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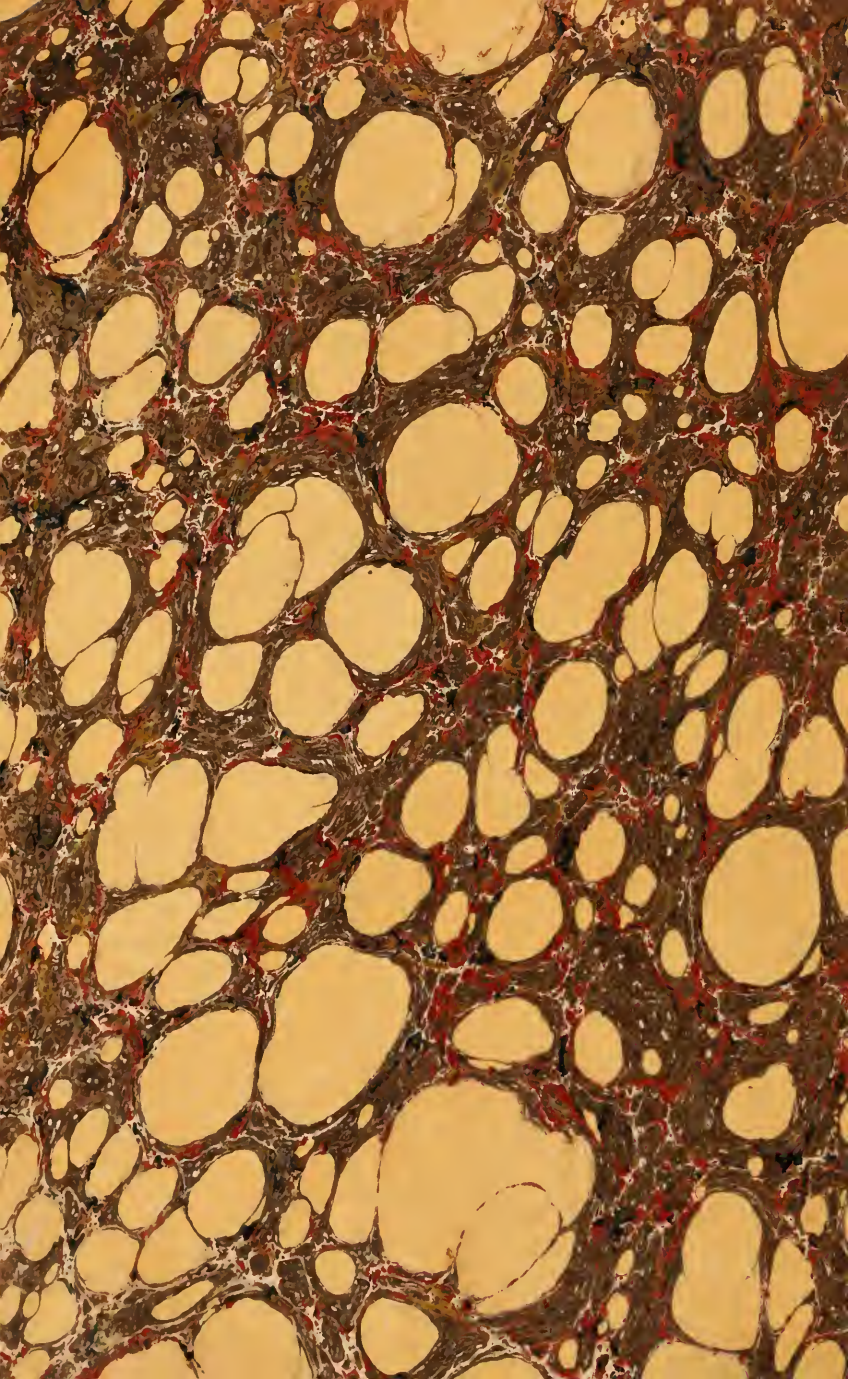

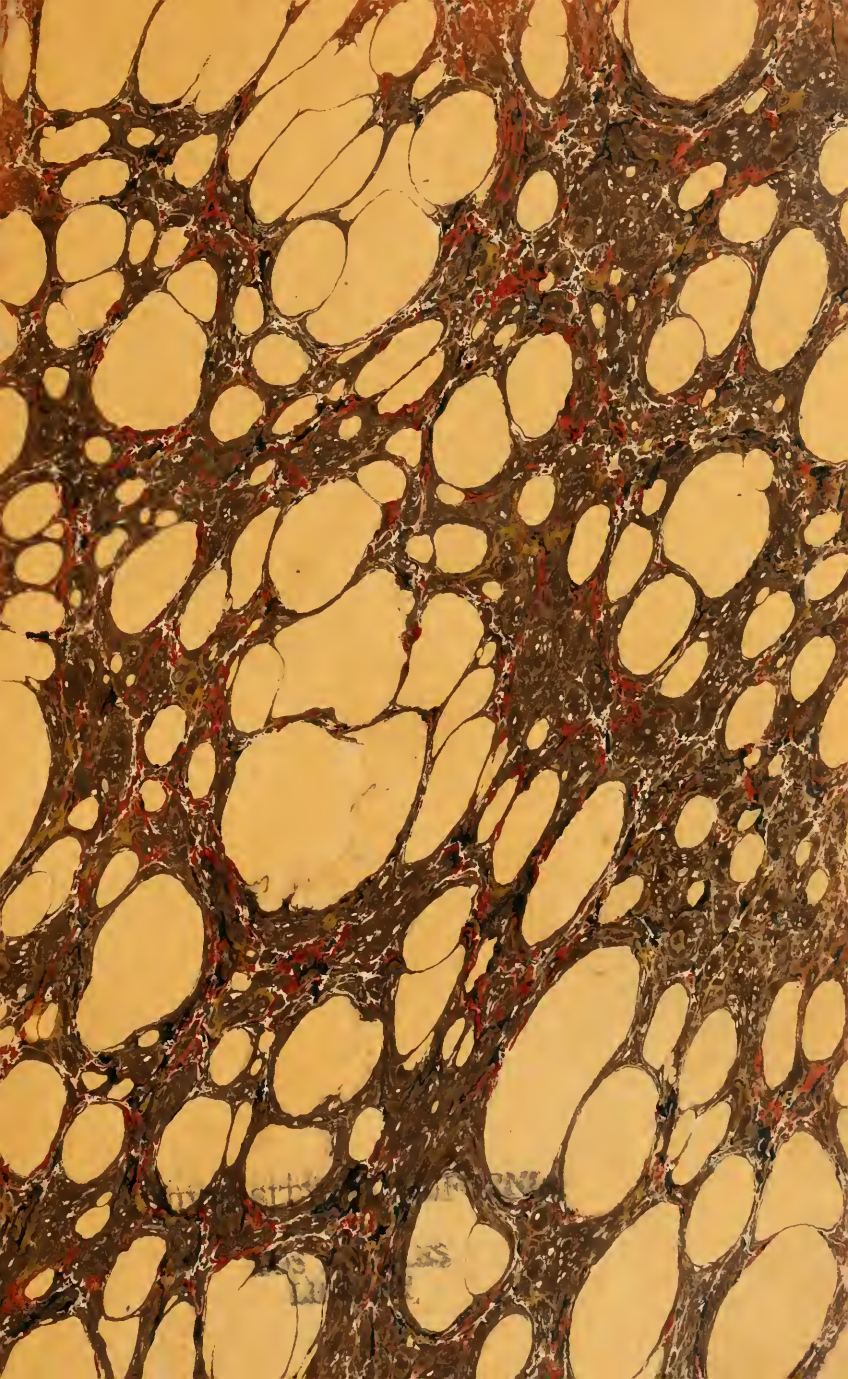

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TOM BURKE

OF "OURS."

BY

CHARLES LEVER.

(Harry Lorrequer.)

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS ON STEEL,

BY

H. K. BROWNE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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TOM BURKE OF "OURS."

CHAPTER L.

A "MAITRE D'ARMES."

The day after the battle of Austerlitz, the Prince of Lichtenstein arrived in our camp, with, as it was rumoured, proposals for a peace. The negociations, whatever they were, were strictly secret, not even the marshals themselves being admitted to Napoleon's confidence on this occasion. Soon after mid-day, a great body of the guard who had been in reserve the previous day, were drawn up in order of battle, presenting an array of several thousand men, whose dress, look, and equipment—fresh as if on parade before the Tuileries—could not fail to strike the Austrian envoy with amazement. Every thing that could indicate the appearance of suffering, or even fatigue, among the troops, was sedulously kept out of view. Such of the cavalry regiments as suffered least in the battle, were under arms, while the generals of division received orders to have their respective staffs fully equipped and mounted, as if on a day of review. It was late in the afternoon when the word was passed along the lines to stand to arms; and the moment after, a calêche, drawn by six horses, passed in full gallop, and took the road towards Austerlitz. The return of the Austrian envoy set a thousand conjectures in motion, and all were eager to find out what had been the result of his mission.

"We must soon learn it all," said an old colonel of artillery near me; "if the game be war, we shall be called up to assist Davoust's movement on Göding—the Russians have but one line of retreat, and that is already in our possession."

"I cannot for the life of me understand the Emperor's inaction," said a younger officer—"here we remain just as if nothing had been done. One would suppose that a Russian army stood in full force before us, and that we had not gained a tremendous battle."

"Depend on it, Auguste," said the old officer, smiling, "his Majesty is not the man to let slip his golden opportunities. If we don't advance, it is because it is safer to remain where we are."

"Safer than pursue a flying enemy?"

"Even so—it is not Russia, nor Austria, we have in the field against us, but Europe—the world."

"With all my heart," retorted the other boldly; "nor do I think the odds unfair—all I would ask is—the General Bonaparte of Cairo or Marengo, and not the purple-clad Emperor of the Tuileries."

"It is not while the plain is yet reeking with the blood of Austerlitz, that such a reproach should be spoken," said I, indignantly; "never was Bonaparte greater than Napoleon."

"Monsieur has served in Egypt," said the young man contemptuously, while he measured me from head to foot.

"Would that I had! would that I could give whatever years I may have before me, for those whose every day shall live in history."

"You are right, young man," said the old colonel, "they were glorious times, and a worthy prelude to the greatness that followed them."

"A bright promise of the future—never to come," rejoined the younger, with a flash of anger on his cheek.

"*Parbleu*, sir, you speak boldly," said a harsh, low voice, from behind. We turned—it was Napoleon, dressed in a grey coat, all covered with fur, and looking like one of the couriers of the army. "I did not know my measures were so freely canvassed as I find them. Who are you, sir?"

"Legrange, Sire, Chef d'escadron of the 2nd voltigeurs," said the young man, trembling from head to foot, while he uncovered his head, and stood cap in hand before him.

"Since when, sir, have I called you into my counsels, and asked your advice, or what is it in your position which entitles you to question one in mine? Duroc, come here—your sword, sir."

The young man let fall his shako from his hand, and laid it on his sword-hilt—"Ah!" cried the Emperor, suddenly—"what became of your right arm?"

"I left it at Aboukir, sire."

Napoleon muttered something between his teeth—then added aloud—"Come, sir, you are not the first whose hand has saved his head: return to your duty, and—mark me! be satisfied with doing yours, and leave me to mine. And you, sir," said he, turning towards me and using the same harsh tone of voice, "I should know your face."

"Lieutenant Burke of the 8th hussars."

"Ah! I remember,—the Chouanist. So, sir, it seems that I stand somewhat higher in your esteem than when you kept company with Messieurs Georges and Pichegru, eh?"

"No, sire,—your majesty ever occupied the first place in my admiration and devotion."

"Sacristi! then, you took a strange way to show it, when first I had the pleasure of your acquaintance. You are on General St. Hilaire's staff?"

"General D'Auvergne's, sire."

"True! D'Auvergne, a word with you:"—he turned and whispered something to the old General, who during the whole colloquy stood at his back, anxious, but not daring to interpose a word.

"Well, well," said Napoleon in a voice of much kinder accent;—"I

am satisfied, your General, sir, reports favourably of your zeal and capacity. I do not desire to let your former conduct prove any bar to your advancement, and on his recommendation, of which I trust you may prove yourself worthy, I name you to a troop in your own regiment.'

"And still to serve on my staff?" said the General, half questioning the Emperor.

"As you wish it, D'Auvergne." With that he moved forward ere I could do more than express my gratitude by a respectful bow.

"I told you, Burke, the time would come for this," said D'Auvergne, as he pressed my hand warmly, and followed the cortége of the Emperor.

Hitherto I had lived an almost isolated life: my staff duties had so separated me from my brother officers, that I only knew them by name; while the other aide-de-camps of the General were men much older than myself, and with none of them had I formed any intimacy whatever. It was not without a sense of this loneliness that I now thought over my promotion. The absence of those who sympathise with our moments of joy and sorrow, reduces our enjoyment to a narrow limit indeed. The only one of all I knew who would really have felt happy in my advancement, was poor Pioche. He was beyond every thought of pleasure or grief. Thus reflecting, I turned towards my quarters at Brunn. It was evening—the watch-fires were lighted, and round them sat groups of soldiers at their supper, chatting away pleasantly, and recounting the events of the battle. Many had been slightly wounded, and by their bandaged foreheads, and disabled arms, claimed a marked pre-eminence above the rest. A straw bivouac, with its great blazing fire in front, would denote some officer's quarters, and here were generally some eight or ten assembled, while the savoury odour of some smoking dish, and the merry laughter, proclaimed that feasting was not excluded from the life of a campaign.

As I passed one of these, I heard the tones of a voice, which, well known, had somehow not been heard by me for many a day before. Who could it be? I listened, but in vain—I asked myself whose was it—I dismounted, and leading my horse by the bridle, passed before the hut; the strong light of the blazing wood lit up the interior, and showed me a party of about a dozen officers, seated and lying on a heap of straw, occupied in discussing a supper, which, however wanting in all the elegancies of table equipment, even where I stood, had a most appetising odour; various drinking vessels—some of them silver—passed from hand to hand rapidly, and the clinking of cups proclaimed, that although of different regiments—as I saw they were—a kindly feeling united them.

"Well, François," said the same voice, whose accents were so familiar to me, without my being able to say why—"Well, François, you have not told us how it happened."

"Easily enough," said another; "he broke my blade in his back, and gave point afterwards, and ran me through the chest." It was the 'Maitre d'armes' of the fourth, my old antagonist, who said this, and I drew near to hear the remainder. "You could not call the thing unfair," continued he; "but, after all, no one ever heard of such a '*passe.*'"

"I could have told you of it though," rejoined the other, "for I

remember once, in the fencing school at the Polytechnique, I saw him catch his antagonist's blade in his sleeve, and when he had it secure, snap it across, and then thrust home with his own. *Parbleu*, he lost a coat by it, and I believe, at the time, poor fellow, he could ill spare it."

This story, which was told of myself, was an incident which occurred in a school duel, and was only known to two or three others; and again was I puzzled, to think, which of my former companions the speaker could be. My curiosity was now stronger than aught else, and so, affecting to seek a light for my cigar, I approached the blaze.

"Hallo. comrade, a cup of wine with you," cried out a voice from within, "Melniker is no bad drinking——"

"When Chambertin can't be had," said another, handing me a goblet of red wine.

"*Par St. Denis!* it's the very man himself," shouted a third. "Why, Burke, my old comrade, do you forget Tascher?"

"What!" said I, in amazement, turning from one to the other of the moustached faces, and unable to discover my former friend, while they laughed loud, and long, at my embarrassment.

"Make way for him there—make way, lads. Come, Burke, here's your place," said he, stretching out his hand and pressing me down beside him on the straw. "So you did not remember me?"

In truth, there was enough of change in his appearance, since last I saw him, to warrant my forgetfulness. A dark bushy beard, worn cuirassier fashion, around the mouth and high on the cheeks, almost concealed his face; while in figure he had grown both taller and stouter.

"Art colonel of the 8th regiment?" said he, laughingly; "you know, I promised you were to be, when we were to meet again."

"No: but if I mistake not," said a hussar officer opposite, "Monsieur is in the way to become so. Were you not named to a troop, about half an hour ago, by the Emperor himself?"

"Yes!" said I, with an effort to suppress my pride.

"*Diantre bleu!*" exclaimed Tascher, "what good fortune you always have. I wish you joy of it, with all my heart. I say, comrades, let us drown his commission for him."

"Agreed—agreed," cried they all in a breath, "François will make us a bowl of punch for the occasion."

"Most willingly," said the little 'Maitre d'armes;' "Monsieur le Capitaine, I am sure, bears me no ill-will for our little affair. I thought not," added he, seizing my hand in both his: "*Ma foi!* you spoiled my *tierce* for me—I shall never be the same man again. Now, gentlemen, pass down the brandy, and let the man with most credit go seek for sugar at the canteen."

While François commenced his operations, Tascher proceeded to recount to me the miserable life he had spent in garrison towns, till the outbreak of the campaign had called him on active service.

"It was no use that I asked the Empress to intercede for me, and get me appointed to another regiment; being the nephew of Napoleon, seemed to set a complete bar to my advancement. Even now,"

said he, "my name has been sent forward by my colonel, for promotion, and I wager you fifty Naps, I shall be passed over."

"And what if you be?" said a huge, heavy-browed major, beside him—"What great hardship is it, to be a lieutenant in the cuirassiers at two and twenty? I was a sergeant ten years later."

"Ay, *parbleu!*" cried another, "I won my epaulettes at Cairo, when three officers were reported living, in a whole regiment."

"To be sure," said François, looking up from his operation of lemon squeezing—"here am I, a Maitre d'armes, after twenty-six years' service; and there's Davoust, who never could stand before me, he's a general of brigade."

The whole party laughed aloud at the grievances of Maitre François, whose seriousness on the subject was perfectly real.

"Ah! you may laugh," said he, half in pique; "but what a mere accident can determine a man's fortune in life. Would Junot there be a major-general to-day, if he did not measure six feet without his boots? We were at school together, and, *ma foi!* he was always at the bottom of the class."

"And so, François, it was your size then that stopped your promotion?"

"Of course it was. When a man is but five feet—with high heels too—he can only be advanced as a Maitre d'armes. *Parbleu!* what should I be now, if I had only grown a little taller."

"It is all better as it is," growled out an old captain, between the puffs of his meerschaum; "if thou wert an inch bigger, there would be no living in the same brigade with thee."

"For all that," rejoined Maitre François, "I have put many a pretty fellow his full length on the grass."

"How many duels, François, did you tell us the other evening, that you fought in the 22nd?"

"Seventy-eight!" said the little man—"not to speak of two affairs, which, I am ashamed to confess, were with the broad-sword; but they were fellows from Alsace, and they knew no better."

"*Tonnerre de ciel!*" cried the major, "a little devil like that is a perfect plague in a regiment. I remember, we had a fellow called Piccotin——"

"Ah! Piccotin—poor Piccotin—we were foster-brothers," interrupted François, "we were both from Chalons-sur-Marne."

"Egad, I'd have sworn you were," rejoined the major. "One might have thought ye were twins."

"People often said so," responded François, with as much composure as though a compliment had been intended—"We both had the same coloured hair and eyes—the same military air—and gave the '*passe en tierce*' always outside the guard, exactly in the same way."

"What became of Piccotin?" asked the major, "he left us at Lyons."

"You never heard, then, what became of him?"

"No: we knew he joined the *Chasséurs a Pied*."

"I can tell you, then," said François, "no one knows better. I

parted from Piccotin when we were ordered to Egypt. We did our best to obtain service in the same brigade, for we were like brothers, but we could not manage it, and so, with sad hearts, we separated; he, to return to France, I, to sail for Alexandria. This was in the spring of 1798, or, as we called it, the year Six of the Republic. For three years we never met; but when the eighth demi-brigade returned from Egypt, we went into garrison at Bayonne, and the first man I saw on the ramparts was Piccotin himself. There was no mistaking him: you know the way he had of walking with a long stride, rising on his instep at every step, squaring his elbows, and turning his head from side to side, just to see if any one was pleased to smile, or even so much as to look closely at him. Ah! *ma foi*! little Piccotin knew how to treat such as well as any one. Methinks I see him approaching his man with a slide and a bow, and then taking off his cap, I hear him say in his mildest tone—'Monsieur assuredly did not intend that stare and that grimace for me—I know I must have deceived myself; monsieur is only a fool, he never meant to be impertinent.' Then, *parbleu*, what a storm would come on, and how cool was Piccotin the whole time—how scrupulously timid he would be of misspelling the gentleman's name, or misplacing an accent over it—how delicately he would inquire his address, as if the curiosity was only pardonable; and then with what courtesy he would take his leave, retiring half-a-dozen paces before he ventured to turn his back on the man he was determined to kill next morning."

"Quite true—perfectly true, François," said the major, "Piccotin did the thing with the most admirable temper and good-breeding."

"That was the tone of Chalons, when we were both boys," said François, proudly; "he and I were reared together." He finished a bumper of wine as he made this satisfactory explanation, and looked round at the company with the air of a conqueror.

"Piccotin saw me, as quickly as I perceived him, and the minute after we were in each other's arms. 'Ah! *mon cher*, how many?' said he to me, as soon as the first burst of enthusiasm subsided.

"'Only eighteen,' said I, sadly; 'but two were Mamelukes of the guard.'

"'Thou wert ever fortunate, François,' he replied, wiping his eyes with emotion; 'I have never pinked any but Christians.'

"'Come—come,' said I, 'don't be down-hearted—good times are coming. They say *le petit Caporal* will have us in England soon.'

"'Mayhap,' said he, sorrowfully, for he could not get over my Turks. Well, in order to cheer him up a little, I proposed that we should go and sup together at the 'Grenadier Rouge,' and away we went accordingly.

"It would amuse you, perhaps," said Maitre François, "were I to tell some of the stories we related to each other that night. We both had had our share of adventure since we met, and some droll ones among the number. However, that is not the question at present. We sat late—so late, that they came to close the *café* at last, and we were obliged to depart. You know the 'Grenadier Rouge,'—don't you?"

"Yes, I know it well," replied the major; "it's over the glacis, about a mile outside the barrier."

"Just so; and there's a pleasant walk across the glacis to the gate. As Piccotin and I set out together on our way to the town, the night was calm and mild: a soft moonlight shed a silvery tint over every object, and left the stately poplars to throw a still longer shadow on the smooth grass. For some time we walked along without speaking: the silence of the night, the fragrant air, the mellow light, were all soft and tranquillizing influences, and we each sank into his own reflections.

"When we reached the middle of the plain—you know the spot, I'm sure—there's a little bronze fountain, with four cedars round it"—The major nodded, and he resumed: "Piccotin came to a sudden halt, and seizing my hand in both of his, said—'François, canst thou guess what I'm thinking of?'

"I looked at him, and I looked around me, and after a few seconds' pause, I answered—'Yes, Piccotin, I know it, it is a lovely spot.'

"'Never was any thing like it!' cried he in a rapture; 'look at the turf, smooth as velvet, and yet soft to the foot; see the trees, how they fall back to give the light admittance; and there, that little fountain, if one felt thirsty—eh!—what say you?'

"'Agreed,' said I, 'grasping him by both hands; for this once—once only, Piccotin.'

"'Only once, François; a few passes, and no more.'

"'Just so—the first touch.'

"'Exactly—the first touch,' said he, as, taking off his cloak, and folding it neatly, he laid it on the grass.

"It was a strange thing, but in all our lives, from earliest boyhood up, we never had measured swords together, and though we were both 'Maitre d'armes,' we never crossed blades, even in jest. Often and often had our comrades pitted us against each other, and laid wagers on the result, but we never would consent to meet—I cannot say why. It was not fear—I know not how to account for it, but such was the fact.

"'What blade do you wear, François,' said he, approaching me, as I arranged my jacket and vest, with my cap, on the ground.

"'A Rouen steel,' said I: 'too limber for most men, but I am so accustomed to it, I prefer it.'

"'Ah! a pretty weapon, indeed,' said he, drawing it from the scabbard, and making one or two passes with it against an elder trunk. 'Was this the blade you had with you in Egypt?'

"'Yes, I have worn none other for eight years.'

"'Ah! *ma foi*, those Mamelukes—how I envy you, those Mamelukes,' he muttered to himself, as he walked back to his place.

"'Move a little—a very little to the left—there's a shadow from that tree—can you see me well?' said I.

"'Perfectly—are you ready? Well—*en garde!*'

"Piccotin's forte, I soon saw, lay in the long meditated attack, where each movement was part of an artfully devised series; and I perceived that he suffered his adversary to gain several trifling advantages, by

way of giving him a false confidence, biding his own time to pay off the scores. In this description of fence he was more than my equal. *My* strength was in the skirmishing passages, where most men lunge at random; then, no matter how confused the rally, I was as cool as in the salute.

"For some time I permitted him to play his game out; and certainly nothing could be more beautiful than his passes over the hilt. Twice he planted his point within an inch of my bosom; and nothing but a spring backwards would have saved me.

"At length, after a long-contested struggle, he made a feint within, and then without the guard, and succeeded in touching my sword-arm, above the wrist.

"'A touch, I believe,' said he.

"'A mere nothing,' said I; for although I felt the blood running down my sleeve, and oozing between my fingers, I was annoyed to think he had made the first hit.

"'Ah, François, these Mamelukes were not of the 'premiere force,' after all. I have only been jesting all this time—see here.' With that he closed on me, in a very different style from his former attack. Pushing and parrying with the rapidity of lightning, he evinced a skill in 'skirmish' I did not believe him possessed of. In this, however, I was his master, and in a few seconds gave him my point sharply, but not deeply, in the shoulder.

"Instead of dropping his weapon when he received mine, he returned the thrust. I parried it, and touched him again, a little lower down. He winced this time, and muttered something I could not catch. 'You shall have it now,' said he, aloud—'I owe you this—and this.' True to his word, he twice pierced me in the back, outside the guard. Encouraged by success, he again closed on me, while I, piqued by his last assault, advanced to meet him.

"Our tempers were both excited; but his far more than mine. The struggle was a severe one. Three several times his blade passed between my arm and my body; and, at last, after a desperate rally, he dropped on one knee, and gave me the point here, beneath the chest. Before he could extricate his blade, I plunged mine into his chest, and pushed till I heard the hilt come clink against his ribs. The blood spurted upwards, over my face and breast, as he fell backwards. I wiped it hurriedly from my eyes, and bent over him. He gave a shudder and a little faint moan, and all was still.

"You killed him?" cried out three or four of us together.

"*Ma foi!* Yes." The coup was mortal—he never stirred after.

"As for me," continued François, "I surrendered myself a prisoner to the officer on guard at the gate. I was tried ten days after by a military commission, and acquitted. My own evidence was my accusation, and my defence."

"*Ventre bleu*—had I been on the court-martial, you had not been here to tell the story," said the old major, as his face became almost purple with passion.

"Nonsense," said Tascher, jeeringly; "what signifies a Maitre d'armes the more, or the less."

"Monsieur will probably explain himself," said François, with one of his cold smiles of excessive deference.

"It is exactly what I mean to do, François."

"Come, sirs, none of this," broke in the major. "Lieutenant Tascher, you may not fancy being placed under an arrest, when the enemy is in the field. Master François, do you forget the sentence of a court-martial is hanging over your head, for an affair at Elchingen, where you insulted a young officer of the hussars?"

"In that case, I must be permitted to say that Maitre François conducted himself like a man of honour," said I.

"*Parbleu*—and got the worst of it besides," cried he, placing his hand on his hip. The tone of his voice, as he said this, and the grimace he made, restored the party once more to good humour, and we chatted away pleasantly till day was breaking.

As Tascher strolled along with me towards my quarters, I was rejoiced to discover that he had never heard of my name as being mixed up in the Chouan conspiracy; nor was he aware with how little reason he believed me to be favoured by fortune.

I received, however, all his congratulations, without any desire to undeceive him. Already had I learned the worldly lesson, that while friends cling closer in adversity, your mere acquaintance deems your popularity your greatest merit; and I at length perceived, that however ungenial, in many respects, the companionship, the life of isolation I led had rendered me suspected by others, and in a career, too, where frankness was considered the first of virtues.

I assented at once, with pleasure, to the prospect of our meeting frequently while in camp. My own regiment had joined Davoust's corps, and I was glad to have the society of some others of my own age, if only to wean myself from my habits of solitude. While I formed these plans for the future, I little anticipated what events were in store for me, nor how soon I should be thrown among scenes and people totally different from those with which I had ever mixed before.

"You mess with us, then, Burke—that's agreed," said Tascher; "They're excellent fellows, these cuirassiers of ours, and I know you'll like them."

With this promise we parted, hoping to meet on the morrow.

CHAPTER LI.

THE MILL ON THE HOLLITSCH ROAD.

