dust, and the grass o' many a year has grown and withered ower me. Ye've been a kind maister,—a gude friend,—and a gude officer to me. God bless Colonel Cameron, and every officer and private man in the regiment! I thocht to have been spared to gang hame wi' ye a' to auld Scotland; but that hath been ordained itherways. But—but—"

His voice failed him again, and his eyes grew dull and glassy, while his face became overspread with the livid hue of death, and assumed that expression which is terrible to look upon. On a sudden he started, and seemed to gaze intently on some distant object.

"Evan!" said Stuart in astonishment. "What see you, that you gaze thus?"

"My faither the piper," said he in a breathless voice, while he grasped Ronald convulsively with one hand, and with the other pointed to some vision of his imagination. "'Tis my faither!" he added, in a voice thrilling with death and delight. "He comes to find me in the deid-thraw! Yonder, yonder he comes,—doon by the dyke-side. His pipes a' braw wi' ribbons frae the drones, and his tartan plaid waving behind him!"

Startled by the energy of the dying soldier, Ronald looked in the direction pointed out. No such appearance was visible to him; but there lay the broad bosom of the Garonne, refulgent with the noon-day sun,—sweeping in watery majesty past the towers and spires of Toulouse, and disappearing among the deep forests, which were resounding with the clang of the battle that was waged hotly and fiercely before the walls of the city.

"Evan," said he, mournfully, "I see not the figure you mention."

But there was no reply: the Highlander had ceased to exist. The blood

oozed slowly and heavily from his wound, and his distended and glassy eyes were yet fixed with the glare of death on the scene of the distant battle-field.

An exclamation of deep anguish burst from Ronald Stuart on beholding the breathless body of his humble but gallant friend, which presented a woful spectacle, being drenched in blood from the chin to the shoe-buckle. He tied a handkerchief over the face, and disposing the body in its plaid, he hewed down an olive-tree with his sword and with the branches covered it up, that it might be unmolested by the peasantry and death-hunters, until he could return and commit it to the earth.

This done, he tied up his own wound, which till then he had forgotten, and again sought the field, where flashing steel and eddying smoke bore token of the strife. Toulouse was the last, and one of the most keenly contested battles of the Peninsular war; and it was very generally believed by the allied army, that Soult, when it took place, was aware that peace had been concluded between Great Britain and France.

* * * * *

Here the author must, for the present, take leave of the courteous reader, who has accompanied him thus far through innumerable long marches and dangerous exploits, and halt for a time on the field of Toulouse. Should he be encouraged to publish the further adventures of his kilted heroes, he will not be tardy in obeying the call; for full many a weary march in France and Flanders—many a wet bivouac—many a desperate duty and perilous adventure, have to be described "before the last grand charge took place in that victory," where the crown of France was lost and won, when Europe was freed from the iron grasp of Napoleon, and where (at least in the great war in which they had so signally distinguished themselves) the "occupation of the Gordon Highlanders" concluded.

THE END.

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