At an early hour on the morning of the 4th, came orders for the "Garde à Cheval," to hold themselves in readiness, with two squadrons of the carabineers, on the road to Hollitsch; part of this force being under the command of General D'Auvergne. We found ourselves fully equipped and in waiting soon after eight o'clock. From the "tenue" and appearance of the troops, it was evident that no measure of active service was contemplated. Yet, if a review were intended, we could not guess why so small a force had been selected. As usual on such occasions, many conjectures were hazarded, and a hundred explanations passed current—one scarcely a whit better than the other—when at last we perceived a peloton of dragoons advancing towards us, at a brisk trot.

The word was passed, to close up, and draw swords—and scarcely was it obeyed, when the staff of the Emperor came up. They were all in the full blaze of their gala uniforms, brilliant with crosses and decorations. Napoleon alone wore the simple costume of the "chasseurs" of the "garde," with the decoration of the legion; but his proud look and his flashing eye, made him conspicuous above them all. He was mounted on his favourite charger, "Marengo," and seemed to enjoy the high spirit of the mettled animal, as he tossed his long mane about, and lashed his sides with his great silken tail.

As the cortége passed, we closed up the rear, and followed at a sharp pace, more than ever puzzled to divine what was going forward. After about two hours' riding, during which we never drew bridle, we saw a party of staff officers in front, who, saluting the Emperor, joined the cortége. At the same instant General D'Auvergne passed close beside me, and whispered in my ear—"Bernadotte has just come up, and been most coldly received." I wished to ask him, what was the object of the whole movement, but he was gone before I could do so. In less than a quarter of an hour afterwards, we left the high road, and entered upon a large plain, where the only object I could perceive was an old mill, ruined and dilapidated. Towards this the imperial staff rode forward, while the peloton in front wheeled about, and rode to the rear of our squadrons. The next moment we were halted, and drawn up in order of battle. While these movements were going forward, I remarked, that the Emperor had dismounted from his horse, and dismissed his staff, all save Marshal Berthier, who stood at a little distance from him. Several dismounted dragoons were employed in lighting two immense fires, a process which Napoleon appeared to watch with great interest for a second or two, and then taking out his

glass, he remained for several minutes intently surveying the great road to Hollitsch.

In this direction at once, every eye was turned, but nothing could we see. The road led through a wide open country for some miles, and at last disappeared in the recesses of a dark pine wood, that covered the horizon for miles on either side. Meanwhile Napoleon, with his hands clasped behind his back, walked hurriedly backwards and forwards, beside the blazing fires, stopping at intervals to look along the road, and then resuming his walk as before. He was not more than two hundred paces from where we stood, and I could mark well his gesture of impatience, as he closed his glass each time, after looking in vain towards Hollitsch.

"I say, Burke," whispered one of my brother officers beside me, "I should not fancy being the man who keeps him waiting in that fashion. Look at Berthier, how he keeps aloof; he knows that something is brewing."

"What can it all mean?" said I. "Who can he be expecting here?"

"They say now," whispered my companion, "that Davoust cannot hold the bridge of Göding, and must fall back before the Russian column; and that Napoleon has invited Alexander to a conference here, to gain time, to reinforce Davoust?"

"Exactly—but the Czar is too wily an enemy for that to succeed, and probably hence the delay, which appears to irritate him now."

The supposition, more plausible than most of those I heard before, was still contradicted by the account of the Emperor Alexander's retreat; and again was I at a loss to reconcile these discrepancies, when I beheld Napoleon, with his glass to his eye, motion with his hand for Berthier to come forward. I turned towards the road, and now could distinguish in the distance a dark object moving towards us. A few minutes after, the sun shone out, and I remarked the glitter of arms, stretching in a long line, while my companion, with the aid of a glass, called out—

"I see them plainly—they are lancers; the escort are Hungarians, and there's a calêche, with four horses, in front."

The Emperor stood motionless, his arms folded on his breast, and his head a little leaned forward, exactly as I have seen him represented in so many pictures and statues—his eyes were thrown downwards, and as he stirred the blazing wood with his foot, one could easily perceive how intensely his mind was occupied with deep thought. The clattering sound of cavalry now turned my attention to another quarter, and I saw exactly in front of us, and about five hundred paces off, a regiment of Hungarian hussars and some squadrons of Hulans, drawn up. I had little time to mark their gorgeous equipment and splendid uniform, for already the calêche had drawn up at the road side, and Prince John, of Lichtenstein, descending, took off his chapeau, and offered his arm, to assist another to alight. Slowly and, as it seemed, with effort, a tall thin figure, in the white uniform of the Austrian guard, stepped from the carriage to the ground. The same instant the officers of the staff fell back, and I saw Napoleon advance, with open arms, to embrace

him. The Austrian Emperor, for it was Francis himself, seemed scarcely able to control the emotion he felt at this moment; and we could see that his head rested for several seconds on Napoleon's shoulder—and, what a moment must that have been! How deeply must the pride of the descendant of the Cæsars have felt the humiliation, which made him thus, a suppliant before one he deemed a mere Corsican adventurer. What a pang it must have cost his haughty spirit, as he uttered the words, "Mon frere!"

As they walked side by side towards the plateau, where the fires were lighted, it was easy to mark that Napoleon was the speaker, while Francis merely bowed from time to time, or made a gesture of seeming assent.

As the Emperor arrived at the place of conference, we fell back some fifty yards, and although the air was still and frosty, and the silence was perfect around, we could not catch a word on either side. After about an hour the conversation appeared to assume a tone of gaiety and good-humour, and we could hear the sovereigns laughing repeatedly.

The conference lasted for above two hours, when once more the Emperors embraced, and, as we thought, with more cordiality, and separated. The Emperor of Austria returning, accompanied by Prince Lichtenstein, while Napoleon stood for some minutes beside the fire, as if musing, and then, beckoning his staff to follow, he walked towards the high road.

Scarcely had the Austrian Emperor reached his carriage, when Savary, bare-headed and breathless, stood beside the door of it. He was the bearer of a message from Napoleon. The next moment the calêche started, accompanied by Savary, who with a single aide-de-camp took the road towards the Austrian head-quarters.

As Napoleon was about to mount his horse, I saw General D'Auvergne move forward towards him. A few words passed between them, and then the general riding up to where I stood, said, "Burke, you are to remain here, and if any orders arrive from General Savary, hasten with them to the head-quarters of his Majesty. In twelve hours you will be relieved." So saying, he galloped back to the imperial staff, and soon after the squadrons defiled into the road, the cortége dashed forward, and all that remained of that memorable scene was the dying embers of the fires, beside which the fate of Europe was decided.

The old mill of Hollitsch had been deserted, when the Austrian and Russian columns took up their position before Austerlitz. The miller and his household fled at the first news of the advance, and had not dared to return. It was a solitary spot at best—a wild heath, without shelter of any kind, stretched away for miles on all sides—but now, in its utter loneliness, it was the most miserable-looking place can be conceived. While, therefore, I contented myself with the hope that my stay there might not be long, I resolved to do what I could to render my quarters more comfortable. My first care was my horse, which I picquetted in the kitchen, where I was happy to find an abundant supply of firewood; my next was to explore the remainder of the

concern, in which I discovered traces of its having been already occupied by the allied troops—rude caricatures of the French army, in full "*deroute*," before terrible-looking dragoons, in Austrian and Russian uniforms, ornamented the walls in many parts; whole columns of French prisoners were depicted begging their lives from a single Austrian grenadier: and one figure, which, it could easily be discovered, was intended for Napoleon himself, was about to be hanged upon a tree, to the very marked satisfaction, as it would seem, of a group of Russian officers, who stood by, laughing. It is easy to smile at the ridiculé of which fortune has thwarted the application—and so I amused myself a good while by contemplating these grotesque frescoes; but a more welcome sight still awaited me, in a small chamber at the top of the building, where, in large letters, written with chalk on the door, I read, "Rittmeister von Oxenhausen's quarters"—here, to my exceeding delight, I discovered a neatly furnished chamber, with a bed, sofa, and, better still, a table—on which the remains of the Rittmeister's supper yet stood: a goodly ham, the greater part of a capon, a loaf of wheaten bread, and an earthenware crock, with a lid of brass, containing about two bottles of Austrian red wine. This was a most agreeable surprise to me—a pleasant exchange for the meagre meal of bread and cheese I had but time to procure from a sergeant of my troop, at parting. It need not be supposed that I hesitated long about becoming the Rittmeister's successor—and so, I drew the chair to the table, and the table nearer to the fire—for, singularly enough, the embers of a wood fire still slumbered on the hearth. Having taken the keen edge off an appetite, the cold air had whetted to the sharpest, I began an inspection of my quarters—first having replenished the fire with some logs of wood.

The chamber was an octagon, with five windows in as many of the faces—a fire-place and two doors occupying the other three. One of the doors, that by which I entered, opened from the stairs—the other led into a granary, or something of that nature—at least, so I conjectured, from a heap of sacks which littered the floor, and filled one corner completely. As I could not discover any corn, I resolved on sharing my loaf with my horse, a meal every campaigning steed is well accustomed to make; and now, returning to my little chamber, I resumed my supper with all the satisfaction of one who felt that he had made his rounds of duty, and might enjoy repose.

As I knew the Chateau de Hollitsch, where the Emperor Francis held his quarters, was some six leagues distant, I guessed that General Savary was not likely to return from his mission before morning at very soonest; and so it behoved me to make my arrangements for passing the night where I was. Having then looked to my horse, for whose bedding I made free with some dozen of the corn-sacks in the granary, I brought up to my own quarters a supply of wood; and having fastened the door, and secured the windows as well as I was able, I lit my meerschaum, and lay down before the fire in as happy a frame of mind as need be. Indeed I began to fancy that fortune had done tormenting, and was now about to treat me more kindly. The notice

of the Emperor had relieved my heart of a load, which never ceased to press on it, and I could not help feeling that a fairer prospect was opening before me. It is true, time and misfortune had both blunted the ardour of enthusiasm with which I started in life—the daring aspirations after liberty—the high-souled desire for personal distinction, had subsided into calmer hopes and less ambitious yearnings. Young as I yet was, I experienced in myself that change of sentiment and feeling which comes upon other men later on in life, and I was gradually reconciling myself to that sense of duty which teaches a man well to play his part, in whatever station he may be called to act, rather than indulge in those overweening wishes for pre-eminence, which in their accomplishment are so often disappointing, and in their failure a source of regret and unhappiness. These feelings were impressed on me, more by the force of events than by any process of my own reasoning. The career in which I first started as a boy, had led to nothing but misfortune. The affection I conceived for one—the only one I ever loved—was destined equally to end unhappily. The passion for liberty, in which all my first aspirations were centred, had met the rude shocks, which my own convictions suggested; and I now perceived that I must begin life anew, endeavouring to forget the influences, whose shadows darkened my early days, and carve out my destiny in a very different path from what I once intended.

These were my last waking thoughts, as my head sank on my arm, and I fell into a deep sleep. The falling of a log from the fire awoke me suddenly. I rubbed my eyes, and for a second or two could not remember where I was. At length I became clearer in mind, and, looking at my watch, perceived it was but two o'clock. As the flame of the replenished fire threw its light through the room, I remarked that the door into the granary stood ajar. This struck me as strange. I thought I could remember shutting it before I went to sleep. Yes; I recollected perfectly placing a chair against it as the latch was bad, and a draught of cold air came in that way; and now the chair was pushed back into the room, and the door lay open. A vague feeling, half suspicion, half curiosity, kept me thinking of the circumstance, when, by chance—the merest chance—my eyes fell upon the table, where I had left my sabre and my pistols. What was my amazement to find that one of the latter—that which lay nearest the door—was missing? In an instant I was on my feet. Nothing can combat drowsiness like the sense of fear; and I became perfectly awake in a moment. Examining the room with caution, I found every thing in the same state as I had left it, save the door and the missing pistol. The granary alone, then, could be the shelter of the invader, whoever he might be. What was to be done? I was totally unprovided with light, save what the fire afforded, and even were it otherwise, I should expose myself by carrying one, long before I could hope to detect a concealed enemy. The best plan I could hit upon seemed to secure the door once more; and then placing myself in such a position as not to be commanded by it again, to wait for morning patiently. This, then, I did at once; and having examined my remaining pistol, and

found the charge and priming all safe, I drew my sabre, and sat down between the door and the window, but so that it should open against me.

Few sensations are more acutely painful than the exercise of the hearing, when pushed to intensity. The unceasing effort to catch the slightest sound, soon becomes fatigue; and as the organ grows weary, the mental anxiety grows more acute, and then begins a struggle between the failing sense and the excited brain. The spectral images of the eye, in fever, are not one half so terrible as the strange discordant tones that jar upon the tympanum in such a state as this. Each inanimate object seems endowed with its own power of voice, and whispering noises come stealing through the dead silence of midnight.

"In this state of almost frenzied anxiety I sat long—my eyes turned towards the door, which oftentimes I fancied I could perceive to move. At length the thought occurred to me, that by affecting sleep, if any one lay concealed within, whose object was to enter the room, this would probably induce him.

I had not long to wait for the success of my scheme. The long-drawn breathing of my seeming slumber was not continued for more than a few minutes, when I saw the door slowly, almost imperceptibly, move. At first it stirred inch by inch—then gradually it opened wider and wider till it met the obstacle of the chair. There now came a pause of several seconds, during which it demanded all my efforts to sustain my part—the throbbing at my throat and temples increasing almost beyond endurance, and the impulse to dash forward, and flinging wide the door, confront my enemy, being nearly too much for my resistance. Again it moved noiselessly as before—and then a hand stole out, and, laying hold of the chair, pushed it slowly backwards. The grey light of the breaking day fell upon the spot, and I could see that the cuff of the coat was laced with gold. This time my anxiety became intense. Another second or two and I should be engaged in the conflict—I knew not against how many. I clutched my sabre more fairly in my grasp, as my breathing grew thicker and shorter. The chair still continued to slide silently into the room, and already the arm of the man within protruded. Now was the moment, or never, and, with a spring, I threw myself on it, and, pinioning the wrist in my hands, held it down upon the floor while I opposed my weight against the door. Quick as lightning the other hand appeared, armed with a pistol, and I had but a moment to crouch my head nearly to the ground, when a bullet whizzed past and smashed through the window behind me—while, with a crash, the frail door gave way to a strong push, and a man sprang fiercely forward to seize me by the throat. Jumping backward I recovered my feet, but before I could raise my pistol he made a spring at me, and we both rolled together on the floor. On the pistol both our hands met, and the struggle was for the weapon. Twice was it pointed at my heart; but my hand held the lock, and not all his efforts could unclasp it. At last I freed my right hand from the sword-knot of my sabre, and, striking him with my clenched knuckles on the forehead, threw him back. His grasp

relaxed at the instant, and I wrenched the pistol from his fingers, and placed the muzzle against his chest. Another second and he would have rolled a corpse before me, when, to my horror and amazement, I saw in my antagonist my once friend, Henri de Beauvais. I flung the weapon from me, as I cried out, " De Beauvais forgive me—forgive me." A deathly paleness came over his features; his eyes grew glazed and filmy, and with a low groan, he fell fainting on the floor. I bathed his temples with water; I moistened his pale lips; I rubbed his clammy fingers; but it was long before he rallied, and when he did come to himself, and looked up, he closed his eyes again, as though the sight of me was worse than death itself.

" Come, Henri," said I, " a cup of wine, my friend! and you will be better presently. Thank God this has not ended as it might." He raised his eyes towards me, but with a look of proud and unforgiving sternness, while he uttered not a word.

" It is unfair to blame me, De Beauvais, for this," said I. " Once more I say forgive me.'

His lips moved, and some sounds came forth, but I could not hear the words.

" There, there," cried I, " it's past and over now. Here is my hand."

" You struck me with that hand," said he in a deep, distinct voice, as though every word came from the very bottom of his chest.

" And if I did, Henri, my own life was on the blow."

" Oh that you had taken mine with it!" said he, with a bitterness I can never forget. " I am the first of my name that ever received a blow. Would I were to be the last!"

" You forget, De Beauvais ——"

" No, sir, I forget nothing. Be assured, too, I never shall forget this night. With any other than yourself I should not despair of that atonement for an injury, which alone can wash out such a stain; but *you*—I know you well—*you* will not give me this."

" You are right, Beauvais—I will not," said I calmly. " Sorry am I that even an accident should have brought us into collision. It is a mischance I feel deeply, and shall for many a day."

" And I, sir," cried he, as starting up his eyes flashed with passion, and his cheek grew scarlet—" and I, sir—what are to be my feelings? Think you that because I am an exile and an outcast—forced by misfortune to wear the livery of one who is not my rightful sovereign, that my sense of personal honour is the less, and that the mark of an insult is not as bloodstained on my conscience as ever it was?"

" Nothing but passion could blind you to the fact, that there can be no insult where no intention could exist."

" Spare me your casuistry, sir," replied he, with an insolent wave of his hand, while he sank into a chair, and laid his head upon the table.

For an instant, my temper, provoked beyond endurance, was about to give way, when I perceived that a handkerchief was bound tightly around his leg above the knee, where a great stain of blood marked his

trouser. The thought of his being wounded banished every particle of resentment, and laying my hand on his shoulder, I said—

"De Beauvais, I know not one but yourself to whom I would three times say, forgive me; but we were friends once, when we were both happier! For the sake of him who is no more—poor Charles de Meudon——"

"A traitor, sir—a base traitor to the king of his fathers."

"This I will not endure," said I passionately; "No one shall dare—"

"Dare!"

"Ay, dare, sir—such was the word. To asperse the memory of one like him, is to dare that, which no man can with truth and honour."

"Come, sir, I'm ready," said Beauvais, rising, and pointing to the door—"*Sortons!*" No one who has not heard that one word pronounced by the lips of a Frenchman, can conceive how much of savage enmity and deadly purpose it implies. It is the challenge, which, if unaccepted, stamps cowardice for ever on the man who declines it; from that hour, all equality ceases between those whom a combat had placed on the same footing.

"*Sortons!*" The word rung in my ears, and tingled through my very heart, while a host of different impulses swayed me. Shame, sorrow, wounded pride, all struggling for the mastery; but, above them all, a better and a higher spirit—the firm resolve, come what would, to suffer no provocation Beauvais could offer, to make me stand opposite him as an enemy.

"What am I to think, sir?" said he, with a voice scarcely articulate from passion. "What am I to think of your hesitation—or why do you stand inactive here? Is it that you are meditating what new insult can be added to those you have heaped on me?"

"No, sir," I replied firmly; "so far from thinking of offence, I am but too, too sorry for the words I have already spoken. I should have remembered, and remembering, should have made allowance for the strength of partisan feelings, which have their origin in a noble but as I believe, a mistaken source."

"Indeed!" interrupted he, in mockery; "is it then come to this? Am I, a Frenchman born, to be lectured on my loyalty and allegiance by a foreign mercenary!"

"Not even that taunt, Beauvais, shall avail you any thing; I am firm in my resolve."

"*Par Dieu!* then," cried he with savage energy, "there remains but this."—As he spoke, he leaped from his chair, and sprung towards me. In so doing, however, his knee struck the table, and with a groan of agony he reeled back and fell upon the floor, while from his re-opened wound a torrent of blood gushed out and deluged the room.

For a second or two he motioned me away with his hand; but as his weakness increased, he lay passive and unresisting, and suffered me to arrest the bleeding by such means as I was able to practise.

It was a long time ere I could stanch the gaping orifice, which had

been inflicted by a sabre, and cut clean through the high boot, and deep into the thigh. Fortunately for his recovery, he had himself succeeded in getting off the boot before, and the wound lay open to my surgical skill. Lifting him cautiously in my arms, I laid him on the bed, and moistened his lips with a little wine. Still the debility continued; no signs of returning strength were there, but his features, pale and fallen, were glazed with a cold sweat that hung in heavy drops upon his brow and forehead. Never was agony like mine. I saw his life was ebbing fast; the respiration was growing fainter and more irregular; his pulse could scarce be felt; yet dare I not leave my post to seek for assistance. A hundred thoughts whirled through my puzzled brain, and, among the rest, the self-accusing one, that I was the cause of his death. Yes, thought I, better far to have stood before his pistol, at all the hazard of my life, than see him thus.

In an instant all his angry speeches and his insulting gestures were forgotten. He looked so like what I once knew him, that my mind was wandering back again to former scenes and times, and all resentment was lost in the flood of memory.

Poor fellow—what a sad destiny was his; fighting against the arms of his country—a mourner over the triumphs of his native land. Alien that I was, this pang at least was spared me. As these thoughts crossed my mind, I felt him press my hand. Overjoyed, I knelt down and whispered some words in his ear.

"No, no," muttered he in a low plaintive tone; "not all lost—not all; La Vendée yet remains." He was dreaming.

The Locomotive Chair.

CHAPTER LII.

THE ARMISTICE.

As I sat thus watching with steadfast gaze the features of the sleeping man, I heard the clattering of a horse's hoofs on the pavement beneath, and the next moment the heavy step of some one ascending the stairs. Suddenly the door was flung wide open, and an officer in the handsome uniform of the Austrian Imperial Guard, entered.

"Excuse this scant ceremony, Monsieur," said he, bowing with much courtesy, "but I almost despaired of finding you out. I come from Hollitsch with despatches for your Emperor; they are most pressing, as I believe this note will inform you.

While I threw my eye over the few lines addressed by General Savary to the officer in waiting at Hollitsch, and commanding the utmost speed in forwarding the despatch that accompanied them, the officer drew near the bed where De Beauvais was lying.

"*Mere de ciel*, it is the count!" cried he, starting back with astonishment.

"Yes," said I, interrupting him; "I found him here on my arrival; he is badly wounded, and should be removed at once. How can this be done?"

"Easily. I'll despatch my orderly at once to Hollitsch, and remain here till he return."

"But if our troops advance?"

"No, no; we're all safe on that score—the armistice is signed. The very despatch in your hands, I believe, concludes the treaty."

This warned me that I was delaying too long the important duty entrusted to me, and with a hurried entreaty to the Austrian not to leave De Beauvais, I hastened down the stairs, and proceeded to saddle for the road.

"One word, Monsieur," said the officer, as I was in the act of mounting. "May I ask the name of him to whom my brother-officers owe the life of a comrade much beloved?"

"My name is Burke—and yours, Monsieur?"

"Berghausen, chef d'escadron of the Imperial Guard. If ever you should come to Vienna"—but I lost the words that followed, as, spurring my horse to a gallop, I set out towards the head-quarters of the Emperor.

As I rode forward, my eyes were ever anxiously bent in the direction of our camp, not knowing at what moment I might see the advance of a column along the road, and dreading lest, before the despatches should reach the Emperor's house, the advanced vedettes should capture the little party at Hollitsch. At no period of his career was Napoleon

more incensed against the adherents of the Bourbons; and if De Beauvais should fall into his hands, I was well aware that nothing could save him. The Emperor always connected in his mind, and with good reason too, the machinations of the royalists with the plans of the English government. He knew that the land which afforded the asylum to their king, was the refuge of the others also; and many of the heaviest denunciations against the "perfide Albion," had no other source than the dread of which he could never divest himself, that the legitimate monarch would one day be restored to France.

While such were Napoleon's feelings, the death of the Duc D'Enghien had heightened the hatred of the Bourbonists to a pitch little short of madness. My own unhappy experience made me more than ever fearful of being in any way implicated with the members of this party, and I rode on, as though life itself depended on my reaching the imperial head-quarters some few minutes earlier.

As I approached the camp, I was overjoyed to find that no movement was in contemplation. The men were engaged in cleaning their arms and accoutrements, restoring the broken wagons and gun-carriages, and repairing, as far as might be, the disorders of the day of battle. The officers stood in groups here and there, chatting at their ease, while the only men under arms were the new conscripts just arrived from France—a force of some thousands—brought by forced marches from the banks of the Rhine.

The crowd of officers near the head quarters of the Emperor, pressed closely about me as I descended from my horse, eager to learn what information I brought from Hollitsch, for they were not aware that I had been stationed nearly half-way on the road.

"Well, Burke," said General D'Auvergne, as he drew his arm within mine, "your coming has been anxiously looked for this morning. I trust the despatches you carry may, if not contradict, at least, explain what has occurred."

"Is this the officer from Hollitsch?" said the aide-de-camp of the Emperor, coming hurriedly forward. "The despatch, sir," cried he, and the next moment hastened to the little hut, which Napoleon occupied as his bivouac. The only other person in the open space where I stood, was an officer of the lancers, whose splashed and travel-stained dress seemed to say he had been employed like myself.

"I fancy, Monsieur," said he bowing, "that you have had a sharp ride also this morning. I have just arrived from Göding—four leagues—in less than an hour, and, with all that, too late, I believe, to remedy what has occurred."

"What then has happened?"

"Davoust has been tricked into an armistice, and suffered the Russians to pass the bridge. The Emperor Alexander has taken advantage of the negociations with Austria, and got his army clear through—so, at least, it would seem—I saw Napoleon tear the despatch into fragments, and stamp his foot upon them—but here he comes."

The words were scarcely spoken when the Emperor came rapidly up,

followed by his staff. He wore a grey surtout, trimmed with dark fur, and had his hands clasped within the cuffs of the coat. His face was pale as death, and, save a slight contraction of his brows, there was nothing to show any appearance of displeasure.

"Who brought the despatch from Göding?"

"I did, sire," said the officer.

"How are the roads, sir?"

"Much cut up, and in one place a torrent has carried away part of a bridge."

"I knew it. I knew it," said he bitterly; "it is too late. Duroc," cried he, while the words seemed to come forth with a hissing sound, "did I not tell you, '*Grattez le Russe, et vous trouverez le Tartare!*'"

The words were graven in my memory from that hour; even yet, I can recall the very accents as when I heard them.

"And you, sir," said he, turning suddenly towards me, "you came from General Savary. Return to him with this letter. Have you written, Duroc? Well, you'll deliver this to General Savary at Hollitsch—he may require you to proceed to Göding—are you well mounted?"

"Yes, sire."

"Come, then, sir; I made you a captain yesterday; let us see if you can win your spurs to-day."

From the time I received the despatch, to that in which I was in the saddle, not more than five minutes elapsed. The idea of being chosen by the Emperor himself for a service, was a proud one, and I resolved to acquit myself with credit. With what concert does one's heart beat to the free stride of a mettled charger; how does each bold plunge warm the blood and stir up the spirits; and as, careering free over hill and valley, we pass in our flight the clouds that drift above, how does the sense of freedom, realized as it is, impart a feeling of ecstasy to our minds—our thoughts, revelling on the wayward liberty our course suggests, rise free and untrammelled from the doubts and cares of every-day life. Onward I went, and soon the old mill came in sight, rearing its ruined head amid the black desolation of the plain. I could not resist the impulse to see what had become of Beauvais, and leading my horse into the kitchen, I hastened up the stairs, and through the rooms; but all were deserted; the little chamber lay open—the granary too—but no one was there.

With a mind relieved, in a great measure, from anxiety, I remounted and continued my way; and soon entered the dark woods of Hollitsch. The chateau and demesne of Hollitsch were a private estate of the Emperor Francis, and once formed a favourite resort of Joseph the Second, in his hunting excursions. The chateau itself was a large irregular mass of building; but still, with all its incongruity of architecture, not devoid of picturesque effect; and the older portion of it was even handsome. While I stood in front of a long terrace, on which several windows opened from a gallery that ran along one side of the chateau, I was somewhat surprised that no guard, was to be seen, nor even a single sentinel on duty. I dismounted, and leading

my horse, appoached the avenue that led up between a double range of statues to the door. An old man, dressed in the slouched hat and light blue jacket of a Bohemian peasant, was busily engaged in wrapping matting around some shrubs, to protect them from the frost. A little boy—his second-self in costume—stood beside him, with his pruning-knife, and stared at me with a kind of stupid wonder as I approached. With some difficulty I made out from the old man, that the Emperor occupied a smaller building called the Kaiser-Lust, about half a league distant in the forest, having given strict orders that no one was to approach the chateau nor its immediate grounds. It was his favourite retreat, and, perhaps, he did not wish it should be associated in his mind with a period of such misfortune. The old peasant continued his occupation while he spoke, never lifting his head from his work, and seeming all absorbed in the necessity of what he was engaged in. As I inquired the nearest road to the imperial quarters, he employed me to assist him for a moment in his task, by holding one end of the matting, with which he was now about to envelope a marble statue of Maria Theresa.

I could not refuse a request so naturally proffered, and while I did so, a little wicket opened at a short distance off, and a tall man, in a grey surtout and a plain cocked-hat without a feather, came forward; he held a riding-whip in his hand, and seemed, from his splashed equipment, to have just descended from the saddle.

"Well, Fritz," said he, "I hope the frost has done us no mischief?"

The old gardener turned round at the words, and, touching his hat respectfully, continued his work, while he replied, "No, Mein Herr, it was but a white hoar, and every thing has escaped well."

"And whom have you got here for an assistant, may I ask?" said he, pointing to me, whom he now saw for the first time. As the question was asked in German, although I understood it, I left the reply to the gardener.

"God knows," said the old fellow in a tone of easy indifference; "I think he must be a soldier of some sort."

The other smiled at the remark, and turning towards me, said in French—"You are, perhaps, unaware, sir, being a stranger, that it is the Emperor of Austria's desire, this chateau should not be intruded on."

"My offending, sir," interrupted I, "was purely accidental. I am the bearer of despatches for General Savary; and, having stopped to inquire from this honest man——"

"The General has taken his departure for Göding," he broke in, without paying further attention to my explanation.

"For Göding; and may I ask, what distance that may be?"

"Scarcely a league, if you can hit upon the right path; the road lies yonder, where you see that dead fir-tree."

"I thank you, sir," said I, touching my hat; "and must now ask my friend here to release me—my orders are of moment."

"You may find some difficulty in the wood, after all," said he; "I'll send my groom part of the way with you."

Before I could proffer my thanks suitably for such an unexpected politeness, he had disappeared in the garden through which he entered a few minutes before.

"I say, my worthy friend, tell me the name of that gentleman—he's one of the Emperor's staff, if I mistake not. I'm certain I've seen the face before."

"If you had," said the old fellow, laughing, "you could scarcely forget him—old Frantzerl is just the same these twenty years."

"Whom did you say?"

Before he could reply, the other was at my side.

"Now, sir," said he, "he will conduct you to the high road. I wish you a good journey."

These words were uttered in a tone somewhat more haughty than his previous ones; and contenting myself with a civil acknowledgment of his attention, I bowed and returned to my horse, which the little peasant child had been holding.

"This way, Monsieur," said the groom, who, dressed in a plain dark brown livery, was mounted on a horse of great size and symmetry.

As he spoke, he dashed forward at a gallop, which all my efforts could not succeed in overtaking. In less than ten minutes, the man halted, and waiting till I came up, he pointed to a gentle acclivity before me, across which the high road led.

"There lies the road, sir; continue your speed, and in twenty minutes you reach Göding."

"One word," said I, drawing forth my purse as I spoke; "one word. Tell me, who is your master?"

The groom smiled, slightly touched his hat, and, without uttering a word, wheeled round his horse, and, before I could repeat my question, was far on his road back to the chateau.

Before me lay the river, and the little bridge of Göding, across which now the Russian columns were marching in rapid but compact order. Their cavalry had nearly all passed, and was drawn with some field-guns along the bank; while, at half-cannon-shot distance, the corps of Davoust were drawn up in order of battle, and standing spectators of the scene. On an eminence of the field, a splendid staff were assembled, accompanied by a troop of Tartar horsemen, whose gay colours, and strange equipment were a remarkable feature of the picture; and here I learned, that the Emperor Alexander then was, accompanied by General Savary.

As I drew near, my French uniform caught the eye of the latter, and he cantered forward to meet me. Tearing open the despatch with eagerness, he rapidly perused the few lines it contained; then seizing me by the arm, in his strong grasp he exclaimed—

"Look yonder, sir; you see their columns extending to Serritz. Go back and tell his Majesty; but no—my own mission here is ended. You may return to Austerlitz."

So saying he rode back to the group around Emperor, where I saw him a few minutes after addressing his majesty, and then, after a formal leave-taking, turned his horse's head and set out towards Brunn.

As I retraced my steps towards the camp, I began to muse over the events which had just occurred; and even by the imperfect glimpses I could catch of the negociations, could perceive that the Czar had out-manœuvred Napoleon. It is true, I was not aware by what means the success had been obtained, nor was it for many a year after that I became cognizant of the few autograph lines by which Alexander induced Davoust to suspend his operations, under the pretence that the Austrian armistice included the Russian army. It was an unworthy act, and ill-befitting one, whose high personal courage and chivalrous bearing gave promise of better things.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE "COMPAGNIE D'ELITE."

WITH whatever triumphant feelings the Emperor Napoleon may have witnessed the glorious termination of this brief campaign, to the young officers of the army it brought any thing rather than satisfaction; and the news of the armistice was received in the camp with gloom and discontent.

The brilliant action at Elchingen, and the great victory at Austerlitz, were hailed as a glorious presage of future successes, for which the high-sounding phrases of a bulletin were deemed but a poor requital. A great proportion of the army were new levies, who had not seen service, and felt proportionably desirous for opportunities of distinction; and to them the promise of a triumphant return to France was a miserable exchange for those battle-fields on which they dreamed they should win honour and fame, and from whence they hoped to date their rise of fortune. Little did we guess, that while words of peace and avowals of moderation were on his lips, Napoleon was at that very moment meditating on the opening of that great campaign, which, beginning at Jena, was to end in the most bloody and long-sustained of all his wars.

Nothing, however, was now talked of but the fêtes which awaited us on our return to Paris, while liberal grants of money were made to all the wounded; and no effort was spared which should mark that feeling of the Emperor's, which so conspicuously opened his bulletin, in the emphatic words—"Soldiers, I am content with you."

Napoleon well understood, and indeed appeared to have anticipated, the disappointment the army would experience, at this sudden cessation of hostilities, and endeavoured now to divert the torrent of their enthusiasm into another and a safer channel. The bulk of the army were

cantoned around Brunn and Olmutz; some picked regiments were recalled to Vienna, where the Emperor was soon expected to establish his head-quarters, while many of those who had suffered most severely from forced marches and fatigues, were formed into corps of escort, to accompany the Russian prisoners—sixteen thousand in number—on their way to France; and lastly, a "*Compagnie d'elite*," as it was called, was selected to carry to the senate the glorious spoils of victory—forty-five standards, taken on the field of Austerlitz, and now destined to grace the Palace of the Luxembourg.

I had scarcely seated myself to the humble supper of my bivouac, when an orderly came to command me to General d'Auvergne's quarters. The little sitting-room he occupied, in a peasant hut, was so filled with officers, that it was some time before I could approach him; and my impatience was not lessened, by more than once hearing my name mentioned aloud, a circumstance not a little trying to a young man in the presence of his superiors in station.

"But here he is," said the General, beckoning to me to come forward. "Burke, his Majesty has most graciously permitted me to include your name in the *Compagnie d'elite*, a testimony of his satisfaction you've every reason to be proud of; and just at the moment I was about to communicate the fact to you, I have received a message from Marshal Murat, requesting that I may permit you to serve on his own staff——"

"Yes, Captain," said an officer in the uniform of a colonel—it was the first time I had been addressed by my new title, and I cannot express what a thrill of pleasure the word gave me—"Marshal Murat witnessed with pleasure the alacrity and steadiness of your conduct on the 2nd, and has sent me with an offer which I fancy few officers would not deem a flattering one."

"Unquestionably it is, Colonel," said General d'Auvergne. "Nay, more I will say, I regard it as the making of a young man's fortune, thus early in his career to have attracted such high notice; but I must be passive here—Captain Burke shall decide for himself."

"In that case, sir, I shall cause you but little delay, if you will still permit me to serve on your own staff."

"But stay, my boy, do not be rash in this affair; I will not insult your better feeling, by dwelling on the little power I possess, and the very great enjoyed by Marshal Murat, of serving your interests; but I must say, that with him, and on his personal staff, opportunities of distinction——"

"And here, I must interpose," said the Colonel, smiling courteously: "with no officer of this army can a man expect to see service, in its boldest and most heroic colours, rather than with General d'Auvergne."

"I know it—I feel it, too, and with him, if he will allow me——"

"Enough, my dear boy," said the old man, grasping my hand in his. "Colonel, you must explain to the marshal how stands this matter; and he is too kind of heart, and too noble of soul, to think the worse of any of us for our obstinacy; and now, my young friend, make your arrangements to join the *compagnie d'elite*—they march to-morrow

afternoon, and this is a service you cannot decline. Leave me to make your acknowledgments to the Marshal, and lose no more time here."

Short as had been my absence from my quarters, when I re-entered, I descried Tascher seated at the table, and busily employed in discussing the last fragments of my supper. "You see, my dear friend," said he, speaking with his mouth full, "you see what it is to have a '*salmi*' for supper. I sat eating a confounded mess of black bread, and blacker veal, for fifteen minutes, when the breeze brought me the odour of your delicious 'plat.' It was in vain I summoned all my virtue to resist it; if there ever was a dish made to seduce a subaltern on service, it is this; but I say, won't you eat something?"

"I fear not," said I, half angrily.

"And why?" replied he. "See what a capital wing that is—a little bare, to be sure—and there's the back of a pigeon. *Ma foi!*—you've no reason to complain. I say—is it true you are named among the '*Compagnie d'elite?*' "

I nodded, and eat on.

"*Diable!* There never was such fortune. What a glorious exchange for this confounded swamp, with its everlasting drill, from morning to night, shivering under arms for four hours, and shaking with the ague the rest of the day after—marching, mid-leg in water, half frozen, and trying quick movements, when the very blood is in icicles; and then you'll be enjoying Paris—delightful Paris—dining at, the "Rocher," supping at, the "Cadran," lounging into the salons, at the very time we shall be hiding ourselves amidst the straw of our bivouacs. I go mad to think of it; and what's worse than all—there you sit, as little elated, as if the whole thing were only the most natural in the world. I believe, on my word, you'd not condescend to be surprised, if you were gazetted Marèchal de France, in to-morrow's gazette."

"When I can bear, without testifying too much astonishment, to see my supper eaten by the man who does nothing but rate me into the bargain, perhaps I may plume myself on some equanimity of temper."

"Confound your equanimity. It's very easy to be satisfied, when one has every thing his own way."

"And so, Tascher, you deem me such a fortunate fellow."

"That I do," replied he, quickly: "you have had more good luck, and made less of it, than any one I ever knew. What a career you had before you when we met first. There was that pretty girl at the Tuileries, quite ready to fall in love with you. I know it, because she rather took an air of coldness with me. Well, you let her be carried off by an old general, with a white head and a queue—unquestionably a bit of pique on her part. Then, somehow or other, you contrived to pink the best swordsman of the army, little François there; and I never heard that the circumstance gained you a single conquest."

"Quite true, my friend," said I, laughing, "I confess it all; and what is far worse—I acknowledge that until this moment I did not even know the advantages I was wilfully wasting."

"And even now," continued he, not minding my interruption—"even now, you are about to return to Paris, as one of the '*elite.*'

Well, I'll wager twenty Naps that the only civil speeches you'll hear, will be from some musty old senators at the Luxembourg. Oh, dear! if my amiable aunt, the Empress, would only induce my most benevolent uncle, the Emperor, to put me on that same list, depend upon it you'd hear of Lieutenant Tascher in the 'Faubourg St. Honoré.'"

"But you seem to forget," said I, half piqued at last by the impertinence of his tone, "that I have neither friends nor acquaintances—that although a Frenchman by service, I am not so by birth."

"And I—what am I?" interrupted he—"a Creole, come from heaven knows what far away place beyond seas—that there never was a man with more expensive tastes, and a smaller means to supply them—with worse prospects, and better connections;—in short, a kind of live antithesis; and yet, with all that, exchange places with me now, and see if, before a fortnight elapse, I have not more dinner invitations than any officer of the same grade within the Boulevards. Watch, if the prettiest girl at Paris is not at my side in the opera. But here comes your official appointment—I take it." As he said this, an orderly of the "Garde" delivered a sealed packet into my hands, which on opening, I discovered was a letter from General Duroc, wherein I read, "that it was the wish of his Majesty, Emperor, and King, that I, his well-beloved Thomas Burke, in conformity with certain instructions, to be afterwards made known to me, should proceed with the *Compagnie d'elite* to Paris, then and there——"

As I read thus far aloud, Tascher interrupted me, snatching the paper from my hands, and continued thus—"Then, and there, to mope, muse, and be *ennuyée*, until such time as active service may again recall him to the army. My dear Burke, I am really sorry for you—wars and campaigning may be, indeed they are, very fine things, but as the means, not the end. His majesty, my uncle—whom may heaven preserve, and soften his heart to his relations—loves them for their own sake; but we, you and I, for instance, what possible reason can we have for risking our bones, and getting our flesh mangled, save the hope of promotion—and to what end that same promotion, if not for a wider sphere of pleasure and enjoyment? Think what a career a colonel, at our age, would have in Paris."

"Come, Tascher, I will not believe you in all this. If there were not something higher to reward one for the fatigues and dangers of a campaign, than the mere sensual delights you allude to, I, for one, would soon doff the epaulettes."

"You are impracticable," said he, half angrily; "but it is as much from the isolation in which you have lived, as any conviction on the subject. You must let me introduce you to some relatives of mine in Paris, they will be delighted to know you—for, as one of the *Compagnié d'elite*, you might figure as a very respectable "*Lion*" for two, nay, three, entire evenings—and you will have the *entrée* to the pleasantest house in Paris—they receive every evening—and all the best people resort there. I only exact one condition.

"And that is——"

"You must not make love to Pauline. That you will fall in love

with her, yourself, is a fact I can't help—nor you either. But no advance on your part—promise me that."

"In such case, Tascher, it were best for all parties I should not know the lady. I have no fancy, believe me, for being smitten, whether I will or no."

"I see, Master Burke, there is a bit of impertinence in all this—you sneer at my warnings about '*la belle cousine*.' Now, I am determined you shall see her at least; besides, you must do me a service with the countess. I have had the bad luck to be for some time out of favour with my aunt Josephine—some trumpery debts of mine they made a work about at the Tuileries. Well, perhaps you could persuade Madame de Lacostellerie to take up my cause—she has great influence with the Empress, and can make her do what she pleases; and if I must confess it, it was this brought me over to your quarters to-night—and I eat your supper, just to pass away time till you came back again. You'll not refuse me."

"Certainly not; but reflect for a moment, Tascher, and you will see that no man was ever less intended for a diplomate. It is only a few minutes since you laughed at my solitary habits, and hermit propensities."

"I've thought of all that, Burke, and am not a whit discouraged—on the contrary, you are the more likely to think of my affairs, because you have none of your own—and I don't know any one but yourself I should fancy to meet Pauline frequently, and on terms of intimacy."

"This, at least, is not a compliment," said I, laughing.

He shrugged his shoulders, and threw up his eyebrows, with a French expression, as though to say, it can't be helped—and then continued—"And now remember, Burke, I count on you, get me out of this confounded place. I'd rather be back at Toulon again, if need be—and as I shall not see you again before you leave, farewell. I'll send the letter for the countess early to-morrow."

We shook hands warmly, and parted, he to return to his quarters, and I to sit down beside my fire, and muse over the events that had just occurred—and think of Tascher himself, whose character had never been so plainly exposed to me before.

If Beauvais, with his hot-headed impetuosity, his mad devotion to the cause of the Legitimists, was a type of the followers of the Bourbons—so, in all the easy indifference and quiet selfishness of his nature, was Tascher a specimen of another class of his countrymen; a class which, wrapped up in its own circle of egotistical enjoyments, believed Paris the only habitable spot of the whole globe. Without any striking traits of character, or any very decided vices, they led a life of pleasure and amusement, rendering every one, and every thing around them, so far as they were able, subservient to their own plans and wishes—and perfectly unconscious, the while, how glaring their selfishness had become—and how palpable, even to the least observant, was the self-indulgence they practised on every occasion. Without cleverness or tact enough to conceal their failings, they believed they imposed on others, because they imposed on themselves—just as the child deems himself unseen, when he closes his eyes.

Josephine's followers were, many of them, like this—and formed a striking contrast to the young men of the Napoleonite party, who, infatuated by the glorious successes of their chief, deemed the career of arms alone honourable. St. Cyr and the Polytechnique was the nursery of these; the principles instilled there, were perpetuated in after life—and however exaggerated their ideas of France and her destiny, their undoubted heroism and devotion, might well have palliated even heavier errors. It was in ruminating thus over the different characters of the few I had ever known intimately, that I came to think seriously on my own condition, which, for many a day before, I had rather avoided than sought to reflect on. I felt, as how many must have done, that the bond of a common country—the inborn patriotism of the native of the soil—is the great resource on which men fall back, when they devote themselves to the career of arms. That the alien's position, disguise it how he will, is that of the mere mercenary. How can he identify himself with interests, on which he is but half-informed; or feel attachment to a land, wherein he has neither hearth nor home? In the very glory he wins, he can scarce participate. In a word, his is a false position—which no events, nor accidents of fortune, can turn to good account—and he must rest satisfied with a life of isolation, and estrangement.

I felt how readily, if I had been a Frenchman born, I could have excused and palliated to my conscience many things which now were matter of reproach. Aggressive war had lost its horrors in the glory of enlarged dominion—the greatness of France, and the honour of her arms, had made me readily forget the miseries entailed on other nations by her lust of conquest. But I, the stranger, the alien, had no part in the inheritance of glory; and personal ambition, what means it, save to stand high amongst those we once looked up to as superiors? For me, there were no traditions of a childhood passed amid great names, revered and worshipped; no early teachings beside the paternal hearth of illustrious examples. And yet there was one, who, although lost to me for ever, before whose eyes I would gladly seem to hold a high place—yes! could I but think that she had not forgotten me, would hear my name with interest—or feel one throb of pleasure, if I were spoken of with honour—I asked no more.

"A letter, *Monsieur le Capitaine*," said my servant, as he deposited a package on my table. Supposing it was the epistle of which Tascher spoke, I paid but slight attention to it—when, by chance, I remarked it was in General D'Auvergne's hand-writing. I opened it at once, and read as follows:

"My dear Burke,

"No one ever set off for Paris without being troubled with commissions for his country friends, and you must not escape the ills of common humanity—happily for you, however, the debt is easily acquitted; I have neither undiscovered shades of silk to be matched, or impossible bargains to be effected. I shall simply beg of you to deliver with your own hand, the enclosed letter to its address

at the Tuileries—adding, if you think fit, the civil attentions of a visit.

"We shall both, in all likelihood, be much hurried when we meet to-morrow, for I also have received orders to march—so that I take the present opportunity to enclose you a check on Paris, for a trifle in advance of your pay—remembering too well, in my own aide-de-camp days, the dilatory habits of the war office, with new captains.

"Yours, ever dear Burke,

"D'AUVERGNE, Lieut.-General.

"Bivouac, 11 o'clock."

The letter of which he spoke had fallen on the table, where I now read the address—"*á Madame, la Comtesse D'Auvergne, née Comtesse de Meudon, dame d'honneur, à S. M. L'Imperatrice.*" As I read these lines, I felt my face grow burning hot—my cheeks flushed up—and I could scarcely have been more excited, were I actually in her presence, to whom the letter was destined. The poor general's kind note, his cheque for eight thousand francs, lay there—I forgot them both, and sat still, spelling over the letters of that name so woven in my destiny; I thought of the first night I had ever heard it—when a mere boy, I wept over her sorrows, and grieved for her whose fate was so soon to throw its shadow over my own. But, in a moment, all gave way before the one thought—I should see her again, speak to her, and hear her voice. It is true, she was the wife of another—but, as Marie de Meudon, our destinies were as wide apart; under no circumstances could she have been mine—nor did I ever dare to hope it. My love to her, for it was such, ardent and passionate—was more the devotion of some worshipper at a shrine, than an affection that sought return. The friendless soldier of fortune, poor, unknown, uncared for—how could he raise his thoughts to one, for whose hand the noblest and the bravest were suitors in vain? Yet, with all this—how my heart throbbed, to think that we should meet again. Nor was the thought less stirring that I felt—that even in the short interval of absence, I had won praise from him, for whom her admiration was equal to my own. With all the turmoil of my hopes and fears, I felt a rush of pleasure at my heart—and when I slept, it was to dream of happy days to come—and a future far brighter than the past.

My first thought, when morning broke, was to ride over to Reygern, to learn the fate of my wounded friends. On my way thither, I fell in with several officers, bound on a similar errand—for already the convent had become the great hospital, to which the sufferers were brought from every part of the camp. As we went along, I was much struck by the depression of spirit so remarkable every where—the battle over, all the martial enthusiasm seemed to have evaporated. Many grumbled at the tiresome prospect of a winter in country quarters, or cantoned in the field; some regretted the briefness of the campaign; while others again complained, that to return to France after so little of active service, would only expose them to ridicule from their companions, who had seen Italy and Egypt.

"Spare your sorrows on that score, my young friends," said a colonel, who listened patiently to the complaints around him. "We shall not see the dome of the Invalides for some time yet. Except the *Compagnie d'elite*, I fancy few of us will figure on the Boulevards."

"There again," cried another; "I never heard any thing so unfair as that *Compagnie d'elite*—they have been, with two solitary exceptions, taken from the cavalry. Austerlitz was to be the day of honour for the infantry of France, said the bulletin."

"And so it was," interrupted a little dark-eyed major; "and I suppose his majesty thought we had enough of it on the field, and did not wish to surfeit us with glory. But I ask pardon," said he, turning towards me, "monsieur is, if I mistake not, named one of the *elite*."

As I replied in the affirmative, I observed all eyes turned towards me, but not with any kindly expression, far from it. I saw that there was a deliberate canvass of me, as though to see by my outward man, how I could possibly deserve such a favour.

"Can you explain to us, monsieur," said the little major to me, "on what principle the *elite* were chosen? for we have a thousand contradictory reports in the camp—some say, by ballot—some, that it was only those who never soiled their jackets in the affair of the other day, and looked fresh and smart."

A burst of laughter from the rest interrupted the major's speech—for its impertinence was quite sufficient to secure it many admirers.

"I believe, sir," said I, angrily, "I can show you some reasons against the selection of certain persons." As I got thus far, an officer whispered something into the major's ear, who, with a roar of laughing, exclaimed, "A thousand pardons; ten thousand, *parbleu;* I didn't know you."

"It was Monsieur pinked Francois, the *maitre d'armes*—yes, yes; don't deny it," said he—as I made no reply whatever to a question I believed quite irrelevant to the occasion. "Don't deny it—that lunge over the guard was a thing to be proud of; and by Jove, you shall not practise it at my expense."

This speech excited great amusement among the party, who seemed to coincide perfectly with the reasoning of the speaker; while I myself remained silent, unable to decide whether I ought to be annoyed, or the reverse.

"Come, Monsieur," resumed the major, addressing me with courtesy, "I ask pardon for the liberty of my speech; by St. Denis, if all the *Compagnie d'elite* have the same skill of fence, I'll not question their appointment." The candour of the avowal was too much for my gravity, and I now joined in the mirth of his companions.

If I have mentioned so trivial an incident as this here, it is because I wish to mark, even thus passingly, a trait of French military life. The singular confession of a man, who regretted his impertinence because he discovered his adversary was a better swordsman, would, under any other code, or in any other country, have argued poltroonery. Not so here; no one for a moment suspected his comrade's courage—nor could any circumstance arise to make it doubtful, save

an actual instance of cowardice. The inequality of the combat was reason enough for not engaging in it. The odds were unfair, because duelling was like a game, where each party was to have an equal chance, and hence no shame was felt at declining a contest, where this inequality existed.

Such a system, it is obvious, could not have prevailed in communities where duelling was only resorted to in extreme cases; but here it was an every day occurrence, and often formed but a brief interval, scarce interrupting the current of an old friendship. Any resentful spirit, any long-continued dislike to the party with whom you once fought, would have been denounced as unofficer-like and ungenerous; and every day saw men walking arm in arm, in closest intimacy, who, but the morning before, stood opposed to each other's weapons.

I now perceived the truth of what Minette had once said, and which, at the time, I but imperfectly comprehended. "Maitre Francois will be less troublesome in future, and you, Lieutenant, will have an easier life also."

"Halt there!" shouted a sentry, as we approached the narrow causeway that led up to the convent. We now discovered that, by a general order, no one was permitted to approach the hospital, save such as were provided with a leave from the medical staff. A bulletin of the deaths was daily published on the guard-house, except which no other information was afforded of the condition of the wounded; and to this we turned eagerly, and with anxious hearts, lest we might read the name of some friend, lost for ever. I ran over, with a rapid glance, the list, where neither St. Hilaire, nor poor Pioche occurred, and then setting spurs to my horse, hurried back to my quarters at the top of my speed. When I arrived, the preparations for the departure of the *elite* were already in progress, and I had but time to make my few arrangements for the road, when the order came to join my comrades.

CHAPTER LIV.

PARIS IN 1806.

A PORTION of the Luxembourg was devoted to the reception of the "Compagnie d'elite," for whom a household, on the most liberal scale, was provided—a splendid table maintained, and all that wealth and the taste of a voluptuous age could suggest, procured, to make their life one of daily magnificence and pleasure. Daru himself, the especial favourite of the Emperor, took the head of the table each day, to which generally some of the ministers were invited, while the *Moniteur* of every morning chronicled the festivities, giving *éclat* to the most minute circumstance, and making Paris re-echo to the glories of him, of whose fame they were but the messengers.

The most costly equipages—saddle-horses of great price—grooms in gorgeous liveries—all that could attract notice and admiration, were put in requisition; while ceremonies of pomp went forward day by day, and the deputation received in state the congratulatory visits of different departments of the government.

While thus this homage was paid to the semblance of Napoleon's glory, his progress through Germany was one grand triumphal procession. One day we read of his arrival at Munich, whither the Empress had gone to meet him—there, he was welcomed witht he most frantic enthusiasm. He had restored to them their army almost without loss, and covered with laurels; he had elevated their elector to a throne, while he cemented the friendship between the two nations by the marriage of Eugene Beauharnois with the princess of Bavaria. Another account would tell us of sixteen thousand Russian prisoners on their way to France, accompanied by two thousand cannon taken from the Austrians. All that could excite national enthusiasm, and gratify national vanity, was detailed by the government press, and popular excitement raised to a higher pitch than in the wildest periods of the revolution.

Hourly was his arrival looked forward to with anxiety and impatience. Fêtes on the most splendid scale of magnificence were in preparation, and the public bodies of Paris held meetings to concert measures for his triumphal reception. At last, a telegraphic despatch announced his arrival at Strasbourg. He crossed the Rhine at the very place where, exactly one hundred days before, he passed over on his march against the Austrians—one hundred days of such glory as not even his career had equalled. Ulm and Austerlitz, vanquished Russia, and ruined Austria, the trophies of this brief space. Never had his genius shone with greater splendour—never had fortune shown herself more the companion of his destiny.

Each hour was now counted, and every thought turned to the day when he might be expected to arrive; and on the evening of the 24th came the intelligence that the Emperor was approaching Paris. He had halted part of a day at Nancy to review some regiments of cavalry, and now might be expected in less than twenty-four hours. The next morning all Paris awoke at an early hour, when, what was the surprise and disappointment to see the great flag floating from the pavilion of the Tuileries. His majesty had arrived during the night, when, at once sending for the minister of finance, he proceeded, without taking a moment's repose, to examine into the dreadful crisis which threatened the bank of France, and the very existence of the government.

At eleven, the council of state were assembled at the Tuileries; and at twelve, a proclamation, dispersed through Paris, announced that M. Molien was appointed minister, and M. Marbois was dismissed from his office. The rapidity of these changes, and the avoidance of all public homage by the Emperor, threw, for several days, a cast of gloom over the whole city, which was soon dissipated by the re-appearance of Napoleon, and the publication of that celebrated report by M. Champagny, in which the glories of France—her victories—her acquisitions in wealth, territory, and influence—were recited in terms whose adulation it would be now difficult to digest.

From that moment the festivities of Paris commenced, and with a splendour unsurpassed by any period of the empire. It was the Augustan era of Napoleon's life, in all that concerned the fine arts—for literature, unhappily, did not flourish at any time beneath his reign—Gérard and Gros, David, Ingres, and Isabey, committed to canvas the glories of the German campaigns; and the capitulation of Ulm—the taking of Vienna—the passage of the Danube, and the field of Austerlitz, still live in the genius of these great painters.

The opera, too, under the direction of Cimerosa, had attained to an unwonted excellence; while Spontini and Boïldieu, in their separate walks, gave origin to the school so distinctly that of the comic opera. Still, the voluptuous tastes of the day prevailed above all; and the ballet, and the strange conceptions of Nicolo, a Maltese composer, in which music, dancing, romance, and scenery, all figured, were the passion of the time.

Dancing was, indeed, the great art of the era. Vestris and Trénis were the great names in every saloon; and all the extravagant graces and voluptuous groupings of the ballet, were introduced into the amusements of society; even the taste in dress was made subordinate to this passion—the light and floating materials, which mark the figure and display symmetry, replacing the heavier and more costly robes of former times. The reaction to the stern puritanism of the republican age had set in, and secretly was favoured by Napoleon himself, who saw in all this extravagance and abandonment to pleasure, the basis of that new social state, on which he purposed to found his dynasty.

Never were the entertainments at the Tuileries more costly—never was a greater magnificence displayed in all the ceremonial of state.

The marshals of the empire were enjoined to maintain a style corresponding to their exalted position; and the reports of the police were actually studied, respecting such persons as lived in what was deemed, a manner unbefitting their means of expense.

Cambacérès and Fouché, Talleyrand and Murat, all maintained splendid establishments. Their dinners were given twice each week, and their receptions were almost every evening. If the Emperor conferred wealth with a liberal hand, so did he expect to see it freely expended. He knew well the importance of conciliating the affections of the *bourgeoisie* of Paris, and that by no other means could such an end be accomplished more readily, than by a lavish expenditure of money throughout all classes of society. This was alone wanting to efface every trace of the old republican spirit. The simple habits and uncostly tastes of the Jacobins were at once regarded as meannesses—their frugal and unpretending modes of life pronounced low and vulgar—and many who could have opposed a stout heart against the current of popular opinion, on stronger grounds, yielded to the insinuations and mockeries of their own class, and conformed to tastes, which eventually engendered opinions and even principles.

I ask pardon from my reader, for digressing from the immediate subject of my own career, to speak of topics which are rather the province of the historian, than a mere story-teller like myself: still, I should not be able to present to his view the picture of manners I desired, without thus recalling some features of that time, so pregnant with the fate of Europe, and the future destiny of France. And now to return.

Immediately on the Emperor's arrival, the Empress and her suite took their departure for Versailles, from whence it was understood they were not to return before the end of the month, for which time a splendid ball was announced at the Tuileries. Unwilling to detain General D'Auvergne's letter so long, and unable, from the position I occupied, to obtain leave of absence from Paris, I forwarded the letter to the Comtesse, and abandoned the only hope I had of meeting her once more. The disappointment from this source—the novelty of the circumstances in which I found myself—the fascinations of a world altogether strange to me—all conspired to confuse and excite me, and I entered into the dissipation of those around me, if not with all their zest, at least with as headlong a resolution to drown all reflection in a life of voluptuous enjoyment.

The only person of my own standing among the *Compagnie d'elite*, was a captain of the chasseurs of the guard, who, although but a few years my senior, had seen service in the Italian campaign. By family a Bourbonist, he joined the revolutionary armies when his relatives fled from France, and slowly won his steps to his present rank. A certain hauteur in his manner with men—an air of distance he always wore—had made him as little liked by them, as it usually succeeds in making a man popular with women, to whom the opposite seems at once a compliment. He was a man who had seen much of the world, and in the best society; gifted with a most fascinating address, when-

ever he pleased to exert it, and singularly good-looking, he was the *beau ideal* of the French officer of the highest class.

The Chevalier Duchesne and myself had travelled together for some days, without exchanging more than the ordinary civilities of distant acquaintance, when some accident of the road threw us more closely together, aud ended by forming an intimacy, which, in our Paris life, brought us every hour into each other's society.

Stranger as I was in the capital, to me the acquaintance was a boon of great price. He knew it thoroughly. In the gorgeous and stately salons of the Faubourg—in the guingettes of the Rue St. Denis—in the costly mansion of the modern banker, the new aristocracy of the land—or in the homely ménage of the shopkeeper of the Rue St. Honoré—he was equally at home, and, by some strange charm, had the entrée, too.

The same "sesame" opened to him the coulisse of the Opera, and the penetralia of the Français. In fact, he seemed one of those privileged people who are met with occasionally in life, in places the most incongruous, and with acquaintances the most opposite, yet never carrying the prestige of the one or the other, an inch beyond the precincts it belongs to.

Had he been wealthy, I could have accounted for much of this; for never was there a period when riches more abounded, nor when their power was more absolute; but he did not seem so. Although in no want of money, his retinue and simple style of living betrayed nothing beyond fair competence; neither, as far as I could perceive, did he incline to habits of extravagance—on the contrary, he was too apt to connect every display with vulgarity, and condemn, in his fastidiousness, the gorgeous splendour that characterised the period.

Such, without going further, did Duchesne appear to be, as we took up our quarters at the Luxembourg, and commenced an intimacy which each day served to increase.

"Well, thank heaven, this Vaudeville is over at last," said he, as he threw himself into a large chair at my fire, and pitched his chapeau, all covered with gold and embroidery, into a far corner of the room. We had just returned from Notre Dame, where the grand ceremonial of receiving the standards was held by the Senate, with all the solemnity of a high mass, and the most imposing observances.

"Vaudeville?" said I, turning round rapidly.

"Yes. What else can you call it? What, I ask you, had those poor decrepid Senators—those effeminate priests, in the costume of *beguines*, to do, with the eagles of a brave, but unfortunate army? In what way can you connect that incense and that organ, with the smoke of artillery, and the crash of mitraille? And lastly—was it like old Daru himself, to stand there, half crouching, beside some wretched half-palsied priest? But I feel heartily ashamed of myself, though I played but the smallest part in the whole drama."

"Is it thus you can speak of the triumph of our army?—the glories ——"

"You mistake me much. I only speak of that miserable mockery

which converts our hard-won laurels into chaplets of artificial flowers; these displays are far beneath us, and would only become the victories of some national guard."

"So then," said I, half laughingly—"it is your republican gorge that rises against all this useless ceremonial."

"You are the very first ever detected me in that guise," said he, bursting into a hearty laugh. "But come—I'd wager you agree with me all this while. This was a very contemptible exhibition; and for my own part, I'd rather see the colours back again, with those poor fellows we chased at Austerlitz, than fluttering in the imbecile hands of dotage and bigotry."

"Then I must say we differ totally. I like to think of the warlike spirit nourished in a nation, by the contemplation of such glorious spoils. I am young enough to remember how the Invalides affected me——"

"When you took your Sunday walk there from the Polytechnique, two and two, with a blue ribbon round your neck, for being a good boy during the week. Oh, I know it all. Delicious times they were, with their souvenirs of wooden legs and plum-pudding. Happy fellow you must be, if the delusion can last this while."

"You are determined it shall not continue much longer," said I, laughing; "that is quite evident."

"No. On the contrary, I should be but too happy to be your convert, instead of making you mine; but unfortunately, 'Sa Majesté, Empereur et Roi,' has taught me some smart lessons since I gave up mathematics, and I have acquired a smattering of his own policy, which is—to look after the substance, and leave the shadow—or the 'drapeau,' if you like it better—to whoever pleases."

"I confess, however," said I, "I don't well understand your enthusiasm about war, and your indifference about its trophies. To me, the associations they suggest are pleasurable beyond any thing."

"I think I remember something of that kind in myself formerly," said he musing. "There was a time when the blast of a trumpet, or even the clank of a sabre, used to set my heart thumping. Happily, however, the organ has grown steeled against even more stirring sounds; and I listened to that salute to-day, fired as it was by that imposing body, the artillery of the 'garde nationale,' with an equanimity truly wonderful. Apropos, my dear Burke. Talk of heroism and self-devotion as you will, but show me any thing to compare with the gallantry of those fellows we saw to-day on the 'Quai Voltaire'—a set of grocers, periwig-makers, umbrella and sausage-men, with portly paunches and spectacles, ramming down charges, sponging, loading, and firing real cannon. On my word of honour, it was fearful."

"They say his Majesty is very proud, indeed, of the national guard of Paris."

"Of course he is—look at them, and just think what must be the enthusiasm of men who will adopt a career so repugnant, not only to their fancy, but their very formation; remember, that he who runs yonder with a twenty-four pounder, never handled any thing heavier

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than a wig block ; and that, the only charges of the little man beside him, have been made in his day-book. By St. Denis, the dromedary-guard we had in Egypt were more at home in their saddles, than the squadron who rode beside the archbishop's carriage."

"It is scarcely fair, after all," said I, half laughing, "to criticise them so severely; and the more, as I think you had some old acquaintances among them."

"Ha! you saw that—did you?" said he smiling. "No, by Jove, I never met them before; but that *confrerie* of soldiers—you understand—soon made us acquainted: and I saw one old fellow speaking to a very pretty girl, I guessed to be his daughter—and soon cemented a small friendship with him—here's his card."

"His card! Why—are you to visit him?"

"Better again—I shall dine there on Monday next. Let us see how he calls himself—'Hippolyte Pierrot, stay and corset maker to her Majesty the Empress, No. 22, Rue de Bac—third floor above the *entre sol.*' *Diable*, we're high up. Unfortunately I am scarcely intimate enough to bring a friend."

"Oh, make no excuses on that head," said I, laughing, "I really have no desire to see Monsieur Hippolyte Pierrot's ménage. And now, what are your engagements for this evening?—are you for the opera?"

"I don't well know," said he, pausing,—"Madame Caulaincourt receives, and of course expects to see our gay jackets in her salon any time before, or after, supper. Then there's the Comtesse de Nevers—I never go there without meeting my tailor; the fellow's a spy of the police, and a confectioner to boot; and he serves the ices, and reports the conversations in the Place Vendome, and that side of the Rue St. Honoré. I couldn't take a glass of lemonade without being dunned. Then, in the Faubourg—I must go in plain clothes, they would not let the 'livery of the usurper' pass the porter's lodge; besides they worry one with their enthusiastic joy or grief, as the last letter from England mentions whether the Comte d'Artois has eaten too many oysters, or found London beer too strong for him."

"From all which I guess that you are indisposed to stir."

"I believe that is about the fact. Truth is, Burke, there is only one *soirée* in all Paris I'd take the trouble to dress for this evening, and, strange enough, it's the only house where I don't know the people. He is a commissary-general, or a 'fournisseur' of some kind or other, of the army—always from home they say; with a wife, who was once, and a daughter, who is now, exceeding pretty; keeps a splendid house, and, like an honest man, makes restitution of all he can cheat in the campaign, by giving good dinners in the capital. His Majesty, at the solicitation of the Empress, I believe, made him a Count—God's mercy it was not a King; and as they come from Guadeloupe, or Otaheite, no one disputes their right; besides this is not a time for such punctilio. This is all I know of them, for, unfortunately, they settled here since I joined the army."

"And the name?"

"Oh, a very plausible name, I assure you—Lacostellerie—Madame la Comtesse de Lacostellerie."

"By Jove, you remind me, I have letters for her—a circumstance I had totally forgotten, though it was coupled with a commission."

"A letter!—why nothing was ever so fortunate—don't lose a moment—you have just time to leave it, with your card, before dinner—you'll have an invitation for this evening at once."

"But I have not the slightest wish."

"No matter, *I* have, and you shall bring me."

"You forget," said I, mimicking his own words, "I am unfortunately not intimate enough."

"As to that," replied he, "there is a vast difference between the etiquette Rue de Bac, No. 22, three floors above the *entre sol*, and the gorgeous salons of the Hotel Clichy, Rue Faubourg St. Honoré; ceremony has the advantage in the former by a height of three pair of stairs, not to speak of the *entre sol*."

"But I don't know the people."

"Nor I."

"But how am I to present you?"

"Easily enough. Captain Duchesne, Imperial Guard; or, if you prefer it, I'll do the honours for *you*."

"With all my heart, then," said I, laughing; and prepared to pay the visit in question.

CHAPTER LV.

THE "HOTEL DE CLICHY."

Duchesne was correct in all his calculations. I had scarcely reached the Luxembourg when a valet brought me a card for the Comtesse's soirée for that evening. It was accordingly agreed upon that we were to go together—I, as the invited, he, as my friend.

"All your finery, Burke, remember that," said he, as we separated to dress. "The uniform of the *Compagnie d'élite* is as much a decoration in a salon, as a camelia, or a geranium."

When he re-entered my room, half an hour later, I was struck by the blaze of orders and decorations with which his jacket was covered, while at his side there hung a magnificent *sabre d'honneur*, such as the Emperor was accustomed to confer on his most distinguished officers.

"You smile at all this bravery," said he, wilfully misinterpreting my look of admiration, "but remember where we are going."

"On the contrary," interrupted I; "but it is the first time I knew you had the Cross of the Legion."

"*Parbleu!*" said he, with an insolent shrug of his shoulders, "I had lent it to my hair-dresser, for a ball at the 'Cirque;' but here comes the carriage."

While we drove along towards the Faubourg, I had time to learn some farther particulars of the people to whose house we were proceeding, and for my reader's information, may as well impart them here, with such other facts as I subsequently collected myself.

Like most of the salons of the new aristocracy, Madame Lacostellerie's received people of every section of party, and every class of political opinion. Standing equally aloof from the old régime and the members of the Jacobin party, her receptions were a kind of neutral territory, where each could come without compromise of dignity; for already, except among the most starched adherents of the Bourbons, few of whom remained in France, there was a growing spirit to side with the Napoleonists, in preference to the revolutionary section; while the latter, with all their pretensions to simplicity and primitive tastes, felt no little pride in mixing with the very aristocracy they so loudly inveighed against.

Besides all this, wealth had its prestige. Never, in the palmiest days of the royalty, were entertainments of greater splendour; and the Legitimists, however disposed to be critical on the company, could afford to be just regarding the "*cuisine;*" the luxury of these modern dinners eclipsing the most costly displays of former times, where hereditary rank and ancient nobility contributed to adorn the scene. And, lastly, the admixture of every grade and class extended the field of conversational agreeability—throwing in new elements, and eliciting new features, in a society where peers, actors, poets, bankers, painters, soldiers, speculators, journalists, and adventurers, were confusedly mixed up together, making, as it were, a common fund of their principles and their prejudices, and starting anew in life, with what they could seize in the scramble.

After following the long line of carriages for above an hour, we at last turned into a large court-yard, lit up almost to the brightness of day. Here the equipages of many of the ministers were standing, a privilege accorded to them above the other guests. I recognised, among the number, the splendid liveries of Decrés, and the stately carriage of Talleyrand, whose household always proclaimed itself as belonging to a "seigneur" of the oldest blood of France, the most perfect type of a high-bred gentleman. Our progress from the vestibule to the stairs was a slow one. The double current of those pressing up and downwards delayed us long; and at last we reached a spacious antechamber, where even greater numbers stood awaiting their turn, if happily it should come, to move forward.

While here, the names of those announced conveyed to us a fair impression of the whole company. Among the first was Le General Junot—Berthollet the celebrated chemist—Lafayette—Monges—Daru—Count de Mailles, a Legitimist noble—David the regicide—the ambassador of Prussia—M. Pasquier—Talma. Such were the names we heard following in quick succession, when suddenly an avenue was opened by a

master of the ceremonies before me, who read from my card the words—

"Le Capitaine Burke, officier d'élite—Le Chevalier Duchesne, presenté par lui."

And, advancing within the door-way, I found myself opposite a very handsome woman, whose brilliant dress and blaze of diamonds concealed any ravages time might have made upon her beauty.

She was conversing with the arch-chancellor, Cambacérès, when my name was announced, and, turning rapidly round, touched my arm with her bouquet, as she said, with a most gracious smile—

"I am but too much flattered to see you on so short an invitation; but M. de Tascher's note led me to hope I might presume so far—your friend, I believe."

"I have taken the great liberty——"

"Indeed, Madame la Comtesse," said Duchesne, interrupting, "I must exculpate my friend here. This intrusion rests on my own head, and has no other apology than my long-cherished wish to pay my homage to the most distinguished ornament of the Parisian world."

As he spoke, the quiet flow of his words, and the low deferential bow with which he accompanied them, completely divested his speech of its tone of gross flattery, and merely made it seem a very fitting and appropriate expression.

"This would be a very high compliment, indeed," replied Madame de Lacostellerie, with a flush of evident pleasure on her cheek, "had it even come from one less known than the Chevalier Duchesne. I hope the Duchesse de Montserrat is well—your aunt, if I mistake not."

"Yes, madame," said he, "in excellent health. It will afford her great pleasure when I inform her of your polite inquiry."

Another announcement now compelled us to follow the current in front, which I was but well content to do, and escape from an interchange of fine speeches, of whose sincerity, on one side at least, I had very strong misgivings.

"So, then, the Comtesse is acquainted with your family," said I in a whisper.

"Who said so?" replied he, laughing.

"Did she not ask after the Duchesse de Montserrat?"

"And then?"

"And didn't you promise to convey her very kind message?"

"To be sure I did; but are you simple enough to think that either of us were serious in what we said? Why, my dear friend, she never saw my aunt in her life; nor, if I were to hint at her inquiry for her, to the duchesse, am I certain it would not cost me something like a half-million of francs the old lady has left me in her will. On my word, I firmly believe she'd never forgive it. You know little what these people of the 'Vieille roche,' as they call themselves, are like. Do you see that handsome fellow yonder, with a star on a blue cordon?"

"I don't know him, but I see he's a Marshal of France."

"Well, I saw that same aunt of mine rise up and leave the room, because *he* sat down in her presence."

" Oh! that was intolerable."

" So, she deemed his insolence —— come, move on; they're dancing in the next saloon;" and, without saying more, we pushed through the crowd in the direction of the music.

It is only by referring to the sensations experienced by those who see a ballet at the opera for the first time, that I can at all convey my own on entering the " Salle de danse." My first feeling was that of absolute shame. Never before had I seen that affectation of stage-costume, which then was the rage in society. The short and floating jupe—formed of some light and gauzy texture, which, even where it covered the figure, betrayed the form and proportions of the wearer—was worn low on the bosom and shoulders, and attached at the waist by a ribbon, whose knot hung negligently down in seeming disorder. The hair fell in long and floating masses loose upon the neck, waving in free tresses with every motion of the figure, and adding to that air of " abandon" which seemed so studiously aimed at; but more than any thing in mere costume was the look and expression in which a character of languid voluptuousness was written, and made to harmonize with the easy grace of their floating movements, and sympathize with gestures full of passionate fascination.

" Now Burke," said Duchesne, as he threw his eyes over the room, " shall I find a partner for you? for I believe I know most of the people here. That pretty blonde yonder, with the diamond buckles in her shoes, is Mademoiselle de Rancy, with a dowry of some millions of francs. What say you to pushing your fortune there? Don't forget the Officier d' Elite is a trump card just now; and there's no time to lose, for there will soon be a new deal."

" Not if she had the throne of France in reversion," said I, turning away in disgust from a figure, which, though perfectly beautiful, outraged at every movement, that greatest charm of womanhood, her inborn modesty.

" Ah, then, you don't fancy a blonde," said he, carelessly—whether wilfully misunderstanding me or not, I could not say. " Nor I, neither," added he. " There, now, is something far more to my taste. Is she not a lovely girl?"

She to whom he now directed my attention, was standing at the side of the room, and leaning on her partner's arm—her head slightly turned, so that we could not see her features; but her figure was actually faultless. Her's was not one of those gossamer shapes which flitted around and about us, balancing on tip-toe, or gracefully floating with extended arms. Rather strongly built than otherwise, she stood with the firm foot and the straight ankle of a marble statue: her arms well rounded, hung easily from her full, wide shoulders, while her head, slightly thrown back, was balanced on her neck with an air at once dignified and easy. Her dress well suited the character of her figure: it was entirely of black, covered with a profusion of deep black lace—the jupe looped up in Andalusian fashion, to display the leg, whose symmetry was perfect. Even her costume, however, had something about it too theatrical for my taste; but there was a stamp of firmness,

"*fierté*," even in her carriage and her attitude, that at once showed her's was no vulgar desire of being remarkable, but the womanly consciousness of being dressed as became her. She suddenly turned her head around, and we both exclaimed in the same breath, "how lovely!" Her features were of that brilliant character only seen in southern blood; eyes large, black, and lustrous, fringed with lashes that threw their shadow on the very cheek; full lips, curled with an air of almost saucy expression, while the rich, olive tint of her transparent skin, was scarce coloured with the pink flush of exercise, and harmonized so perfectly with the proud repose of her countenance.

"She must be Spanish—that's certain," said Duchesne. "No one ever saw such an instep come from this side the Pyrenees; and those eyes have got their look of sleepy wickedness from Moorish blood. But here comes one will tell us all about her."

This was the Baron de Treve, a withered-looking, dried-up old man, rouged to the eyes, and dressed in the extravagance of the last fashion—the high collar of his coat rising nearly to the back of his head, as his deep cravat in front entirely concealed his mouth, and formed a kind of barrier around his features.

As Duchesne addressed him, he stopped short, and assuming an attitude of great intended grace, raised his glass slowly to his eye, and looked towards the lady.

"Ah! the Senorina—don't you know *her*? Why, where have you been, my dear Chevalier? Oh! I forgot. You've been in Austria, or Russia, or some barbarous place or other. She is the belle, *par excellence*. Nothing else is talked of in Paris."

"But her name? Who is she?" said Duchesne impatiently.

"Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie, the daughter of the house," said the Baron, completely overcome with astonishment at our ignorance; "and you, not to know this—you, of all men living. Why," he continued, dropping his voice to a lower key, "there never was such a fortune. Mines of rubies and emeralds; continents of coffee, rice, and sandalwood; spice islands, and sugar plantations, to make one's mouth water."

"By Jove, Baron, you seem somewhat susceptible yourself."

"I had my thoughts on the subject," said he, with a half-sigh; "but, Helas! there are so many ties to be broken—so many tender chains one must snap asunder ——"

"I understand," said Duchesne, with an air of well-assumed seriousness. "The thing was impossible. Now, then, what say you to assist a friend?"

"You—yourself, do you mean?"

"Of course, Baron—no other."

"Come this way," said the old man, taking him by the arm, and leading him along to another part of the room, while Duchesne, with a sly look at me, followed.

While I stood, awaiting his return, my thoughts became fixed on Duchesne himself, of whose character, I never felt free from my misgivings. The cold indifference he manifested on ordinary occasions

to every thing and every body, I now saw could give way to strong impetuosity; but even this might be assumed also. As I pondered thus, I had not remarked that the dance was concluded; and already the dancers were proceeding towards their seats, when I heard my name uttered beside me—Capitaine Burke. I turned; it was the Countess herself, leaning on the arm of her daughter.

"I wish to present you to my daughter," said she, with a courteous smile, "the college friend and brother-officer of your cousin Tascher, Pauline."

The young lady courtesied with an air of cold reserve—I bowed deeply before her, while the Countess continued—

"We hope to have the pleasure of seeing you frequently during your stay in Paris, when we shall have a better opportunity of making your acquaintance.'

As I expressed my sense of this politeness, I turned to address a few words to Mademoiselle; and requesting to have the honour of dancing with her, she looked at me with an air of surprise, as though not understanding my words, when suddenly the Countess interposed—

"I fear that my daughter's engagements have been made long since; but another night ——"

"I will hope——"but before I could say more, the Countess addressed another person near her, and Mademoiselle, turning her head superciliously away, did not deign me any further attention—so that, abashed and awkward at so unfavourable a *debut* in the gay world, I fell back, and mixed with the crowd. As I did so, I found myself among a group of officers, one of whom was relating an anecdote, just then current in Paris, and which I mention merely, as illustrating in some measure the habits of the period.

At the levee of the emperor on the morning before, an old general of brigade advanced to pay his respects, when Napoleon observed some drops of rain glistening on the embroidery of his uniform. He immediately turned towards one of his suite, and gave orders to ascertain by what carriage the general had arrived. The answer was, that he had come in a "fiacre," a hired vehicle, which, by the rules of the court, was not admitted within the court of the Tuileries, and thus he was obliged to walk above one hundred yards, before he could obtain shelter.

The old officer, who knew nothing of the tender solicitude of the Emperor, was confounded with astonishment to observe at his departure a handsome calèche, and two splendid horses at his service.

"Whose carriage is this?" said he.

"Yours, Monsieur le General."

"And the servant, and the horses!"

"Yours, also! His Majesty has graciously been pleased to order them for you, and desires you will remember that the sum of six thousand francs will be deducted from your pay, to meet the cost of the equipage, which the Emperor deems so befitting your rank in the service."

"It is thus," said the narrator, "the Emperor would enforce that

liberality on others, he so eminently displays himself. The spoils of Italy and Austria are destined—not to found a new noblesse, but to enrich the bourgeoisie of this good city of Paris. I say, Edward, is not that Duchesne yonder? I thought he was above patronising the salons of a mere commissary-general."

"You don't know the chevalier," replied the other. "No game flies too high or too low for his mark. Depend upon it, he's not here for nothing."

"If Mademoiselle be the object," said a third, "I'll swear he shall have no rivalry on my side. By Jove! I'd rather face a charge of Hulans, than speak to her."

"If thou wert a Marshal of France, Claude, thou wouldst think differently."

"If I were a Marshal of France," repeated he, with energy, "I'd rather marry Minette, the vivandiere of ours."

"And no bad choice either," broke in a large heavy-looking officer; "there is but one objection to such an arrangement."

"And that—if I might ask——"

"Simple enough. She wouldn't have you."

The young man endeavoured to join in the laugh this speech excited among the rest, though it was evident he felt ill at ease from the ridicule.

"A thousand pardons, my dear Burke," said Duchesne, at this moment, as he slipped his arm through mine; "but I thought I should have been in need of your services a few minutes ago."

"Ah, how?"

"Move a little aside, and I'll tell you. I wished to ask Mademoiselle to dance, and approached her for the purpose. She was standing with a number of people, all strangers to me, at the door-way yonder—Dobretski, that Russian prince, the only man I knew amongst them. A very chilling—'Engaged, sir!' was the answer of the lady, to my first request. The same reply met my second and third—when the Russian, as if desirous to increase the awkwardness of my position, interposed with, 'And the fourth set, Mademoiselle dances with me.' 'In that case,' said I, 'I may fairly claim the fifth.'

"'On what grounds, sir,' said she, with a look of easy impertinence.

"'The Emperor's orders, Mademoiselle,' said I proudly.

"Indeed, sir!—May I ask, how and when?"

"Austerlitz, December 2.—The order of four o'clock, dated from Reygern, says—'The Imperial Guard will follow closely on the track of the Russians. Signed—NAPOLEON.'

'In that case, sir,' said she, 'I cannot dispute his Majesty's orders. I shall dance with you the fifth.'"

"And the Russian. What said he?"

"Ma foi! I paid no attention to him—for, as Mademoiselle moved off will her partner, I strolled away in search of you."

If I was amused at this recital of the chevalier, I could not avoid feeling picqued at the greater success he had than myself—for still, the chilling reception I had met with was rankling in my mind.

"Let us move away from this quarter," said Duchesne, "here we have got ourselves among a knot of old campaigners, with their stupid stories of Cairo and Acre, Alexandria and the Adige. By Jove! if any thing would make me a Legitimist, it is my disgust at those confounded narratives about Kleber and Desaix. The Emperor himself does not despise the time of the revolution, more heartily than I do. Come—there's bouillotte yonder. Let us go, and win some pieces. I feel I'm in vein—and even to lose, would be better than listen to these people. It is only a few minutes ago I was hunted away from Madame de Muraire by old Berthollet, who is persuading her that her diamonds are but charcoal, and that a necklace is only fit to roast an orlotan. This comes of letting savants into society—decidedly, they had much better taste in the time of the monarchy."

It was with some difficulty we succeeded in approaching the bouillotte-table, where, to judge from the stakes, very high play was going forward. Duchesne was quickly recognised among the players, who made place for him among them. I soon saw that he was not mistaken in supposing he was in luck; every coup was successful, and while he continued to win time after time, the heap of gold grew greater, till it covered the part of the table before him.

"Most certainly, Burke," said he, in a whisper, "this is a strong turn of fortune, who, being a woman, won't long be of the same mind. Five thousand francs," cried he, throwing the billet de banque carelessly before him, while he turned to resume what he was saying to me. Were I in action now, I'd win the baton de Marechal. I feel it. There's always an innate sense of luck, when it means to be steady."

"The Chevalier Duchesne—the Chevalier Duchesne!" was repeated from voice to voice, outside the circle, "Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie is waiting to waltz with you."

"A thousand pardons," said he, rising. "Burke, continue my game, while I try, if I can't push fortune the whole way."

So saying, and without listening to my excuses about ignorance of play, he pressed me into his seat, and pushed his way through the crowd to join the dancers.

It was only when the players asked me if I intended to go on, that I was aware of the position in which I found myself. I knew little more of the game than I had learned in looking over the table, but I was aware of the strict etiquette in all the play of society, which enjoins a revenge to every loser, so that I continued to bet and stake for Duchesne, as I had seen him do already—not, however, with such fortune. He had scarcely left the table, when luck changed, and now I saw his riches decreasing even more rapidly than they had been accumulated. At last, after a long run of ill-fortune, when I had staked a very large sum on the board, just as the banker was about to begin, I changed my mind, and withdrew half of it.

"No, no; let it stay," whispered a voice in my ear; "the sooner this is over, the better."

I turned—it was Duchesne himelf, who for some time had been seated behind my chair, and looking on at the game.

Fleeting as was the glance I had of his features, I fancied they were somewhat paler than usual. Could this be from the turn of fortune?—But no. I watched him now, and I perceived that he never even looked at the game. At last, I staked all that remained in one coup, and lost. When drawing forth my own purse, I was about to make another bet—"No, no, Burke," whispered he in my ear, "I was only waiting for this moment. Let us come away now. I rise as I sat down, Messieurs," he said gaily, while he added, in a lower tone—"*Sauf l'honneur.*"

"Have you had enough of gaiety for one night?" said he, as he drew my arm within his. "Shall we turn homewards?"

"Willingly," said I; for somehow I felt chagrined and vexed at my ill luck, and was angry with myself for playing.

"Come along then; this door will bring us to the stairs."

As we passed along hastily through the crowd, I saw that a young officer, in a hussar uniform, whispered something in Duchesne's ear, to which he quickly replied—"Certainly;" and as he spoke again in the same low tone, Duchesne answered—"Agreed, sir," with a courteous smile, and a look of much pleasure.

"Well, Burke," said he, turning to me, "these are about the most splendid salons in Paris—I think I never saw more perfect taste—I certainly must thank you for being my chaperon here."

"You forget, Duchesne, the Duchesse de Montserrat, it seems," said I, laughing.

"By Jove, and so I had," said he; "yet the initiative lay with you. How the termination may be, is another matter," added he, in a mumbling voice, not intended to be heard.

"At all events," said I, puzzled what to say, and feeling I should say something; "I am happy your Russian friend took no notice of your speech."

"And why?" said he, with a peculiar smile—"and why?"

"I abhor a duel, in the first place."

"But, my dear boy, that speech smacks much more of the Ecole de Jesuites, than of St. Cyr. Don't let any one less your friend than I am, hear you say so."

"I care not who may hear it. Necessity may make me meet an adversary in single combat; but as to acting the cold-blooded part of bystander—as to being the witness of my friend's crime, or his own death ——"

"Come, come—when you exchange the Dolman for an Alb, I'll listen to this from you, if I can listen to it from any one; but happily now we have no time for more morality, for here comes the carriage."

Chatting pleasantly about the soirée and its company, we rolled along towards our quarters, and parted with a cordial shake of the hand for the night.

CHAPTER LVI.

A "SALLE DE POLICE.'

When I entered the breakfast-room the following morning, I found Duchesne stretched before the fire, in an easy chair, busily engaged in reading the *Moniteur* of that day where a long list of imperial "ordonances" nearly filled three columns.

"Here have I been," said he, "conning over this catalogue of princely favour these twenty minutes, and yet cannot discern one word of our well-beloved cousins Captains Burke and Duchesne; and yet there seems to be a hail-storm of promotions. Some of them have got grand duchies—some, principalities—some, have the cross of the Legion—and, here, by Jove, are some endowed with wives. Now that his Majesty has taken to christening and marrying, I suppose we shall soon see him administering all the succours of holy church. Have you much interest in hearing that Talleyrand is to be called Prince of Benevente, and Murat is now Grand Duke of Berg; that Sebastiani is to be married to Mademoiselle de Coigny; and Monsieur Decazes, fils de M. Decazes, has taken some one else to wife. Oh dear, oh dear! It's all very tiresome, and not even the féte of St. Napoleon ——"

"Of whom?" said I, laughing.

"St. Napoleon—*parbleu!*—it's no joking matter, I assure you—here is the letter of the cardinal legate to the archbishops and bishops of France, commanding that the first Sunday in the August of each year should be set apart to celebrate his saintship, with an account of the processions to take place, and various plenary indulgences to the pious who shall present themselves on the occasion. Fouché could tell you the names of some people who bled freely, to get rid of all this trumpery; and, in good sooth, it's rather hard, if we could not endure St. Louis, to be obliged to tolerate St. Napoleon—Saints, like Bourdeaux wine, being all the more palatable, when they have age to mellow them. I could forgive any thing, however, but this system of forced marriages; it smacks too much of old Frederick for my taste; and one cannot always have the luck of your friend General D'Auvergne."

I felt my cheek grow burning hot at the words; Duchesne did not notice my confusion, but continued:—"And yet, of all the ill-assorted unions for which his sainted Majesty will have to account hereafter, that was unquestionably the most extraordinary."

"But I have heard, and I believe it too, that the marriage was not of the Emperor's making; it was purely a matter of liking."

"Come, come, Burke," said he laughing, "you will not tell me that the handsomest girl at the court, with a large dowry, an ancient name,

and every advantage of position, marries an old weather-beaten soldier, the senior officer of her own father, once, of her own free-will and choice. The thing is absurd. No, no. These are the imperial recompenses, when grand duchies are scarce, and confiscations few. The Emperor does not travel for nothing: he brought back with him from Egypt something beside his Mameluke guard—that clever trick the Pachas have of providing a favourite with an ex-sultana. There, there—don't look so angrily: we shall both be marshals of France one of these days, and that may reconcile one to a great deal."

"You are determined to owe nothing of your promotion to a blind devotion to Napoleon—that's certain," said I, annoyed at the tone of insolent disparagement in which he spoke.

"You are right—perfectly right there," replied he, in a quiet tone of voice. "No man would rather hug himself up in an illusion, if he could but make it minister to his pleasure or his enjoyment; but when it does neither—when the material is so flimsy as to be seen through at every minute, I throw it from me as a worthless garment, unfit to wear."

"Can you, then, deem Napoleon's glory such?"

"Of course, to me, it is. How am I a sharer in his triumphs, save as the charger that marches in the cavalcade? You don't perceive that I, as the descendant of an old loyalist family, would have fared far better with the Bourbons, from reasons of blood and kindred; and a hundred times better with the Jacobins, from very recklessness."

"How then came it——"

"I will spare you the question. I neither liked emigration, nor the guillotine, and preferred the slow suffering of *ennui*, to the quick death of the scaffold. There has been but one career in France for many a day past. I adopted it, as much from necessity as choice—I followed it, more from habit than either."

"But you cannot be insensible to the greatness of your country, nor her success in arms."

"Nor am I; but these things are a small ingredient in patriotism. You, the stranger, share with us all our triumphs in the field. But the inherent features of a nation—the distinctive traits of which every son of the soil feels proud—where are they now? What is France to me more than to you? One half my kindred are exiled—of those who remain, many regard me as a renegade. Their properties confiscated, themselves suspected, what tie binds them to this country? You are not more an alien, here, than I am.'

"And yet, Duchesne, you shed your blood freely for this same cause you condemn. You charged the Pratzen, some days ago, with four squadrons, against a whole column of Russian cavalry."

"Ay—and would again to-morrow, boy. Had you been a gambler I needn't have told you, that it is the game, not the stake, that interests the real gamester. But come, do not fancy I want to make you a convert to these tiresome theories of mine. What say you to the pretty Mademoiselle Pauline?—did you admire her much?"

"She is unquestionably very handsome; but, if I must confess it, her manner towards me was too ungracious to make me loud in her praise."

"I like that, I vow," said Duchesne, "that saucy air has an indescribable charm for me. I don't know if it is not the very thing which pleases me most about her. She has been spoiled by flattery and admiration; for her beauty and her fortune are prizes in the great wheel. And that she is aware of the fact is nothing wonderful, considering that she hears it repeated every evening of her life, by every rank in the service, from a marshal of France down to —— a captain in the *chasseurs-à-chéval*," said he, laughing.

"Who probably was one of the last to tell her so," said I, looking at him slyly.

"What have we here?" said he suddenly, without paying any attention to my remark, as he again took up the *Moniteur*—"It is rumoured that the Russian Prince, Dobretski, was dangerously wounded this morning in an affair of honour; the names of the other party and the seconds are still unknown; but the efforts of the police, stimulated by the express command of the Emperor, will, it is to be hoped, succeed in discovering them ere long."

"Is not that the name of your Russian friend of last night, Duchesne?"

"Yes, and the same person too, formerly Russian minister at Madrid, and latterly residing on his parole at Paris," continued he, reading from the paper, "'The very decided part his majesty has taken against the practice of duelling, is strengthened on this occasion by a recent order of council respecting the prisoners on parole.' *Diable!* Burke, what a scrupulous turn Napoleon seems to have taken in regard to these Cossacks. And here follows a long list of witnesses, who have seen nothing, and suspicious circumstances, that occur every morning in the week, without remark. After all, I don't think the empire has advanced us much on the score of police—the same threadbare jests, the same old practical jokes amused the bourgeoisie in the time of Louis XIV."

"I don't clearly understand your meaning."

"It is simply this; that every government of France, from Pepin downwards, has understood the value of throwing public interest from time to time on a false scent, and to this end has maintained a police. Now, if for any cause his majesty thought proper to incarcerate that Russian prince in the Temple, or *La Force*, the affair would cause a tremendous sensation in Paris, and soon would ring over the whole of Germany, and the rest of Europe, with every variation of despotism, tyranny, and all that, attached to it, long before any advantages to be derived from the step could be realized. Whereas see the effect of an opposite policy. By this report of a duel, for instance—I don't mean to assert it false, here—the whole object is attained, and an admirable subject of imperial praise obtained into the bargain. Governments have learned wisdom from the cuttle-fish, and can muddy the water on

their enemies at the moment of danger. I should not be surprised if the affairs of the bank looked badly this morning."

"It is evident, then, you disbelieve the whole statement about the duel."

"My dear friend," said he, smiling, "who is there in all Paris, from Mont Martre to St. Denis, believes, or disbelieves any one thing in the times we live in? Have we not trusted so implicitly for years past to the light of our reason, that we have actually injured our eyesight with its brilliancy. Little reproach, indeed, to our minds, when our very senses seem to mislead us—when one sees the people who enter the Tuileries now, with embroidered coats, who, in our fathers' days, never came nearer to it than the Place de Carrousel. *Helas!* it's no time for incredulity, that's certain. But to conclude," said he, turning to the paper once more—"'The *commissaires de police* throughout Paris have received orders to spare no effort to unravel the mystery, and detect the other parties in this unhappy affair.' Military tribunal—prisoners on parole—rights of hospitality—honour of France—and the old peroration—the usual compliment on the wisdom which presides over every department of state. How weary I do become of all this. Let your barber puff his dye for the whiskers, or your boot-maker the incomparable effulgence of his blacking, the thing is in keeping, no one objects to it. I don't find fault with my old friend Pigault Lebrun, if he now and then plays the critic on himself, and shows the world the beauties they neglectfully slurred over. But, Burke, have you ever seen a *Bureau de Police?*"

"Never; and I have the greatest curiosity to do so."

"Come, then, I'll be your guide; the *commissaire* of this quarter has a very extended jurisdiction, stretching away towards the Bois de Boulogne; and if there be any thing in this report, he is certain to know it; and assuredly, no other topic will be talked of till to-morrow evening, for it's not opera night, and Talma does not play either."

I willingly accepted this proposition; and when our breakfast was over, we mounted our horses, and set out for the place in question.

"If the forms of justice where we are now going," said Duchesne, "be divested of much of their pomp and ceremony, be assured of one thing, it is not at the expense of the more material essence. Of all the police tribunals about Paris, this obscure den in the Rue de Dix Sous is the most effective. Situated in a quarter where crime is as rife as fever in the Pontine Marshes, it has become acquainted with the haunts and habits of the lowest class in Paris—the lowest class, probably, in any city of Europe. Watching with parental solicitude, it tracks the criminal from his first step in vice, to his last deed in crime; from his petty theft, to his murder. Knowing the necessities to which poverty impels men, and studying with attention the impulses that grow up amid despair and hunger, it sees motives, through a mist of intervening circumstances that would baffle less subtle observers—and can trace the tortuous windings of crime, where no other sight could find the clue. Is it not strange, to think with what ingenuity men will investigate the minute anatomy of vice, and how little they will do to apply this

knowledge to its remedy? Like the surgeon, enamoured of his operating skill, he would rather exhibit his dexterity on the amputation, than his science in saving the limb. Such is the Bureau of the Police in the poorer quarters. In the more fashionable ones it takes a higher flight, amusing the world with its scenes, alternately humorous and pathetic, it forms a kind of feature in the literature of the period, and is the only reading of thousands. In these places the *commissaire* is usually a *bon vivant*, and a wit; despising the miserable function of administering the law, he takes his seat upon the bench, to cap jokes with the witnesses, puzzle the complainant, and embarrass the prisoner. To the reporters, alone, is he civil; and in return, his poor witticisms appear in the morning papers, with the usual 'loud laughter,' that never existed, save in type."

As we thus chatted, we entered a quarter of dirty and narrow streets, inhabited by a poor-looking, squalid population—the women, with little to mark their sex in their coarse heavy countenances, wore coloured kerchiefs on their heads, in lieu of a cap, and were, for the most part, without shoes or stockings. The men, a brutalized, stupid race, sat smoking in the door-ways—scarcely lifting their eyes as we passed; or some were eating a coarse morsel of black rye bread, which, by their eagerness in devouring it, seemed an unusual delicacy.

"You scarcely believed there was such poverty in Paris," said he, "but this is by no means the worst of the quarter. Though M. de Champagny,' in his late report, makes no mention of these 'signs of prosperity,' we are now entering the region where, even in noon day, the passage is deemed perilous—but the number of police agents on duty to-day, will make the journey a safe one."

The street we entered at the moment consisted of a mass of tall houses, almost falling from decay and neglect; scarcely a window remained in many of them—while in front, a row of miserable booths, formed of rude planks, narrowed the passage to a mere path, scarce wide enough for three people abreast. There, vice of every description and drunkenness, waited not for the dark hours to shroud them, but came forth in the sunlight—the ruffian shouts of intoxication mingling with the almost maniacal laugh of misery, or the reckless chorus of some degrading song. Half-naked wretches leaned from the windows as we passed along, some staring in stupid wonderment at our appearance; others saluting us with mockery and grimace—or even calling out to us in the slang dialect of the place.

"Yes," said Duchesne, as he saw the expression of horror and disgust the scene impressed on me, "here are the rotting seeds of revolutions, putrifying, to germinate at some future day. Starvation and vice, misery, even to despair, inhabit every den around you. The furious and blood-thirsty wretch of '92, the Chouan, the Jacobite, the escaped galley-slave, the untaken murderer, are here, side by side—crime their great bond of union. To this place men come for an assassin, or a false witness, as to a market. Such are the wrecks, the retiring waves of a revolution have left us. So long as the trade of blood lasted, openly, like vultures, they fattened on it; but once, the

reign of order restored, they were driven to murder and outrage as a livelihood."

While he was speaking, we approached a narrow arched passage, within which a flight of stone steps arose. "We dismount here," said he; at the same moment a group of ragged creatures, of every age, surrounded us to hold our horses, not noticing the orderly who rode at some distance behind us. I followed Duchesne up the steps, and along a gloomy corridor, to a little court-yard, where several dismounted gendarmes were standing in a circle, chatting. Passing through this, we entered a dirty, mean-looking house, around the door of which several people were collected, some of whom saluted the chevalier as he came up.

"Who are these fellows?" said I, "they seem to know you."

"Oh! nothing but the common police spies," said he, carelessly; "the fellows who lounge about the cabarets, and the low gambling houses. But, here comes one of higher mark." As he spoke, he laid his hand on the arm of a tall, powerful-looking man, in a blouse—he wore immense whiskers, and a great beard, descending far below his chin. "Ah! Bocquin, what have we got going forward to-day? I came to show a young friend here the interior of your *salle*."

"Monsieur le Capitaine, your most obedient," said the man, in a deep voice, as he removed his casquette, and bowed ceremoniously to us; "and yours, also, Monsieur," added he, turning to me. "Why, there's nothing to speak of save that duel, capitaine."

"Come, come, Bocquin, no nonsense with me. What was that story got up for?"

"Ah! you mistake there," said Bocquin. "By Jove! there's a man badly wounded—shot through the neck—and no one to tell a word about it. No seconds present—the thing done quite privately—the wounded man left at his own door, and the other off—heaven knows where."

"And you believe this tale, Bocquin," said Duchesne superciliously.

"Believe it!—that I do. I have been to see the place where the man lay; and, by tracking the wheel-marks, I have discovered they came from the Champs Elysées. The cabriolet, too, was a private one—no fiacre has got so narrow a tire to the wheel."

"Closely followed up—eh, Burke?" said the chevalier, turning towards me with a smile of admiration at his sagacity. "Go on, Bocquin."

"Well, I followed the scent to the Barriere de l'Etoile, where I learned that one cabriolet passed towards the Bois de Boulogne, and returned in about half an hour. As the pace was a sharp one, I guessed they could not have gone far, and so I turned into the wood at the first road to the right, where there is least recourse of people, and, by Jove! I was all correct. There, in a small open space between the trees, I saw the marks of recent footsteps, and a little farther on found the grass all covered with blood——"

"Monsieur Bocquin! Monsieur Bocquin! the *commissaire* wants you," cried a voice from the landing of the stair; and with an apo-

logy for leaving thus suddenly, he turned away. We followed, however, curious to hear the remainder of this singular history ; and, after some difficulty, succeeded in gaining admittance to a small room, now densely crowded with people, the most of whom were of the very lowest class. The *commissaire* speedily made place for us beside him on the bench ; for, like every one else in any conspicuous position, he also was an acquaintance of Duchesne.

While the *commissaire* conversed with Bocquin in a low tone, we had time to observe the *salle* and its occupants. Except the witnesses, two or three of whom were respectable persons, they were the squalid-looking, ragged wretches of the quarter, listening with the greedy appetite of crime to any tale of bloodshed. The surgeon, who had just returned from visiting the wounded man, was waiting to be examined. To him now the *commissaire* directed his attention. It appeared that the wound was by no means of the dangerous character described, being merely through the fleshy portion of the neck, without injuring any part of importance. Having described circumstantially the extent of the injury, and its probable cause, he replied to a question of the *commissaire*, that no entreaty could persuade the wounded man to give any explanation of the occurrence, nor mention the name of his adversary. Duchesne paid little apparent attention to the evidence, and before it was concluded, asked me if I were satisfied with my police experience, and disposed to move away. Just at this moment there was a stir among the people around the door, and we heard the officers of the court cry out—"Room! make way there!" and the same moment General Duroc entered, accompanied by an aide-de-camp. He had been sent specially by the Emperor to ascertain what progress the investigation had made. His majesty had determined to push the inquiry to its utmost limits. The general appeared dissatisfied with the little prospect there appeared of elucidation ; and, turning to Duchesne, remarked—

"This is peculiarly ill-timed just now, as negociations are pending with Russia, and the prince's family are about the person of the Czar."

"But as the wound would seem of little consequence, in a few days, perhaps, the whole thing may blow over," said Duchesne.

"It is for that very reason," replied Duroc, earnestly, "that we are pressed for time. The object is to mark the sentiments of his Majesty, *now*. Should the prince be once pronounced out of danger, it will be too late for sympathy."

"Oh! I perceive," said Duchesne, smiling ; "your observation is most just. If my friends here, however, cannot put you on the track, I fear you have little to hope for elsewhere."

"I am aware of that, and Monsieur Cauchois knows the great reliance his Majesty reposes in his skill and activity."

Monsieur Cauchois, the *commissaire*, bowed with a most respectful air at the compliment, probably of all others the highest that could be paid him.

"A brilliant soirée we had last evening, Duchesne," said the general.

"I hope this unhappy affair will not close that house at present. You are aware the prince is the suitor of mademoiselle?"

"I only suspected as much," said the chevalier, with a peculiar smile. "It was my first evening there."

As General Duroc addressed a few words in a low tone to the *commissaire*, the man called Bocquin approached the bench, and handed up a small slip of paper to Duchesne. The chevalier opened it, and having thrown his eyes over it, passed it into my hand. All I could see were two words, written coarsely with the pencil—"How much?"

The chevalier turned the back of the paper, and wrote—"Fifty Napoleons."

On reading which the large man tore the scrap, and nodding slightly with his head, sauntered from the room. We rose a few moments after, and having taken a formal leave of the general and the *commissaire*, proceeded towards the street, where we had left our horses. As we passed along the corridor, however, we found Bocquin awaiting us. He opened a door into a small mean-looking apartment, of which he appeared the owner. Having ushered us in, and cautiously closed it behind him, he drew from his pocket a piece of cloth, to which a button and a piece of gold embroidery were attached.

"Your jacket would be spoiled without this morsel, captain," said he, laughing in a low dry laugh.

"So it would, Bocquin," said Duchesne, examining his coat, which I now perceived was torn on the shoulder, and a small piece, the exact one in his hand, wanting, but which had escaped my attention from the mass of gold lace and embroidery with which it was covered.

"Do you know, Bocquin," said Duchesne, in a tone much graver than he had used before, "I never noticed that."

"*Parbleu!* I believe you," said he, laughing; "nor did I, till you sat on the bench; when I was so pleased with your coolness, I could not, for the life of me, interrupt you."

"Have you got any money, Burke?" said the chevalier; "some twenty gold pieces"——

"No, no, captain," said Bocquin, "not now—another time. I must call upon you one of these mornings about another affair, and it will be time enough then."

"As you please, Bocquin," said the chevalier, putting up his purse again: "and so, till we meet."

"Till we meet, gentlemen," replied the other, as he bowed us respectfully to the door.

"You seem to have but a very faint comprehension of all this, Burke," said Duchesne, as he took my arm. "You look confoundedly puzzled, I must say."

"If I didn't, I should be an admirable actor—that's all," said I.

"Why, I think the thing is plain enough, in all conscience; Bocquin found that piece of my jacket on the ground, and, of course, the affair was in his hands."

"Why, do you mean to say——"

"That I shot Monsieur le Prince—this morning, at a quarter past

seven o'clock—and felt devilish uncomfortable about it, till the last ten minutes, my boy. If I did not confide the matter to you before, it was because that until all chance of detection was past, I could not expose you to the risk of an examination before the prefet de police. Happily now these dangers are all over. Bocquin is too clever a fellow, not to throw all the other spies on a wrong scent, so that we need have no fear of the result." I could scarcely credit the evidence of my senses, at the coolness and duplicity of the chevalier throughout an affair of such imminent risk, nor was I less astonished at the account he gave me of the whole proceeding.

One word, on leaving the *soirée*, had decided there should be a meeting the following day; and as the Russian well knew the danger of his adversary from the law, which was recently passed regarding prisoners on parole, he proposed they should meet, without seconds on either side. Duchesne acceded; and it was arranged, that the chevalier should drive along the Rue de Rivoli, at seven the next morning, where the Russian would join him, and they should drive together to the Bois de Boulogne.

"To do my Cossack, justice," said Duchesne, "he behaved admirably throughout the whole affair; and on taking his place beside me in the cab, entered into conversation freely and easily on the topics of the day. We chatted of the campaign—of the cavalry—of the Russian service—their size and equipment, only needing a higher organization to make them first-rate troops. We spoke of the Emperor Alexander, of whom he was evidently proud, and much pleased to hear the favourable opinion Napoleon entertained of his ability, and capacity; and it was in the middle of an anecdote about Savary and the Czar, we arrived at the Bois de Boulogne.

"I need not tell you the details of the affair, save that we loaded our own pistols, and stepped the ground ourselves. They were like other things of the same sort—the first shot concluded the matter. I aimed at his shoulder, but the pistol threw high. As to his bullet, it was only a while ago I knew it went so near me. It was nervous work, passing the barrier; for had he not made an effort to sit up straight in the cab, the sentry might have detained and examined us. All that you heard about his being left at his own door, covered with blood, and fainting, I need not tell you, has no truth. I never left the spot till the door was opened, and I saw him in the hands of a servant. Of course I concealed my face, and then drove off, at full speed."

By this time we arrived at the Luxembourg, and Duchesne, with all the coolness in the world, joined a knot of persons engaged in discussing the duel, and endeavouring, by sundry clever and ingenious explanations, to account for the circumstance.

As I sauntered along to my quarters, I pondered over the adventure, and the character of the chevalier; and however I might turn the matter in my mind, one thought was ever uppermost—a sincere wish that I had not been made his confidant in the secret.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE RETURN OF THE WOUNDED.

A FEW mornings after this occurrence, when, as Duchesne himself prophesied, all memory of it was completely forgotten, the *ordre du jour* from the Tuileries commanded all the troops, then garrisoned in Paris, to be under arms, at an early hour, in the Champs Elysées, when the Emperor would pass them in review. The spectacle had, however, another object, which was not generally known. The convoys of the wounded from Austerlitz were that same day to arrive at Paris, and the display of troops was intended at once to honour this *entrée,* and give to the sad procession of the maimed and dying, the semblance of a triumph. Such were the artful devices which ever ministered to the deceit of the nation, and suffered them to look on but one side of their glory.

As I anticipated, the chevalier was greatly out of temper at the whole of this proceeding. He detested nothing more than those military displays which are got up for the populace; he despised the exhibition of troops to the vulgar and unmeaning criticism of tailors and barbers; and, more than all, he shrunk from the companionship of the national guard of Paris—those shop-keeping soldiers, with their umbrellas and spectacles, who figured with such pride on these occasions.

"Another affair like this," said he, passionately, "and I'd resign my commission. A procession at the Porte St. Martin—the *bœuf gras* on Easter Monday—I'm your man for either; but to sit bolt upright on your saddle for three, maybe, four hours—to be stared at by every Bourgeois from the Rue de Bac—to be pointed at with pink parasols—and compared with some ribbon-vender of the Boulevards. Par St. Louis! I can't even bear to think of it. Look yonder," said he, pointing to the court of the palace, where already a regiment was drawn up, under arms, and passing in inspection before the colonel. "There begins the dress-rehearsal already. His Majesty says midday—the generals of division draw out their men at eleven o'clock—the colonels take a look at their corps at ten—the *chefs de bataillon* at nine—and, *parbleu!* the corporals are at work by day-break. Then, what confounded drilling and dressing up, as if Napoleon could detect the slightest waving of the line over two leagues of ground; while you see the luckless adjutants flying hither and thither, cursing, imprecating, and threatening, and hastily reiterating at the head of each company —'Remember, men—be sure to remember—that when the drums beat to arms, you shout—"Vive l'Empereur!"' Rely upon it, Burke, if we

had but one half of these preparations before a battle, we'd not be the dangerous fellows those Russians and Austrians think us."

"Come, come," said I, "you shall not persuade me, that the soldiers feel no pride on these occasions. The same men who fight so valiantly for their Emperor"——

"Stop there, I beg of you," said he, bursting into a fit of laughter. "I must really cry halt now. So long as you live, my dear friend, let nothing induce you to repeat that worn cant—Fight for their Emperor! why, they fought as bravely for Turenne, and Villars, and Maréchal Saxe; they were as full of courage under Moreau, and Kleber, and Dessaix, and Hoche; ay, and will be again, when the Emperor is no more; and, heaven knows who stands in his place. The genius of a French army is fighting, not for gain, nor plunder, nor even for glory, so much as for fighting itself; and he is the best man who gives them most of it. What reduced the reckless hordes of the revolution to habits of discipline and obedience, but the warlike spirit of their leaders, whose bravery they respected; and, think you, Napoleon himself does not feel this in his heart, and know the necessity of continual war, to feed the insatiable appetite of his followers. In a word, my friend," added he, in a tone of mock solemnity, "we are a great people, and nature intended us to be so, by giving us a language in which 'gloire' rhymes with 'victoire,' and 'François' with 'succès;' and now for the march, for, I fancy, we are late enough already."

There are few sources of annoyance more poignant, than to discover any illusion we have long indulged in, assailed by the sneers and sarcasms of another, who assumes a tone of superior wisdom on the faith of a difference of opinion. The mass of our likings and dislikings find their way into our heart, more from impulse than reason, and when attacked, are scarcely defensible by any effort of the understanding. This very fact renders us more painfully alive to their preservation, and we shrink instinctively from any discussion of them. While such is the case, we feel more bitterly the cruelty of him, who out of mere wantonness, can sport with the sources of our happiness, and assail the hidden stores of so many of our pleasures, for, unhappily, the mockery once listened to, lies associated with the idea for ever.

Already had Duchesne stripped me of more than one delusion, and made me feel, that I was but indulging in a deceptive happiness in my dream of life; and often did I regret that I ever knew him. It is not enough to feel the sophistry of one's adversary—you should be able to detect and expose it, otherwise the triumphant tone he assumes gives an air of victory, which ends by imposing on yourself; and of this, I felt now convinced in my own case.

These thoughts rendered me silent, as we wended our way towards the Tuileries, where the various officers of the staff, and the corps d'Elite were assembled. Here we found several of the marshals in waiting for the Emperor, while the Mameluke guard, in all the splendour of its gay equipments, stood around the great entrance of the palace. Many handsome equipages were also there—one conspicuous above the rest, for its livery of white and gold, with four outriders,

belonged to Madame Murat, the grand Duchess of Berg, whose taste for splendour and show extended to every department of her household.

At last there was a movement in those nearest the palace: the drums beat to arms; the guard within the vestibule presented, and the Emperor appeared, followed by a brilliant staff. He stood for a few seconds on the steps—his hands clasped behind his back, and his head a little bent forwards, as if in thought—then drawing himself up, he looked with a gaze of proud composure on the crowd that filled the court of the palace, and where now all was silent and still. Never before had I remarked the same imperious expression of his features; but as his eye ranged over the brilliant array, now, I could read the innate consciousness of superiority in which he excelled. Ney, Murat, Victor, Bessieres—how little seemed they all before that mighty genius, whose glory they but reflected.

Oh! how lightly, then, did I deem the mocking jests of Duchesne, or all that his spirit of sarcasm could invent. There, stood the conqueror of Italy and Egypt—the victor of Marengo and Austerlitz, looking every inch a monarch and a soldier. Whether from thoughtless inattention, or studied affectation, I cannot say, but at that moment, when all stood in respectful silence before the Emperor, Duchesne had approached the grille of the palace—next the place de Carrousel, and was busily chatting with a pretty-looking girl, who, with a number of others, sat in a hired *caleche.* A hearty burst of laughter at something he said, rang through the court, and turned every eye in that direction. In an instant the Emperor's eagle glance pierced the distance, and fastened on the Chevalier, who, seated carelessly on one side of his saddle, paid no attention to what was going forward, when suddenly an aide-de-camp touched him on the arm, and said—

"Monsieur Le Capitaine Duchesne, his Majesty the Emperor would speak with you."

Duchesne turned—a faint, a very faint flush covered his cheek, and, putting spurs to his horse, he galloped up to the front of the terrace, where the Emperor was standing. From the distance at which I stood, to hear what passed was impossible; but I watched, with a most painful interest, the scene before me.

The Emperor's attitude was unchanged, as the Chevalier rode up; and when Duchesne himself seemed to listen with a respectful manner to the words of his Majesty, I could see, by his easy bearing, that his self-possession had never deserted him. The interview lasted not many minutes, when the Emperor waved his hand haughtily, and the Chevalier, saluting with his sabre, backed his horse some paces, and then, wheeling round, rapidly galloped towards the gate, through which he passed.

"This evening, then, Mademoiselle," said he with a smile, "I hope to have the honour ——," and, with a courteous bow, rode on towards the arch-way opening on the quay.

"What has happened?" said I eagerly, to the officer at my side.

He shook his head, as if doubtful, and half fearing even to whisper at the moment.

"His privilege of the *elite* is withdrawn, sir," said an old general officer. "He must leave Paris to join his regiment in twenty-four hours."

"Poor fellow!" muttered I half-aloud, when a savage frown from the veteran officer corrected my words.

"What, sir!" said he in a low voice, where every word was thickened to a guttural sound. "What, sir! is the court of the Tuileries no more than a canteen or a bivouac? *Par dieu*, if it was not for his laced jacket he had been degraded to the ranks—ay, and deserved it too."

The coarse accents and underbred tone of the speaker showed me at once that he was one of the old generals of the republican army, who never could endure the descendants of aristocratic families in the service, and were too willing always to attribute to insolence and premeditated affront even the slightest breaches of military etiquette. Meanwhile the Emperor mounted, and accompanied by the officers of his staff, rode forward towards the Champs Elysées, while all of lesser note followed at a distance.

From the garden of the Tuileries to the Barrier de l'Etoile, the troops were ranged in four lines, the cavalry of the guard and the artillery forming the ranks along the road by which the convoy must pass. It was a bright day, with a clear, frosty atmosphere and a blue sky, and well suited the brilliant spectacle.

Scarcely had the Emperor issued from the Tuileries when ten thousand shouts of "Vive l'Empereur," rent the air—the cannon of the Invalides thundered forth at the same moment, and the crash of the military bands added their loud clangor to the sounds of joy. He rode slowly along the line, stopping frequently to speak with some of the soldiers, and giving orders to his suite concerning them. Of the officers in his staff that day, the greater number had been wounded at Austerlitz, and still bore the traces of their injuries. Rapp displayed a tremendous scar from a sabre across his cheek—Sebastiani wore his sword-arm in a sling—and Friant, unable to mount his horse, followed the Emperor on foot, leaning on a stick, and walking with great difficulty.

The sight of these brave men, whose devotion to Napoleon had been proved on so many battle-fields, added to the interest of the scene, and tended to excite popular enthusiasm to its utmost; but on Napoleon, still, all eyes were bent. The general, who led their armies to victory—the monarch, who raised France to the proudest place among the nations—was there, within a few paces of them. Each word he spoke was sinking deeply into some heart, prouder of that moment than of rank or riches.

So slow was the Emperor's progress along the ranks, that it was near three o'clock before he had arrived at the extremity of the line. The cavalry were now ordered to form in squadrons, and move past in close order. While this movement was effecting, a cannon-shot at the barrier announced the approach of the convoy. The cavalry were halted in line once more, and the same moment the first wagon of the

train appeared above the summit of the hill. So secretly had the whole been managed, that none, save the officers of the various staffs, knew what was coming. While each look was turned then towards the barrier in astonishment, gradually the wagon rolled on, another followed, and another. These were, however, but the ambulances of the hospitals, and now the wounded themselves came in sight, a white flag—that well-known signal—waving in front of each wagon, while a guard of honour, consisting of picked men of the different regiments, rode at either side. One loud cheer—a shout echoed back from the Tuileries itself—rung out, as the soldiers saw their brave companions restored to them once more. With that impulse which, even in discipline, French soldiers never forget, the men rushed forward to the wagons, and in a moment officers and men were in the arms of their comrades. What a scene it was, to see the poor and wasted forms, mangled by shot, and maimed of limb, brightening up again, as home and friends surrounded them—to hear their faint voices mingle with the questions for this one, or for that, while the fate of some brave fellow met but one word in elegy. On they passed—a sad train, but full of glorious memories. There, were the grenadiers of Oudinot, who carried the Russian centre; eleven wagons are filled with their wounded. Here come the voltigeurs of Bernadotte's brigade. See how the fellows preserve their ancient repute—cheering and laughing—ever the same, whether roistering at midnight in the Faubourg St. Antoine, or rushing madly upon the ranks of the enemy. There, are the dragoons of Nansouty, who charged the imperial guard of Russia. See the proud line that floats on their banner—"All wounded by the sabre." And here, come the cuirassiers of the guard, with a detachment of their own, as escort. How splendidly they look in the bright sun, and how proudly they come. As I looked, the Emperor rode forward, bareheaded, his whole staff uncovered. "*Chapeau bas*, Messieurs," said he, in a loud voice—"honour to the brave in misfortune!" Just then the escort halted, and I heard a laugh in front, close to where the Emperor was standing; but from the crowded staff around him, could not see what was going forward.

"What is it?" said I, curious to learn the least incident of the scene.

"Advance a pace or two, Captain," said the young officer I addressed, "you can see it all." I did so, and then beheld—oh! with what delight and surprise—my poor friend Pioche seated on the driving-seat of a gun, with his hand in salute, as the Emperor spoke to him.

"Thou wilt not have promotion, nor a pension—what, then, can I do for thee?" said Napoleon, smiling. "Hast any friend in the service whom I could advance for thy sake?"

"Yes, *parbleu!*" said Pioche, scratching his forehead, with a sort of puzzle and confusion, even the Emperor smiled at, "I have a friend; but mayhap those wouldn't like ——"

"Ask me for nothing—thou thinkest I could not—ought not to grant," said the Emperor sternly. "What is't now?"

The poor corporal seemed thoroughly nonplussed, and for a second or two could not reply. At last, as if summoniug all his courage for the effort, he said—"Well, thou can'st but refuse, and then the fault will be all thine; she is a brave girl, and had she been a man ——"

"Whom can he mean?" said Napoleon. "Is the man's head wandering?"

"No, *mon general*—all right there—that shell has turned many a sabre's edge. I was talking of Minette, the vivandiere of ours. If thou are so bent on doing me a service, why, promote *her*, and thou'lt make the whole regiment proud of it."

This speech was lost in the laugh, which, beginning with the Emperor, extended to the staff, and at last to all the bystanders.

"Dost wish I should make her one of my aide-de-camps?" said Napoleon, still laughing.

"*Parbleu!* thou hast more ill-favoured ones among them," said Pioche, with a significant look at the grim faces of Rapp and Daru, whose hard and weather-beaten features never deigned a smile, while every other face was moved in laughter.

"But thou hast not said, yet, what I am to do," rejoined the Emperor.

"Thou used not to be so hard to understand," grumbled out Pioche. "I have seen the time thou'd have said—'Is it Minette that was wounded at the Adige?—is that the girl stood in the square at Marengo? *Parbleu!*—I'll give her the cross of the Legion."

"And she shall have it, Corporal Pioche," said Napoleon, as he detached the decoration he wore on the breast of his coat. "Give the order for the Vivandiere to advance."

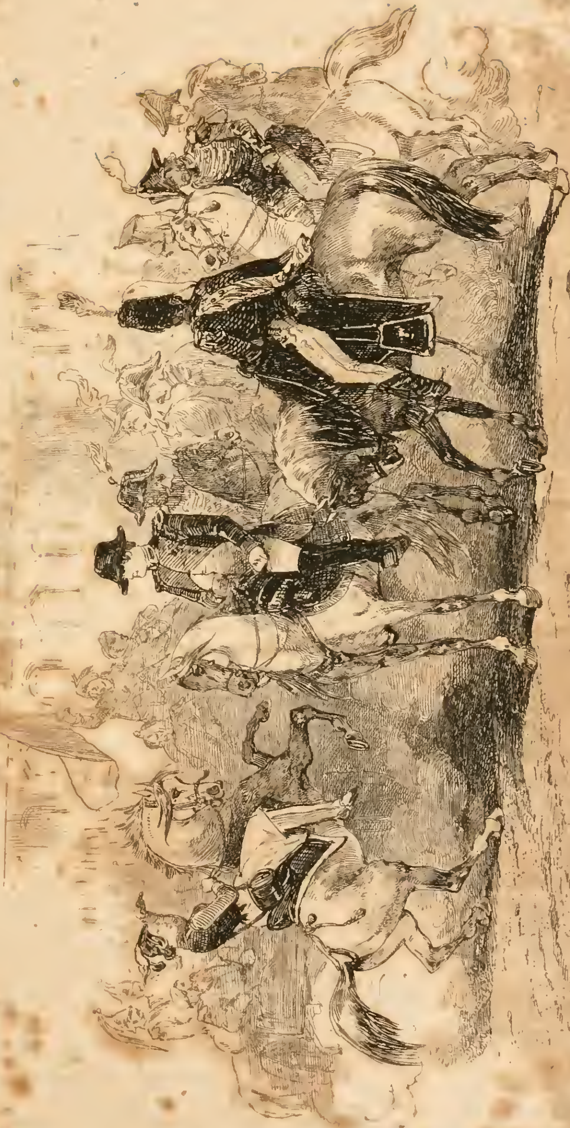
Scarce were the words spoken, when the sound of a horse pressed to his speed was heard, and mounted upon a small, but showy Arab, a present from the regiment, Minette rode up. In the bloom of health, and flushed by exercise, and the excitement of the moment, I never saw her look so handsome. Reining in her horse short, as she came in front of the Emperor, the animal reared up, almost straight, and pawed the air with his fore-legs, while she, with all the composure in life, raised her hand to her cap, and saluted the Emperor, with an action the most easy and graceful.

"Thou hast some yonder," said Pioche, with a grim smile at the staff, "would be sore puzzled to keep their saddles as well."

"Minette," said the Emperor, while he gazed on her handsome features with evident pleasure, "your name is well known to me, for many actions of kindness and self-devotion; wear this cross of the Legion of Honour; you will not value it the less, that, until now, it has been only worn by me. Whenever you find one worthy to be your husband, Minette, I will charge myself with the dowry."

"Oh, sire," said the trembling girl, as she pressed the Emperor's fingers to her lips—"oh, sire, is this real?"

"Yes, *parbleu!*" said Pioche wiping a large tear from his eye, as he spoke—"he can make thee be a man, and make me feel like a girl." As Duroc attached the cross to the button-hole of the Vivandiere's frock, she sat pale as death, totally overcome by her sensations of pride, and



unable to say more than, "Oh, sire!" which she repeated three or four times at intervals.

Again the procession moved on; other wagons followed with their brave fellows; but all the interest of the scene was now, for me at least, wrapped up in that one incident, and I took but little notice of the rest.

For full two hours the cortége continued to roll on—wagon after wagon, filled with the shattered remnants of an army: yet such was the indomitable spirit of the people—such the heartfelt passion for glory—all deemed that procession the proudest triumph of their arms. Nor was this feeling confined to the spectators; the wounded themselves leaned eagerly over the sides of the charettes, to gaze into the crowds on either side, seeking some old familiar face, and looking, through all their sufferings, proudly, on the dense mob beneath them. Some tried to cheer, and waved their powerless hands; but others, faint and heart-sick, turned their glazed eyes towards the "Invalides," whose lofty dome appeared above the trees, as though to say, that, was now their resting-place—the only one before the grave.

He who witnessed that day, could have little doubt about the guiding spirit of the French nation; nor could he distrust their willingness to sacrifice any thing—nay, all—to national glory.

Suffering and misery—wounds, ghastly and dreadful, were on every side; and yet, not one word of pity—not a look of compassion was there. These men were, in *their* eyes, far too highly placed for sympathy: theirs was that path to which all aspired; and their trophies were their own worn frames and mangled bodies.

And then, how they brightened up, as the Emperor would draw near—how even the faintest would strive to catch his eye, and gaze with parted lips on him as he spoke, as though drinking in his very words—the balm to their bruised hearts; and the faint cry of "*L'Empereur! L'Empereur!*" passed like a murmur along the line.

Not until the last wagon had defiled before him, did the Emperor leave the ground. It was then nearly dark, and already the lamps were lighted along the quays, and the windows of the Palace displayed the brilliant lustre of the preparations for a grand dinner to the Marshals.

As we moved slowly along in close order, I found myself among a group of officers of the Emperor's staff, eagerly discussing the day and its events.

"I am sorry for Duchesne," said one, "with all his impertinences, and he had enough of them; he was a brave fellow, and a glorious leader at a moment of difficulty."

"Well, well, the Emperor has, perhaps, forgiven him by this time; it is not likely he would mar the happiness of a day like this, by disgracing an officer of the '*Elite*.'"

"You are wrong, my friend; his Majesty is not sorry for the occasion, which can prove that he knows as well how to punish as to reward. Duchesne's fate is sealed. You are not old enough to remember, as I can, the morning at Lonado, where the same *ordre du*

jour conferred a mark of honour on one brother, and condemned another to be shot."

"And was this, indeed, the case?"

"Ay, was it. Many can tell you of it, as well as myself. They were both in the same regiment—the fifteenth demi-brigade of light infantry. They held a chateau, at Salo, against the enemy for eight hours, when, at length, the elder, who commanded at the front, capitulated, and laid down his arms: the younger refused to comply, and continued the fight. They were reinforced, an hour afterwards, and the Austrians beaten off. The day after, they were both tried, and the result was as I have told you—the utmost favour the younger could obtain, was, not to witness the execution of his brother."

As I heard this story, my very blood curdled in my veins, and I looked with a kind of dread on him who now rode a few paces in front of me—the stern and pitiless Napoleon.

At last we entered the court of the Tuileries, when the Emperor, dismissing his staff, entered the palace, and we separated, to follow our own plans for the evening. For a moment or two I remained uncertain which way to turn. I wished much to see Duchesne, yet scarcely hoped to meet with him, by returning to the Luxembourg. It was not the time to be away from him, at a moment like this, and I resolved to seek him out.

For above an hour I went from café to café, where he was in the habit of resorting, but to no purpose. He had not been seen in any of them during the day, so that at length I turned homeward, with the faint hope that I should see him there on my arrival.

Somehow, I never had felt more sad and depressed; and the events of the day, so far from making me participate in the general joy, had left me gloomy and desponding. My spirit was little in harmony with the gay and merry groups that passed along the streets, chanting their campaigning songs, and usually having some old soldier of the "guard" amongst them; for they felt it as a fête, and were hurrying to the "cabarets," to celebrate the day of Austerlitz.

CHAPTER LVIII.

"THE CHEVALIER."

When men of high courage and proud hearts meet with reverses in life, our anxiety is rather to learn what new channel their thoughts and exertions will take in future, than to hear how they have borne up under misfortune. I knew Duchesne too well to suppose that any turn of fate would find him wholly unprepared; but still, a public reprimand, and from the lips of the Emperor too, was of a nature to wound him to the quick; and I could not guess, nor picture to myself in what way he would bear it. The loss of grade itself was a thing of consequence; as the service of the "*élite*" was reckoned a certain promotion—not to speak of—what to him was far more important—the banishment from Paris and its salons, to some gloomy and distant encampment. In speculations like these, I returned to my quarters, where I was surprised to discover that the chevalier had not been since morning. I learned from his servant that he had dismissed him, with his horses, soon after leaving the Tuileries, and had not returned home from that time.

I dined alone that day, and sat moodily by myself, thinking over the events of the morning, and wondering what had become of my friend; and watching every sound that might tell of his coming. It is true there were many things I liked not in Duchesne: his cold sardonic spirit, his *moqueur* temperament, chilled and repelled me; but I recognised even through his own efforts at concealment, a manly tone of independence—a vigorous reliance on self, that raised him in my esteem, and made me regard him with a certain species of admiration. With his unsettled or unstable political opinions, I greatly dreaded the excess to which a spirit of revenge might carry him. I knew that the Jacobin party, and the Bourbons themselves, lay in wait for every erring member of the Imperial side; and I felt no little anxiety at the temptations they might hold out to him, at a moment when his excitement might have the mastery over his cooler judgment.

Late in the evening a government messenger arrived with a large letter addressed to him from the minister of war; and even this caused me fresh uneasiness, since I connected the despatch in my mind with some detail of duty, which his absence might leave unperformed.

It was long past midnight, as I sat, vainly endeavouring to occupy myself with a book, which each moment I laid down to listen; when suddenly I heard the roll of a *fiacre* in the court beneath—the great doors banged and closed, and the next moment the chevalier entered the room.

He was dressed in plain clothes, and looked somewhat paler than

usual; but though evidently labouring under excitement, affected his wonted ease and carelessness of manner, as, taking a chair in front of me, he sat down.

"What a day of worry and trouble this has been, my dear friend," he began; "from the moment I last saw you, to the present one, I have not rested, and with four invitations to dinner, I have not dined any where."

He paused as he said thus much, as if expecting me to say something; and I perceived that the embarrassment he felt rather increased than otherwise. I therefore endeavoured to mumble out something about his hurried departure, and the annoyance of such a sentence—when he stopped me suddenly—

"Oh, as to *that*, I fancy the matter is arranged already; I should have had a letter from the war office."

"Yes; there is one here—it came three hours ago."

He turned at once to the table, and breaking the seal, perused the packet in silence, then handed it to me, as he said—

"Read that, it will save a world of explanation."

It was dated five o'clock, and merely contained the following few words—

"His Majesty, I. and R. accepts the resignation of senior Captain Duchesne, late of the Imperial Guard; who, from the date of the present, is no longer in the service of France."

(Signed) "BERTHIER,
"Marshal of France."

A small sealed note dropped from the packet, which Duchesne took up, and broke open with eagerness.

"Ha! *parbleu!*" cried he with energy; "I thought not; see here, Burke—it is Duroc who writes—

"MY DEAR DUCHESNE—I knew there was no use in making such a proposition, and told you as much. The moment I said the word 'England,' he shouted out 'No!' in such a tone, you might have heard it, at the Luxembourg. You will perceive, then, the thing is impracticable; and perhaps, after all, for your own sake, it is better it should be so.—Yours ever, D."

"This is all mystery to me, Duchesne; I cannot fathom it in the least."

"Let me assist you—a few words will do it. I gave in my *demission* as Captain of the Guard, which, as you see, his Majesty has accepted: we shall leave it to the *Moniteur* of to-morrow to announce, whether graciously or not. I also addressed a formal letter to Duroc, to ask the Emperor's permission to visit England, on private business of my own." His eyes sparkled with a malignant lustre as he said these last words, and his cheek grew deep scarlet. "This, however, his Majesty has not granted, doubtless from private reasons of his

own, and thus we stand. Which of us, think you, has most spoiled the other's rest for this night?"

"But still I do not comprehend. What can bring you to England? You have no friends there—you've never been in that country——"

"Do you not know the very word is proscribed—that the island is covered from his eyes in the map he looks upon—that, *Perfide Albion* is the demon that haunts his dark hours, and menaces, with threatening gesture, the downfall of all his present glory? Ah! by St. Denis, boy, had I been you, it is not such an epaulette as this I had worn."

"Enough, Duchesne; I will not hear more. Not to you, nor any one, am I answerable for the reasons that have guided my conduct; nor had I listened to so much, save that such excitement as yours may make that pardonable, which in calmer moments is not so."

"You say right, Burke," said he, quickly, and with more seriousness of manner; "it is seldom I have been betrayed into such a passionate warmth as this; I hope I have not offended you. This change of circumstance will make none in our friendship. I knew it, my dear boy; and now let us turn from such tiresome topics. Where, think you, I have been spending the evening?—but how could you ever guess? Well, at the '*Odeon*,' attending Mademoiselle Pierrot, and a very pretty friend of hers—one of our Vivandieres, who happens to be in the brigade with mademoiselle's brother, and dined there to-day. She only arrived in Paris this morning; and, by Jove, there are some handsome faces in our gay salons, would scarcely stand the rivalry with hers. I must show you the fair Minette."

"Minette," stammered I; while a sickly sensation, a fear of some unknown misfortune to the poor girl, almost stopped my utterance; "I know her—she belongs to the fourth cuirassiers."

"Ah, you know her? Who would have suspected my quiet friend of such an acquaintance; and so, you never even hinted this to me. *Ma foi!* I'd have thought twice about throwing up my commission if I had seen her half an hour earlier. Come, tell me all you know of her—where does she come from?"

"Of her history I am totally ignorant; I can only tell you that her character is without stain or reproach, in circumstances where few if any, save herself, ever walked scathless. That on more than one occasion she has displayed heroism worthy of the best among us."

"Oh dear, oh dear, how disappointed I am; indeed, I half feared as much: she's a regular Vivandiere of the melodrame,—virtuous, high-minded, and intrepid. You, of course, believe all this; don't be angry, Burke; but I don't, and the reason is, I can't—the gods have made me incredulous from the cradle. I have a rooted obstinacy about me, perfectly irreclaimable; thus, I fancy Napoleon to be a Corsican—a modern marshal to be a promoted sergeant—a judge of the upper court to be a public prosecutor—and a Vivandiere of the *grande armée*——but, I'll not offend, don't be afraid, my poor fellow, even at the risk of the rivalry. Upon my life, I'm glad to see you have a heart susceptible of any little tenderness; but you cannot blame me if I'm weary of this eternal travestie of character which goes on amongst us. Why

will our republican and *sans culotte* friends try courtly airs and graces, while our real aristocracy stoop to the affected coarseness of the canaille? Is it possible, that they who wish to found a new order of things, do not see that all these pantomime costumes and characters denote nothing but change—that we are only performing a comedy after all. I scarcely expect it will be a five-act one; and, apropos of comedies, when shall we pay our respects to Madame de Lacostellerie? It will require all my diplomacy to keep my ground there, under my recent misfortune. Nothing short of a tender inquiry from the Duchesse de Montserrat, will open the doors for me. Alas, and alas! I suppose I shall have to fall back on the Faubourg."

"But is the step irrevocable, Duchesne? Can you really bring yourself to forego a career which opened with such promise?"

"And terminated with such disgrace," added he, smiling placidly.

"Nay, nay, don't affect to take it thus; your services would have placed you high, and won for you honours and rank."

"And, *ma foi*, have they not done so? Am I not a very interesting individual at this moment—more so, than at any other of my life? Are not half the powdered heads of the Faubourg plotting over my downfall, and wondering how they are to secure me to the "true cause?" Are not the hot heads of the Jacobites speculating on my admission, by a unanimous vote into their order; and has not Fouché gone to the special expense of a new police spy, solely destined to dine at the same *café*—play at the same salon—and sit in the same box of the opera, with me? Is this nothing? Well, it will be good fun after all, to set their wise brains on the wrong track, not to speak of the happiness of weeding one's acquaintance, which a little turn of fortune always effects so instantaneously."

"One would suppose from your manner, Duchesne, that some unlooked-for piece of good luck had befallen you; this event seems to have been the crowning one of your life."

"Am I not at liberty, boy? Have I not thrown the slavery behind me? Is that nothing? You may fancy your collar, because there is some gold upon it; but, trust me, it galls the neck as cursedly as the veriest brass. Come, Burke, I must have a glass of Champagne, and you must pledge me in a creaming bumper. If you don't join in the sentiment now, the time will come later on—we may be many a mile apart—ay, perhaps a whole world will divide us; but you'll remember my toast—'To him that is free.' I am sick of most things—women, wine, war, play—the game of life itself, with all its dashing and exciting interests—I have had them to satiety; but liberty has its charm—even to the palsied arm and the withered hand, freedom is dear—and why not to him who yet can strike?"

His eyes flashed fire as he spoke, and he drained glass after glass of wine, without seeming aware of what he was doing.

"If you felt thus, Duchesne, why have you remained so long a soldier?"

"I'll tell you. He who travels unwillingly along some dreary path, stops often as he goes, and looks around to see if in the sky above, or

the road beneath, some obstacle may not cross his way, and bid him turn. The faintest sound of a brewing storm—the darkening shadow of a cloud—a swollen rivulet, is enough, and straightway he yields: so men seem swayed in life by trifles, which never moved them—by accidents, which came not near their hearts. These, which the world called their disappointments, were often but the pivots of their fortune. I have had enough, nay, more than enough of all this. You must not ask the hacknied actor of the melodrame to start at the blue lights, and feel real fear at burning forests and flaming chateaus; this mock passion of the Emperor——"

"Come, my friend, that is indeed too much; unquestionably there was no feigning there."

Duchesne gave a bitter laugh; and laying his hand on my arm, said—

"My good boy, I know him well; the knowledge has cost me something—but I have it. A soldier's enthusiasm!" said he, in irony; "bah! Shall I tell you a little incident of my boyhood—I detest story telling, but this you must hear. Fill my glass—listen, and I promise you not to be lengthy."

It was the first time in our intimacy in which Duchesne referred distinctly to his past life; and I willingly accepted the offer he made, anticipating that any incident, no matter how trivial, might throw a light on the strange contrarieties of his character.

He sat for several minutes silent—his eyes turned towards the ground; a faint smile, more of sadness than aught else, played about his lips, as he muttered to himself some words I could not catch; then rallying, with a slight effort, he began thus:—but, short as his tale was, we must give him a chapter to himself.

CHAPTER LIX.

A BOYISH REMINISCENCE.

I BELIEVE I have already told you, Burke, that my family were most of them Royalists. Such as were engaged in trade, followed the fortunes of the day, and cried "*Vive la Republique*," like their neighbours. Some, deemed it better to emigrate, and wait in a foreign land, for the happy hour of returning to their own—a circumstance, by the way, which must have tried their patience ere this; and a few, trusting to their obscure position, living in out-of-the-way, remote spots, supposed, that in the general uproar, they might escape undetected, and with one or two exceptions, they were right. Among these latter was an unmarried brother of my mother, who having held a military command for a great many years in the Ile de Bourbon, retired to spend the remainder of his days in a small but beautiful chateau, on the sea side, about three leagues from Marseilles. The old viscount we (continued to call him so among ourselves, though the use of titles was proscribed long before) had met with some disappointment in love, in early life, which had prevented his ever marrying, and turned all his affections towards the children of his brothers and sisters, who invariably passed a couple of months of each summer with him, arriving from different parts of France for the purpose; and truly, it was a strange sight to see the mixture of look, expression, accent, and costume, that came to the rendezvous—the long featured boy, with blue eyes and pointed chin—cold, wary, and suspicious—brave, but cautious, that came from Normandy; the high-spirited reckless youth from Bretagny; the dark-eyed girl of Provence; the quick tempered, warm-hearted Gascon; and stranger than all, from his contrast to the rest—the little Parisian, with his airs of the capital, and his contempt for his rustic brethren, nothing daunted, that in all their boyish exercises, he found himself so much their inferior. Our dear old uncle loved nothing so well as to have us around him, and even the little ones, of five and six years old, when not living too far off, were brought to these "*reunions*," which were to us, the great events of each year of our lives.

It was in the June of the year 1794—I shall not easily forget the date—that we were all assembled as usual at "Le Luc." Our party was reinforced by some three or four new visitors, among whom was a little girl of about twelve years old, Annette de Noailles, the prettiest creature I ever beheld. Every land has its own trait of birth distinctly marked. I don't know whether you have observed that the brow and the forehead are more indicative of class in Frenchmen, than any other portion of the face—her's was perfect, and though a mere child, conveyed an impression of tempered decision and mildness, that was most

fascinating ; the character of her features was thoughtful, and were it not for a certain vivacity in the eyes, would have been even sad. Forgive me, if I dwell—when I need not—on these traits ; she is no more. Her father carried her with him in his exile, and your louring skies and gloomy air soon laid her low. Annette was the child of royalist parents. Both her father and mother had occupied places in the royal household : and she was accustomed from her earliest infancy to hear the praise of the Bourbons, from lips which trembled when they spoke. Poor child ! how well do I remember her little prayer for the martyred saint, for so they styled the murdered king, which she never missed saying each morning, when the mass was over in the chapel of the chateau. It is a curious fact, that the girls of a family were frequently attached to the fortunes of the Bourbons, while the boys declared for the revolution, and these differences penetrated into the very core, and sapped the happiness of many, whose affection had stood the test of every misfortune, save the uprooting torrent of anarchy that poured in with the revolution. These party differences entered into all the little quarrels of the school-room and the nursery ; and the taunting epithets of either side were used in angry passion, by those who neither guessed nor could understand their meaning. Need it be wondered, if in after life, these opinions took the tone of intense convictions, when even thus in infancy they were nurtured and fostered ! Our little circle at Le Luc was, indeed, wonderfully free from such causes of contention ; whatever paths in life fate had in store for us afterwards, then, at least, we were of one mind. A few of the boys, it is true, were struck by the successes of those great armies, the revolution poured over Europe ; but even they, were half ashamed to confess enthusiasm in a cause, so constantly allied in their memory with everything mean and low-lived. Such, in a few words, was the little party assembled around the supper table of the chateau, on one lovely evening in June. The windows opening to the ground, let in the perfumed air from many a sweet and flowery shrub without, while already the nightingale had begun her lay in the deep grove hard by. The evening was so calm, we could hear the plash of the making tide upon the shore, and the minute peals of the waves smote on the ear, with a soft and melancholy cadence, that made us silent and thoughtful. As we sat for some minutes thus, we suddenly heard the sound of feet coming up the little gravel walk towards the chateau, and on going to the window, perceived three men in uniform leading their horses slowly along. The dusky light prevented our being able to distinguish their rank or condition ; but my uncle, whose fears were easily excited by such visitors, at once hastened to the door to receive them.

His absence was not of many minutes' duration, but even now I can remember the strange sensations of dread, that rendered us all speechless, as we stood looking towards the door, by which he was to enter. He came at last, and was followed by two officers, one the elder and the superior, evidently, was a thin slight man of about thirty, with a pale but stern countenance, in which a certain haughty expression predominated ; the other was a fine soldier-like, frank

looking fellow, who saluted us all as he came in, with a smile, and a pleasant gesture of his hand.

"You may leave us, children," said my uncle, as he proceeded towards the bell.

"You were at supper, if I mistake not," said the elder of the two officers, with a degree of courtesy in his tone, I scarcely expected.

"Yes, general! but, my little friends ——."

"Will, I hope, share with us, said the general interrupting, and I at least am determined, with your permission, that they shall remain. It is quite enough that we enjoy the hospitality of your chateau for the night, without interfering with the happiness of its inmates, and I beg that we may give you as little inconvenience as possible in providing for our accommodation."

Though these words were spoken with an easy and a kindly tone, there was a cold, distant manner in the speaker, that chilled us all, and while we drew over to the table again, it was in silence and constraint. Indeed, our poor uncle looked the very picture of dismay, endeavouring to do the honours to his guests, and seem at ease, while it was clear his fears were ever uppermost in his mind.

The aide-de-camp, for such the young officer was, looked like one who could have been agreeable and amusing, if the restraint of the general's presence was not over him. As it was, he spoke in a low, subdued voice, and seemed in great awe of his superior.

Unlike our usual ones, the meal was eaten in a mournful stillness—the very youngest amongst us feeling the presence of the stranger as a thing of gloom and sadness.

Supper over, my uncle, perhaps hoping to relieve the embarrassment he laboured under, asked permission of the general for us to remain, saying, "My little people, sir, are great novelists, and they usually amuse me of an evening by their stories. Will this be too great an endurance for you?"

"By no means," said the general gaily; "there's nothing I like better, I hope they will admit me as one of the party. I have something of a gift that way myself." The circle was soon formed, the general and his aide-de-camp making part of it; but though they both exerted themselves to the utmost to win our confidence, I know not why or wherefore we could not shake off the gloom we had felt at first, but sat awkward and ill at ease, unable to utter a word, and even ashamed to look at each other.

"Come," said the general, "I see how it is; I have broken in upon a very happy party; I must make the only *amende* in my power; I shall be the story-teller for this evening." As he said this, he looked around the little circle, and by some seeming magic of his own, in an instant he had won us every one. We drew our chairs closer towards him, and listened eagerly for his tale. Few people, save such as live much among children, or take the trouble to study their tone of feeling and thinking, are aware how far reality surpasses in interest the force of mere fiction. The fact is, with them, far more than all the art of the narrative, and if you cannot say "this was true," more

than half of the pleasure your story confers is lost for ever. Whether the general knew this, or that his memory supplied him more easily than his imagination, I cannot say, but his tale was a little incident of the siege of Toulon, where a drummer boy was killed, having returned to the breach, after the attack was repulsed, to seek for a little cockade of ribbon his mother had fastened on his cap that morning. Simple as was the story, he told it with a subdued and tender pathos, that made our hearts thrill, and filled every eye around him. "It was a poor thing, it's true," said he; "that knot of ribbon, but it was glory to him to rescue it from the enemy—his heart was on the time when he should show it, blood-stained and torn, and say, I took it from the ground amid the grape-shot and the musketry. I was the only living thing there, that moment, and see, I bore it away triumphantly." As the general spoke, he unbuttoned the breast of his uniform, and took forth a small piece of crumpled ribbon, fastened in the shape of a cockade. "Here it is," said he, holding it up before our eyes, "it was for this he died." We could scarce see it through our tears. Poor Annette held her hands upon her face, and sobbed violently. "Keep it, my sweet child," said the general, as he attached the cockade to her shoulder; "it is a glorious emblem, and well worthy to be worn by one so pure and so fair, as you are."

Annette looked up, and as she did, her eyes fell upon the tricolor, that hung from her shoulder—the hated, the despised tricolor—the badge of that party, whose cruelty she had thought of by day, and dreamed of by night. She turned deadly pale, and sat with lips compressed, and clenched hands, unable to speak, or stir.

"What is it, are you ill, child?" said the general suddenly.

"Annette, love—Annette, dearest," said my uncle, trembling with anxiety; "speak; what is the matter?"

"It is that," cried I, fiercely, pointing to the knot, on which her eyes were bent with a shrinking horror, I well knew the meaning of; "it is that!"

The general bent on me a look of passionate meaning, as with a hissing tone, he said, "Do you mean this?"

"Yes," said I, tearing it away, and trampling it beneath my feet; "yes! it is not a Noailles can wear the badge of infamy and crime; the blood-stained tricolor will find slight favour here."

"Hush, boy—hush, for heaven's sake!" cried my uncle, trembling with fear. The caution came too late. The general, taking a note-book from his pocket, opened it leisurely, and then turning towards the Vicomte, said: "This youth's name, is?"

"Duchesne; Henri Duchesne!"

"And his age?"

"Fourteen in March," replied my uncle, as his eyes filled up; while he added in a half whisper, "if you mean the conscription, general, he has already supplied a substitute."

"No matter, sir, if he had sent twenty; such defect of education as his, needs correction; he shall join the levies at Toulon in three days—in three days, mark me. Deoend upon it, sir," said he, turning

to me, "you shall learn a lesson beneath that tricolor, you'll be somewhat long in forgetting. Dumolle, look to this." With this direction to his aide-de-camp, he arose—and before my poor unhappy uncle could recover his self-possession to reply, had left the room.

"He will not do this, sir—surely, he will not"—said the Vicomte to the young officer.

"General Bonaparte does not relent, sir, and if he did, he'd never show it," was the cold reply. That day week, I carried a musket on the ramparts of Toulon: here, begun a career I have followed ever since—with how much of enthusiasm, I leave you to judge for yourself.

As Duchesne concluded this little story, he arose, and paced the room backwards and forwards with rapid steps—while his compressed lips and knitted brow showed he was lost in gloomy recollections of the past.

"He was right, after all, Burke," said he, at length; "personal honour will make the soldier, conviction may make the patriot. I fought as stoutly for this same cause, as though I did not loathe it; how many others may be in the same position? You, yourself, perhaps."

"No, no; not I."

"Well, be it so," rejoined he carelessly. "Good night:" and with that he strolled negligently from the room, and I heard him humming a tune, as he mounted the stairs towards his bed-room.

CHAPTER LX.

A GOOD-BY.

"I HAVE come to bring you a card for the court ball, Capitaine," said General Daru, as he opened the door of my dressing-room the following morning. "See what a number of them I have here; but except your own, the addresses are not filled up. You are in favour at the Tuileries, it would seem."

"I was not aware of my good fortune, general," replied I.

"Be assured, however, it is such," said he: "these things are not, as so many deem them, mere matters of chance. Every name is well weighed and conned over. The officers of the household serve one, who does not forgive mistakes. And now, that I think of it, you were intimate—very intimate, I believe—with Duchesne?"

"Yes, sir: we were much together."

"Well, then, after what has occurred, I need scarcely say your acquaintance with him had better cease. There is no middle course in these matters. Circumstances will not bring you, as formerly, into each other's company; and to continue your intimacy would be offensive to his majesty."

"But surely, sir, the friendship of persons so humble as we are, can neither be a subject for the Emperor's satisfaction or displeasure, if he even were to know of it."

"You must take my word for that," replied the general, somewhat sternly. "The counsel I have given to-day, may come as a command to-morrow. The Chevalier Duchesne has given his majesty great and grave offence—see that you are not led to follow his example:" with a marked emphasis on the last few words, and with a cold bow he left the room.

"That I am not led to follow his example!" said I, repeating them over slowly to myself. "Is that, then, the danger of which he would warn me?"

The remembrance of the misfortunes which opened my career in life came full before me; the unhappy acquaintance with De Beauvais, and the long train of suspicious circumstances that followed; and I shuddered at the bare thought of being again involved in apparent criminality. And yet, what a state of slavery was this! The thought flashed suddenly across my mind, and I exclaimed aloud:—"And this is the liberty for which I have perilled life and limb; this, the cause for which I have become an alien and an exile!"

"Most true, my dear friend," said Duchesne, gaily, as he slipped into the room, and drew his chair towards the fire. "A wise reflection

—but most unwisely spoken; but there are men nothing can teach—not even the 'Temple,' nor the 'Palais de Justice.'"

"How, then—you know of my unhappy imprisonment?"

"Know of it! To be sure I do. Bless your sweet innocence! I have been told, a hundred times over, to make overtures to you, from the Faubourg. There are at least a dozen old ladies there, who believe firmly you are a true Legitimist, and wear the white cockade next your heart. I have had, over and over, the most tempting offers to make you. Faith I'm not quite certain if we are not believed to be, at this very moment, concocting how to smuggle over the frontier a brass carronade and a royal livery, two pounds of gunpowder and a court periwig, to restore the Bourbons!" He burst into a fit of laughing as he concluded, and however little disposed to mirth at the moment, I could not refrain from joining in the emotion.

"But now for a moment of serious consideration, Burke: for I can be serious at times, at least when my friends are concerned. You and I must part here. It is all the better for you it should be so. I am what the world is pleased to call a 'dangerous companion,' and there's more truth in the epithet than they wot of, who employ it. It is not, because I am a man of pleasure, and occasionally a man of expensive habits and costly tastes, nor, that I now and then play deep, or drink deep, or follow up, with passionate determination, any ruling propensity of the moment; but because I am a discontented and an unsettled man, who has a vague ambition of being something, he knows not what, by means he knows not how; ever willing to throw himself into an enterprize where the prize is great, and the risk greater, and yet never able to warm his wishes into enthusiasm, nor his belief into a conviction. In a word, a Frenchman, born a Legitimist, reared a Democrat, educated an Imperialist, and turned adrift upon the world a Scoffer—such men as I am, are dangerous companions; and when they increase, (as they are likely to do in our state of society,) will be still more dangerous citizens. But come, my good friend, don't look dismayed, nor distend your nostrils as if you were on the scent for a smell of brimstone—'Sathan s'en va!'" With these words he arose and held out his hand to me. "Don't let your Napoleonite ardour ooze out too rapidly, Burke, and you'll be a Marshal of France yet: there are great prizes in the wheel, to be had by those who strive for them. Adieu!"

"But we shall meet, Duchesne!"

"I hope so. The time may come, perhaps, when we may be intimate, without alarming the police of the department. But, for the present, I am about to leave Paris; some friends in the south have been kind enough to invite me to visit them, and I start this afternoon." We shook hands once more, and Duchesne moved towards the door; then, turning suddenly about, he said:—"Apropos of another matter—this Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie."

"What of her?" said I, with some curiosity in my tone.

"Why, I have a kind of half suspicion, ripening into something like an assurance, that when we meet again, she may be Madame Burke."

"What nonsense! my dear friend—the absurdity——

"There is none whatever. An acquaintance begun like yours, is very suggestive of such a termination. When the lady is saucy and the gentleman shy, the game stands usually thus, the one needs control, and the other lacks courage. Let them change the cards, and see what comes of it."

"You are wrong, Duchesne—all wrong."

"Be it so. I have been so often right, I can afford a false prediction without losing all my character as prophet. Adieu."

No sooner was I alone than I sat down to think over what he had said. The improbability, nay, as it seemed to me, the all but impossibility of such an event as he foretold, seemed not less now than when first I heard it; but somehow, I felt a kind of internal satisfaction, a sense of gratified vanity, to think that to so acute an observer as Duchesne, such a circumstance did not appear even unreasonable. How hard is it to call in reason against the assault of flattery! how difficult to resist the force of an illusion by any appeal to our good sense and calmer judgment. It must not be supposed from this, that I seriously contem platedsuch a possible turn of fortune—far less, wished for it. No: my satisfaction had a different source. It lay in the thought that I, the humble captain of hussars, should ever be thought of as the suitor of the greatest beauty and the richest dowry of the day; here, was the main-spring of my flattered pride. As to any other feeling, I had none. I admired Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie greatly. She was, perhaps, the very handsomest girl I ever saw: there was not one in the whole range of Parisian society so much sought after; and there was a degree of distinction in being accounted, even among the number of her admirers. Besides this, there lay a lurking desire in my heart, that Marie de Meudon (for as such only could I think of her) should hear me thus spoken of. It seemed to me like a weak revenge on her own indifference to me, and I longed to make any thing a cause of connecting my fate with the idea of her, who yet held my whole heart.

Only men who live much to themselves and their own thoughts know the pleasure of thus linking their fortunes, by some imaginary chain, to that of those they love. They are the straws that drowning men catch at; but still, for the moment, they sustain the sinking courage, and nerve the heart where all is failing. I felt this acutely. I knew well that she was not, nor could be, any thing to me; but I knew, also, that to divest my mind of her image, was to live in darkness, and that the mere chance of being remembered by her was happiness itself.

It was while hearing of her I first imbibed the soldier's ardour from her own brother. She herself had placed before me the glorious triumphs of that career, in words that never ceased to ring in my ears. All my hopes of distinction—my aspirations for success—were associated with the half prediction she had uttered, and I burned for an occasion by which I could signalize myself, that she might read my name—perchance might say, "And *he* loved me!"

In such a world of dreamy thought I passed day after day;—Duchesne was gone, and I had no intimate companion to share my hours with, nor with whom I could expand in social freedom. Meanwhile, the gay life of the capital continued its onward course—fêtes and balls succeeded each other, and each night I found myself a guest at some splendid entertainment,—but where I neither knew, nor was known to any one.

It was on one morning. after a very magnificent fête at the Arch Chancellor's. that I remembered. for the first time, I had not seen my poor friend Pioche since his arrival at Paris. A thrill of shame ran through me at the thought of having neglected to ask after my old comrade of the march, and I ordered my horse at once, to set out for the Hotel Dieu, which had now been, in great part, devoted to the wounded soldiers.

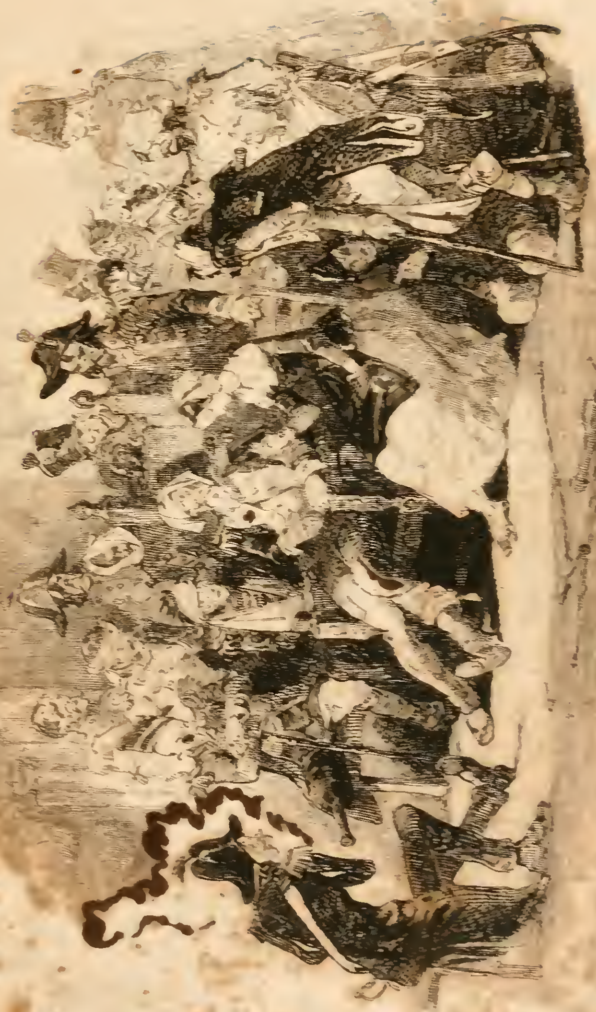
The day was a fine one for the season, and as I entered the large courtyard I perceived numbers of the invalids moving about in groups. to enjoy the air and the sun of a budding spring. Poor fellows! they were but the mere remnants of humanity. Several had lost both legs. and few were there without an empty sleeve to their loose blue coats. In a large hall, where three long tables were being laid for dinner, many were seated around the ample fire-places, and at one of these a larger group than ordinary attracted my attention. They were not chatting and laughing, like the rest, but apparently in deep silence. I approached, curious to know the reason, and then perceived that they were all listening attentively to some one reading aloud. The tones of the voice were familiar to me; I stopped to hear them more plainly. It was Minette herself—the Vivandiere—who sat there in the midst: beside her, half reclining in a deep old-fashioned arm-chair, was "Le Gros Pioche"—his huge beard, descending mid-way on his chest, and his great moustache curling below his upper lip. He had greatly rallied since I saw him last, but still showed signs of debility and feebleness by the very attitude in which he lay.

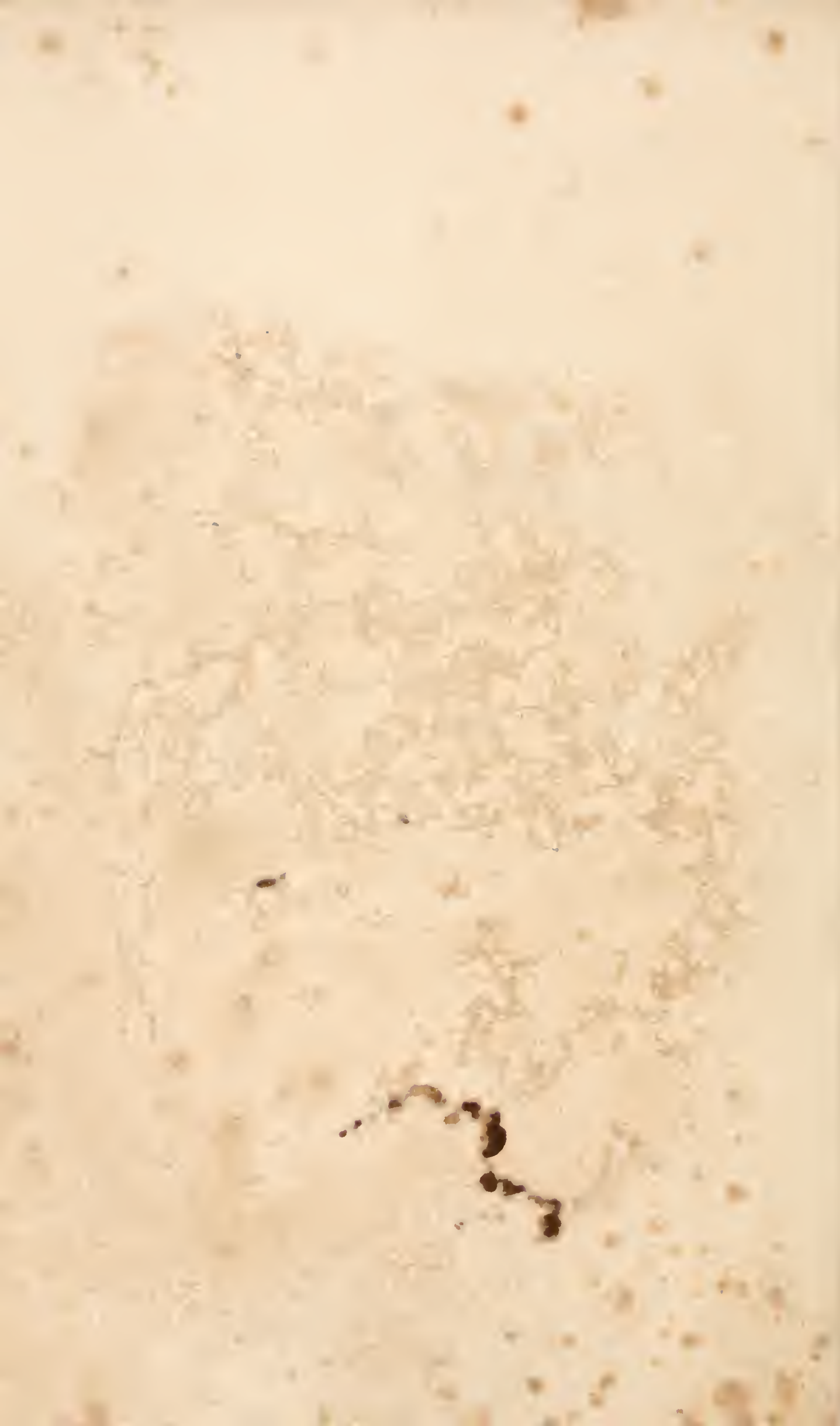
Mingling unperceived with the crowd, who were far too highly interested in the recital to pay any attention to my approach, I listened patiently, and soon perceived that mademoiselle was reading some incident of the Egyptian campaign, from one of those innumerable volumes which then formed the sole literature of the garrison:—

"The redoubt," continued Minette, "was strongly defended in front by stockades and a ditch, while twelve pieces of artillery, and a force of seven hundred Mamelukes were within the works. Suddenly an aide-de-camp arrived in full gallop, with orders for the thirty-second to attack the redoubt with the bayonet, and carry it. The major of the regiment (the colonel had been killed that morning, at the ford) cried out —

"'Grenadiers, you hear the order—forward!' but the same instant a terrible discharge of grape tore through the ranks, killing three and wounding eight others. 'Forward, men! forward!' shouted the major; but no one stirred.

"Tete d'enfer," growled out Pioche, "where was the tambour?"





"You shall hear," said Minette, and resumed. 'Do you hear me?' cried the major, 'or am I to be disgraced for ever! Advance! quick time! march!'

"'But, major,' said a serjeant, aloud, 'they are not roasted apples those fellows, yonder, are pelting.'

"'Silence!' called out the major; 'not a word! Tambour, beat the charge!'

"Suddenly a man sprang up to his knees, from the ground, where he had been lying, and began to beat the drum with all his might. Poor fellow! his leg was smashed with a shot, but he obeyed his orders in the midst of all his suffering.

"'Forward, men, forward!' cried the major, waving his cap above his head. 'Fix bayonets! Charge!' and on they dashed after him.

"'Hollo! comrades,' shouted the 'tambour,' 'don't leave me behind you;' and in an instant two grenadiers stooped down and hoisted him on their shoulders, and then rushed forward through the smoke and flame. Crashing and smashing went the shot through the leading files, but on they went, leaping over the dead and dying——

"With the 'tambour' still?" asked Pioche.

"To be sure," said Minette. "There he was: but listen:"—

"Just as they reached the breach, a shot, above their heads, came whizzing past, and a terrible bang rung out, as it went.

"'He is killed,' said one of the grenadiers, preparing to lower the body; 'I heard his cry.'

"'Not yet, comrade,' cried the 'tambour;' 'it is the drum head they have carried away; that's all;' and he beat away on the wooden sides harder than ever. And thus they bore him over the glacis, and up the rampart, and never stopped till they placed him sitting on one of the guns on the wall!"

"Hurrah! well done!" cried Pioche; while every throat around him re-echoed the cry—"Hurrah!"

"What was his name, mademoiselle?" cried several voices. "Tell us the name of the 'tambour!'"

"*Ma foi! Messieurs*, they have not given it."

"Not given his name!" growled they out. *Ventre bleu!* that is too bad!"

"An he had been an officer of the guard, they would have told us his whole birth and parentage," said a wrinkled, sour-looking old fellow, with one eye.

"Or a lieutenant of hussars! mademoiselle!" said Pioche, looking fixedly at the Vivandiere, who held the book close to her face, to conceal a deep blush that covered it. "But, hollo, there! Qui vive?" The cuirassier had just caught a glimpse of me at the moment, and every eye was turned at once to where I was standing. "Ah, Lieutenant! you here; not invalided, I hope?"

"No, Pioche; my visit was intended for you; and I have had the good fortune to come in for the tale, mademoiselle was reading."

Before I had concluded these few words, the wounded soldiers, or such of them as could, had risen from their seats, and stood respect-

fully around me, while Minette, retreating behind the great chair where Pioche lay, seemed to wish to avoid recognition.

"Front rank, mademoiselle—front rank!" said Pioche. "*Parbleu!* when one has the 'Cross of the Legion,' from the hands of the Emperor himself, they need not be ashamed of being seen. Besides," added he, in a lower tone, but one I could well overhear, "thou art not dressed in thy uniform now, thou hast nothing to blush for!"

Still, she hung down her head, and her confusion seemed only to increase; so that unwilling to prolong her embarrassment, which I saw my presence had caused, I merely made a few inquiries from Pioche regarding his own health, and took my leave of the party.

As I rode homeward, I could not help turning over in my mind the words of Pioche, "Thou art not in thy uniform now, thou hast nothing to blush for!" Here, then, seemed the key to the changed manner of the poor girl, when I met her at Austerlitz, some feeling of womanly shame at being seen in the costume of the Vivandiere, by one who had known her only in another guise; but could this be so, I asked myself:—a question a very little knowledge of a woman's heart might have spared me: and thus pondering I returned to the Luxembourg.

CHAPTER LXI.

AN OLD FRIEND UNCHANGED.

They who took their tone in politics from the public journals of France must have been somewhat puzzled at the new and unexpected turn of the papers in government influence, at the period I now speak of. The tremendous attacks against the "*Perfide Albion*," which constituted the staple of the leading articles in the *Moniteur*, were gradually discontinued. The great body of the people were separated from the "tyrannical domination of an insolent aristocracy;" an occasional eulogy would appear, too, upon the "native good sense and right feeling of John Bull," when not led captive by appeals to his passions and prejudices; and at last, a wish more boldly expressed, that the two countries, whose mission it should be to disseminate civilization over the earth, could so far understand their real interests, as to become "fast friends, instead of dangerous enemies."

The accession of the Whigs to power in England was the cause of this sudden revolution. The Emperor, when first Consul, had learned to know and admire Charles Fox; sentiments of mutual esteem had grown up between them, and it seemed now, as if his elevation to

power were the only thing wanting to establish friendly relations between the two countries.

How far the French Emperor presumed on Fox's liberalism, and the strong bias to party inducing him to adopt such a line of policy as would run directly counter to that of his predecessors in office, and thus dispose the nation to more amicable views towards France, certain it is, that he miscalculated considerably, when he built upon any want of true English feeling on the part of that minister, or any tendency to weaken, by unjust concessions, the proud attitude England had assumed at the commencement, and maintained throughout the entire of the continental war.

A mere accident led to a renewal of negociations between the two countries. A villain, calling himself Guillet de la Grevilliere, had the audacity to propose to the English minister the assassination of Napoleon, and to offer himself for the deed. He had hired a house at Passy, and made every preparation for the execution of his foul scheme. To denounce this wretch to the French minister of foreign affairs, Talleyrand, was the first step of Fox. This led to a reply, in which Talleyrand reported, word for word, a conversation that passed between the Emperor and himself, and wherein expressions of the kindest nature were employed by Napoleon with regard to Fox, and many flattering allusions to the times of their former intimacy. The whole concluding with the expression of an ardent desire for a good understanding, and a "lasting peace between two nations designed by nature to esteem each other."

Although the whole scheme of the assassination was a police stratagem devised by Fouché, to test the honour and good faith of the English minister, the result was eagerly seized on as a basis for new negociations; and from that hour, the temperate language of the French papers evinced a new policy towards England. The insolent allusions of journalists, the satirical squibs of party writers, the caricatures of English eccentricity were suppressed at once; and by that magic influence which Napoleon wielded, the whole tone of public feeling seemed altered as regarded England and Englishmen. From the leaders in the *Moniteur* to the shop windows of the "Palais," an Anglo-mania prevailed, and the idea was thrown out, that the two nations had divided the world between them—the sea being the empire of the British, the land that of Frenchmen. Commissioners were appointed on both sides: at first Lord Yarmouth, and then Lord Lauderdale, by England; General Clarke, and M. Champagny, on the part of France. Lord Yarmouth, at that time a *détenu* at Verdun, was selected by Talleyrand to proceed to England, and learn the precise basis on which an amicable negociation could be founded.

Scarcely was the interchange of correspondence made public, when the new tone of feeling and acting towards England, displayed itself in every circle and every salon. If a proof were wanting how thoroughly the despotism of Napoleon had penetrated into the very core of society, here was a striking one: not only were many of the *détenus*

liberated, and sent back to England, but were *fêted* and entertained at the various towns they stopped at on their way, and every expedient practised to make them satisfied with the treatment they had received on the soil of France.

An English guest was deemed an irresistible attraction at a dinner party; and the most absurd attempts at imitation of English habits, dress, and language, were introduced into society, as the last "mode," and extolled as the very pinnacle of fashionable excellence.

It would be easy for me here to cite some strange instances of this new taste; but I already feel that I have wandered from my own path, and owe an apology to my reader for invading precincts which scarce become me. Yet, may I observe here, and the explanation will serve once for all, I have been more anxious in this "true history" to preserve some passing record of the changeful features of an eventful period in Europe, than merely to chronicle personal adventures, which, although not devoid of vicissitudes, are still so insignificant in the great events by which they were surrounded. The Consulate, the Empire, and the Restoration, were three great tableaux, differing in their groupings and colour; but each part of one mighty whole, links in the great chain, and evidencing the changeful aspect of a nation crouching beneath tyranny, or dwindling under imbecility and dotage.

I have said the English were the vogue in Paris; and so they were, but especially in those salons which reflected the influence of the court, and where the tone of the Tuileries was revered as law.

Every member of the government, or all who were even remotely connected with it, at once adopted the reigning mode; and to be "*à l'Anglais*," became now as much the type of fashion, as ever it had been directly the opposite. Only such as were in the confidence of Fouché and his schemes, knew how hollow all this display of friendly feeling was, nor how ready the government held themselves to assume their former attitude of defiance, when circumstances should render it advisable.

Among those who speedily took up the tone of the Imperial counsels, the salons of the Hotel Clichy were conspicuous. English habits, as regarded table equipage, English servants, even to English cookery, did French politeness extend its complaisance; and many of the commonest habitudes and least cultivated tastes were imported, as the daily observances of fashionable people "*outre mer*."

In this headlong Anglo-mania, my English birth and family—I say English, because, abroad, the petty distinctions of Irishman or Scotchman are not attended to—marked me out for peculiar attention in society; and although my education and residence in France had well nigh rubbed off all, or the greater part of my national peculiarities, yet the flatterers of the day found abundant traits to admire, in what they recognized as my John Bull characteristics. And in this way, a blunder in French, a mistake in grammar, or a false accentuation, became actually a *succés de salon*.

Though I could not help smiling at the absurdity of a vogue, whose

violence alone indicated its unlikeliness to last, yet I had sufficient of the spirit of my adopted country to benefit by it, while it did exist, and never spent a single day out of company.

At the Hotel Clichy, I was a constant guest, and while with Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie my acquaintance made little progress, with the Countess I became a special favourite. She, honouring me so far as to take me into her secret counsels, and tell me all the little nothings which Fouché usually disseminated as state secrets, and circulated twice or thrice a week throughout Paris. From him, too, she learned the names of the various English who each day arrived in Paris from Verdun, and thus contrived to have a succession of those favoured guests at her dinner and evening parties.

During all this time, as I have said, my intimacy with mademoiselle advanced but slowly, and certainly showed slight prospect of verifying the prophecy of Duchesne at parting. Her manner had, indeed, lost its cold and haughty tone, but in lieu of it, there was a flippant, half impertinent *moqueur* spirit, which, however, easily turned to advantage by a man of the world, like the chevalier, was terribly disconcerting to a less forward and less enterprising person like myself. Dobretski still continued an invalid, and, although she never mentioned his name, nor alluded to him in any instance, I could see that she suspected I knew something more of his illness, and the cause of it, than I had ever confessed. It matters little what the subject of it be—let a secret once exist between a young man and a young woman; let there be the tacit understanding that they mutually know of something, of which others are in ignorance, and from that moment a species of intelligence is established between them, of the most dangerous kind. They may not be disposed to like each other; there may be attachments elsewhere; there may be a hundred reasons why love should not enter into the case: yet, will there be a conscious sense of this hidden link which binds them, strangely at variance with their ordinary regard for each other, eternally mingling in all their intercourse, and suggesting modes of acting and thinking, at variance with the true tenor of the acquaintanceship.

Such then was my position at the Hotel de Clichy, at which I was almost daily a visitor or a guest. In the morning to hear the chit chat of the day; the changes talked of in the administration; the intended plans of the Emperor, or the last modes in dress introduced by the Empress, whose taste in costume and extravagant habits were much more popular with the trades-people, than with Napoleon.

An illness of a few days' duration had confined me to the Luxembourg, and unhappily deprived me of the court ball, for which I had received my invitation several weeks before; it seemed as if my fate forbade any chance of my even seeing her once more, whose presence in Paris was the great hope I held out to myself when coming. Already a rumour was afloat that several officers had received orders to join their regiments, and now I began to fear lest I should leave the capital without meeting her, and was thinking of some plan by which I could attain that object, when a note arrived from Mademoiselle de La-

costellerie, written with more than her usual cordiality, and inviting me to dinner on the following day, with a very small party, but when I should meet one of my oldest friends.

I thought of every one in turn, who could be meant under the designation, but without ever satisfying my mind, that I had hit upon the right one. Tascher it could not be, for the very last accounts I had seen from Germany spoke of him as with his regiment. My curiosity was sufficiently excited to make me accept the invitation, and true to time, I found myself at the Hotel Clichy at the hour appointed.

On entering the salon, I discovered that I was alone; none of the guests had as yet arrived, nor had the ladies of the house made their appearance, and I lounged about the splendid drawing room, where every appliance of luxury was multiplied—pictures, vases, statues, and bronzes abounded, for the apartments had all the ample proportions of a gallery. Battle scenes, from the great events of the Italian and Egyptian campaigns, busts of celebrated generals, and portraits of several of the marshals, from the pencils of Gerard and David—but more than all, was I struck by one picture. It was a likeness of Pauline herself in the costume of a Spanish peasant; never had artist caught more of the character of his subject, than in that brilliant sketch—for it was no more, the proud tone of the expression, the large full eye, beaming a bright defiance; the haughty curl of the lip, the determined air of the figure, as she stood one foot in advance, and the arms hanging easily on either side, all conveyed an impression of high resolve, and proud determination quite her own.

I was leaning over the back of a chair, my eye steadfastly fixed on the painting, when I heard a slight rustling of a dress near me. I turned about. It was mademoiselle herself. Although the light of the apartment was tempered by the closed jalousies, and scarcely more than a mere twilight admitted, I could perceive that she coloured, and seemed confused, as she said—"I hope you don't think that picture is a likeness?"

"And yet," said I hesitatingly, "there is much that reminds me of you, I mean—I can discover——."

"Say it frankly, sir. You think that saucy look is not from mere fancy. I deemed you a closer observer—but no matter. You have been ill, I trust you are recovered again."

"Oh, a mere passing indisposition, which unfortunately came at the moment of the court ball; you were there of course."

"Yes, it was there we had the pleasure to meet your friend, the General; but perhaps, this is indiscreet on my part. I believe, indeed I promised to say nothing of him."

"The General! Do you mean General D'Auvergne?"

"That much I will answer you—I do not. But ask me no more questions. Your patience will not be submitted to a long trial; he dines with us to-day."

I made no reply, but began to ponder over in my mind who the General in question could be.

"There, pray do not worry yourself about what a few moments will reveal for you, without any guessing. How strange it is, the intense feeling of curiosity people are afflicted with, who themselves have secrets."

"But I have none, mademoiselle, at least none worth the telling."

"Perhaps," replied she saucily; "but here come our guests." Several persons entered the salon at this moment, with each of whom I was slightly acquainted; they were either members of the government, or generals on the staff. The countess herself soon after made her appearance, and now, we only waited for the individual so distinctively termed "my friend," to complete the party.

"Pauline has kept our secret I hope," said the countess to me. "I shall be sadly disappointed if anything mars this surprise."

Who can it be? thought I, or is the whole thing some piece of badinage got up at my expense? Scarcely had the notion struck me, when a servant flung wide the folding doors, and announced Le General somebody, but so mumbled was the word, the nearest thing I could make of it was "Bulletin." This time, however, my curiosity suffered no long delay, for quickly after the announcement, a portly personage in an English uniform, entered hastily, and approaching madame, kissed her hand with a most gallant air; then turning to mademoiselle, he performed a similar ceremony. All this time my eyes were rivetted upon him, without my being able to make the most remote guess as to who he was.

"Must I introduce you gentlemen?" said the countess. "Captain Burke."

"Eh! what! my old friend—my boy Tom; this you, with all that moustache; delighted to see you," cried the large unknown, grasping me by the hands, and shaking them with a cordiality, I had not known for many a year.

"Really, sir," said I, "I am but too happy to be recognised, but a most unfortunate memory——"

"Memory lad! I never forgot anything in life. I remember the doctor shaking the snow off his boots, the night I was born; a devilish cold December; we lived at Benhungeramud in the Himalaya."

"What!" cried I. "Is this Captain Bubbleton, my old and kind friend?"

"General, Tom—Lieutenant-General Bubbleton, with your leave," said he, correcting me. "How the boy has grown; I remember him when he was scarce so high."

"But my dear Captain—."

"General, Lieutenant-General—."

"Well, Lieutenant-General, to what happy chance do we owe the pleasure of seeing you here?"

"War, boy, the old story; but we shall have time enough to talk over these things, and, I see, we are detaining the countess." So saying, the general gave his arm to madame, and led the way towards the dinner, whither we followed, I, in a state of surprise and astonish-

ment, that left me unable to collect my faculties for a considerable time after.

Although the party, with the exception of Bubbleton, were French, he himself, as was his wont, supported nearly the whole of the conversation; and if his French was none of the most accurate, he amply made up in volubility for all accidents of grammar. It appeared he had been three years at Verdun, a prisoner; though how he came there, whence, and at what exact period, there was no discovering; and now, his arrival at Paris was an event equally shrouded in mystery, for no negociations had been opened for his exchange whatever, but he had had the eloquence to persuade the Préfet that the omission was a mere accident, some blunder of the war-office people, which he would rectify on his arrival at Paris; and there he was, though with what prospect of reaching England, none but one of his inventive genius could possibly guess.

He was brimful of politics, ministerial secrets, state news, and government intentions, not only as regarded England, but Austria and Russia, and communicated in deep confidence a grand scheme, by which the Fox ministry were to immortalize themselves, which was by giving up Malta to the Bourbons—Lous XVIII. to be king—Goza to be a kind of dependency to be governed by a lieutenant-general, whom "he would not name;" finishing his glass with an ominous look as he spoke—thence he wandered on to his repugnance to state, and dislike to any government function, illustrating his quiet tastes and simple habits, by recounting a career of oriental luxury, in which he described himself as living for years past; every word he spoke, whatever the impression on others, bringing me back most forcibly to my boyish days in the old barrack, where first I met him. Years had but cultivated his talents; his visions were bolder and more daring than ever, while he had chastened down his hurried and excited tone of narrative to a quiet flow of unexaggerated description, which, taking his age and appearance into account, it was most difficult to discredit.

Whether the Frenchmen really gave credit to his revelations, or only from politeness affected to do it, at first, I cannot say, but assuredly he put all their courtesy to a rude test, by a little anecdote, before he left the dinner room.

While speaking of the memorable siege of Valenciennes, in —93, at which one of the French officers was present, and in a high command, Bubbleton at once launched forth into some very singular anecdotes of the campaign, where, as he alleged, he also had served.

"We took an officer of one of your infantry regiments prisoner, in a sortie one evening," said the Frenchman. "I commanded the party, and shall never forget the daring intrepidity of his escape. He leaped from the wall into the fosse, a height of thirty feet and upwards. *Parbleu*, we had not the heart to fire after him, though we saw, that after the shock, he crawled out upon his hands and feet, and soon afterwards gained strength enough to run. He gave me his pocket-book, with his name; I shall not forget it readily—it was Stopford."

"Ah, poor Billy—he was my junior lieutenant," said Bubbleton; "an active fellow, but he never could jump with me. Confound him he has left me a souvenir also, though of a different kind from yours—a cramp in the stomach, I shall never get rid of."

As this seemed a somewhat curious legacy from one brother officer to another, we could not help calling on the General for an explanation, a demand Bubbleton never refused to gratify.

"It happened in this wise," said he, pushing back his chair as he spoke, and seating himself with the easy attitude of your true story-teller; "the night before the assault—the twenty-fourth of July, if my memory serves me right—the sappers were pushing forward the mines with all despatch. Three immense globes were in readiness beneath the walls, and some minor details were only necessary to complete the preparations. The stormers consisted of four British, and three German regiments—my own, the Welsh Fusileers, being one of the former. We occupied the lines stretching from L'Herault to Damies."

The French officer nodded assent, and Bubbleton resumed.

"The Fusileers were on the right, and divided into two parties—an assaulting column and a supporting one—the advanced companies at half cannot-shot from the walls, the others a little farther off. Thus we were—when, about half-past ten, or it might be even eleven o'clock, we were drinking some mulled claret in my quarters, a low, swooping kind of a noise came stealing along the ground. We listened—it grew stronger and stronger; and then we could hear musket shot, and shouting, and the tramp of men as if running. Out we went, and, by Jove, there we saw the first battalion in full retreat towards the camp. It was a sortie in force from the garrison, which drove in our advanced posts, and took several prisoners. The drums now soon beat to quarters—the men fell in rapidly, and we advanced to meet them; no pleasant affair, either, let me remark, for the night was pitch dark, and we could not even guess the strength of your force. It was just then that I was running with all my speed to come up with the flank companies, that my cover sergeant, a cool, old Scotch fellow, shouted out—

"'Take care, sir—stoop there, sir—stoop there.'

"But the advice came too late. I could just discern through the gloom a something black, hopping and bounding along towards me—now striking the ground, and then rebounding again several feet in the air.

"'Stoop, sir, down,' cried he.

"But before I could throw myself flat, plump it took me here—over I went, breathless, and deeming all was finished; but miraculous to say, in a few minutes after I found myself coming to; and except the shock, nothing the worse for the injury.

"'Was that a shell, sergeant?' said I, 'a spent shell?'

"'Na, sir,' said he, in his own broad way; 'it was naething o' the kind; it was only Lieutenant Stopford's head that was snapped aff up there.'

"'His head!' exclaimed we all of a breath; 'his head!'

"Yes, poor fellow, so it was, a d——d hard kind of a bullet-head, too. The blow has left a weakness of the stomach, I suppose I shall never recover from; and the occurrence being so singular, I have actually never asked for a pension. There are people, by Jove, would throw discredit on it."

This latter observation seemed so perfectly to sum up our own thoughts on the matter, that we really had nothing to remark on it; and after a silence of a few seconds, politely relieved by the countess hinting at coffee in the drawing-room, we arose and followed her.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE RUE DES CAPUCINES.

Before I parted with Bubbleton that evening he promised to breakfast with me on the following morning; and true to his word, entered my quarters soon after ten o'clock. I longed to have an opportunity of talking to him alone, and learning some intelligence of that country, which, young as I had left it, was still hallowed in my memory as my own.

"Eh, by Jupiter! this is something like a quarter—gilded mouldings, frescoes, silk hangings, and Persian rugs. I say, Tom, are you sure you hav'n't made a mistake, my boy, and just imagined that you were somebody else—Murat or Bernadotte, for example?—the thing is far easier than you may think; it happened to me before now."

"Be tranquil on that score," said I; "we are both at home here, though these quarters are, as you remark, far beyond the mark of a captain of hussars."

"A captain! why, hang it, you're not captain already."

"Yes, to be sure; what signifies it? Only think of your own rapid rise since we parted; you were but a captain then, and to be now a lieutenant-general."

"Ah, true, very true," said he, hurriedly, while he bustled about the room, examining the furniture, and inspecting the decorations most narrowly. "Capital service this must be," muttered he between his teeth; "not much pay, I fancy—but a deal of plunder and private robbery."

"I cannot say much on that head," said I, laughing outright at what he intended for a soliloquy; "but I must confess I have no reason to complain of my lot."

"Egad, I should think not," rejoined he; "better than Old George's-street. Well, well, I wish I were but back there—that's all."

"Come, sit down to your breakfast; and perhaps when we talk it over, some plan may present itself for your exchange."

How thoroughly had I forgotten my friend when I uttered the sentiment; for scarcely was he seated at table, when he launched out, as of old, into one of his visionary harangues—throwing forth dark hints of his own political importance, and the keen watch the Emperor had set upon his movements.

"No, my friend, the thing is impossible," said he, ominously; "Nap. knows me—he knows my influence with the Tories. To let me escape would be to blow all his schemes to the winds. I am destined for the 'Temple,' if not for the guillotine."

The solemnity of his voice and manner at this moment was too much for me, and I laughed outright.

"Ay, you may laugh—so does Anna Maria."

"And is Miss Bubbleton here, too?"

"Yes; we are both here," ejaculated he with a deep sigh; "'Rue Neuve des Capucines, No. 46,' four flights above the entresol; ay, and in that entresol, they have two spies of Fouché's police: I know them well, though they pretend to be hairdressers—I'm too much for old Fouché yet, depend upon it, Tom."

It was in vain I endeavoured to ascertain what circumstances led him to believe himself suspected by the government; neither was I more fortunate to discover how he first became a *détenu*. The mist of imaginary events, places, and people which he had conjured up around him, prevented his ever being able to see his way, or know clearly any one fact connected with his present position. Dark hints about spies—suspicious inuendoes of concealed enemies—plotting Préfets, and opened letters, had actually filled his brain to the exclusion of every thing rational and reasonable; and I began seriously to fear for my poor friend's intellect.

Hoping by a change of topic to induce a more equable tone of thinking, I asked about Ireland.

"All right there! They've hanged 'em all," said he. "Then, as if suddenly remembering himself, he added, with a slight confusion, "You were well out of that scrape, Tom. Your old friend Barton had a warrant for you the morning you left, and there was a reward of five hundred pounds for your apprehension, and something, too, for a confounded old piper, old Blast-the-Bellows, I think they called him."

"Darby! What of him, Bubbleton; they did not take him, I trust?"

"No, by Jove!" They hanged two fellows, each of whom they believed to be him, and he was in the crowd looking on, they say; but he's at large still, and the report goes, Barton does not stir out at night, for fear of meeting him, as the fellow has an old score to settle with him."

"And so, all hopes of liberty would seem extinguished now," said I, gloomily.

"That is as you may take it, Tom. I'm a bad judge of these things; but I fancy, that the man who can live here, might contrive to eke out life under a British government, though he might yearn now and then for a secret police—a cabinet noir—or perhaps a tight cravat in the Temple."

"Hush, my friend."

"Ay! there it is. Now, if we were in Dame-street, we might abuse the ministers and the army, and the Lord Lieutenant, to our heart's content, and if Jemmie O'Brien wasn't one of the company, I'd not mind a hit at Barton himself."

"But does England still maintain her proud tone of ascendancy towards Ireland? Is the Saxon the hereditary lord, and the Celt the slave, still?"

"There again you puzzle me. For I never saw much of this same ascendancy or slavery either. Loyal people, someway or other, were usually in favour with the government, and had, what many thought, a most unjust proportion of the good things to their share; but even the others got off in most cases easily too—a devilish deal better than you treated those luckless Austrians the other day. You killed some thirty thousand, and made bankrupts of the rest of the nation. But then, to be sure, it was the cause of liberty you were fighting for—and as for the Italians——."

"Yes! but you forget these were wars, not of our seeking. The treachery of false-hearted allies led to these sad results."

"I suppose so. But certain it is, nations, like individuals, that have a taste for fighting, usually have the good luck to find an adversary—and as your Emperor here seems to have learned the Donnybrook-fair trick of trailing his coat after him, it would be strange enough if nobody would gratify him by standing on it."

Without being able to say why, I felt piqued and annoyed at the tone of Bubbleton's remarks, which coming from one of his narrow intelligence on ordinary topics, worried me only the more. I had long since seen, that the liberty with which in boyhood I was infatuated, had no existence, save in the dreams of ardent patriotism—that the great and the mighty felt ambition a goal, and power a birth-right—that the watch-words of freedom were inscribed on banners, when the sentiments had died out of men's hearts, while, as a passion, the more dazzling one of glory, made every other pale before it, and that the calm head and moderate judgment could scarce survive contact with the intoxicating triumphs of a nation's successes.

Such was, indeed, the real change Napoleon had wrought in France. Their enthusiasm could not rest content with national liberty. Glory alone could satisfy a nation drunk with victory. Against the stern followers of the republican era, the soldiers of the Sambre and Meuse—the men of Gemappe—he had arrayed the ardent, high spirited youth of the Consulate and the Empire—the heroes of Arcola, of Rivoli, of Cairo, and Austerlitz. How vain to discuss questions of social order

or national freedom with the cordoned and glittering bands, who saw monarchy and kingdoms among the prizes of their ambition. And even I, who had few ambitious hopes—how had the ardour that once stimulated me, and led me to the soldier's life, how had it given way to the mere conventional aspirings of a class. The grade of colonel was far oftener in my thoughts than the cause of freedom. The cross of the Legion would have reconciled me to much, that in my calmer judgment I might deem harsh and tyrannical.

"Believe me, Tom," said Bubbleton, who saw in my silence that his observations had their weight with me, "believe me, my philosophy is the true one—never to meddle where you cannot serve yourself, or some of your friends. The world will always consist of two parties—one governing, the other governed. We belong to the latter category, and shall only get into a scrape by poking our heads, where they have no business to be."

"Why, a few moments' since you were full of state secrets, and plots, and secret treaties, and heaven knows what besides."

"To be sure I was: and for whose interest, man—for whose sake? George Frederick Augustus Bubbleton's. Ay, no doubt of it. Here am I a *détenu*, and have been these two years and half, wasting away existence at Verdun, while my property is going to the devil from sheer neglect. My West India estates, who can say how I shall find them? My Calcutta property, the same. Then there's that fee-simple thing in Norfolk. But I can't even think of it.—Well, I verily believe no single step has been taken for my release or exchange. The Whigs, you know, will do nothing for me. I may tell you in confidence,"—here he dropped his voice to a low whisper,—"I may tell you, Charles Fox hates me: but more of this another time. What was I to do in all this mess of trouble and misfortune? Stand still and bear it? No, faith, that's not Bubbleton policy! You'd never guess what I did."

"I fear not."

"Well, it chanced that some little literary labours of mine—(you know I dally sometimes with the muse)—became known to the Préfet at Verdun. I saw that they watched me, and consequently I made great efforts at secrecy, concealing my papers in the chimney, under the floor, sewing them in the linings of my coat, and so on. The bait took; they made a regular search; seized my MSS., put great seals on all the packages, and sent them up to Paris. The day after, I made submission; offered to reveal all to the Minister for Foreign Affairs; and accordingly they sent me up here, with an escort. What would have come next I cannot tell you, if Anna Maria had not found out Lord Lauderdale, and trumped up some story to him, so that he interfered, and we are now living at the Rue des Capucines; but how long we shall be there, and where they may send us next, I wish I could only guess."

A few minutes' consideration satisfied me that the police were concerned in Bubbleton's movements; and knowing at once that no danger was to be apprehended from such a source—were merely

holding him up for some occasion, when they could make use of him to found some charge against the British government—a manœuvre constantly employed, and always successful with the Parisians, whenever an explanation became necessary in the public papers.

It would have served no purpose to impart these suspicions of mine to Bubbleton himself; on the contrary, he would inevitably have destroyed all clue to their confirmation by some false move, had I done so. With this impression, then, I resolved to wait patiently—watch events, and, when the time came, see what best could be done towards effecting his liberation.

As I was disposed to place more reliance on Miss Bubbleton's statements than those of her imaginative brother, I agreed to his proposal to pay her a visit, and accordingly we set out together for the "Rue des Capucines."

Lieutenant-General Bubbleton's quarters were by no means of that imposing character which befitted his rank in the British army. Traversing a dirty court-yard, strewed with fire-wood, we entered a little gloomy passage, from which a still gloomier stair ascended to the topmost regions of the house, where, unlocking a door, he pushed me before him into a small, meanly-furnished apartment, the centre of which was occupied by a little iron stove, whose funnel pierced the ceiling above, and gave the chamber somewhat the air of a ship's cabin. Bubbleton, however, either did not, or would not, perceive any want of comfort or propriety in the whole; on the contrary, he strode the floor with the step of an emperor, and placed the chair for me to sit on, as though he were about to seat me on a throne. While exchanging his coat for a most ragged dressing-gown, he threw himself on an old sofa with such energy of ease, that the venerable article of furniture creaked and groaned in every joint. "She's out," said he, with a toss of his thumb to a half-open door, "gone to take a stroll in the Tuileries for half-an hour, so that we shall have a little chat before she comes. And now, what will ye take?—a little sherry-and-water—a glass of maraschino? eh!—or what say you to a nip of real Nantz?"

"Nothing, my dear friend; you forget the hour, not to speak of my French education."

"Oh, very true," said he. "When I was, in the 45th——" when he had uttered these words, he stopped suddenly, hesitated and stammered, and, at last, fairly overcome with confusion, he unfolded a huge pocket-handkerchief, and blew his nose with the sound of a cavalry trumpet, while he resumed, "we had a habit in the old 45th—a deuced bad one, I confess—of a mess breakfast, that began after parade, and always ran into luncheon—but hush! here she comes," cried he, in evident delight at the interruption so opportunely arriving. Then springing up, he threw open the door, and called out—"I say, Anna Maria, you'll not guess who's here?"

Either the ascent of the steep stair called for all the lady's spare lungs, or the question had little interest for her, as she certainly made no reply whatever, but continued to mount step by step, with that plodding monosyllabic pace, one falls into, at the highest of six flights.

"No," cried he aloud—"no, you're wrong—it is not Lauderdale." Then turning towards me, with a finger to his nose, he added, with pantomimic action—"She thinks you are Yarmouth. Wrong again, by Jove! What do you say to Tom Burke—Burke of 'Ours,' as I used to call him long ago?"

By this time Miss Bubbleton had reached the door, and was holding the handle to recover her breath after the fatigue of the ascent. Even in that momentary glance, however, I recognised her; nothing altered by time, she was the same crabbed, cross-grained looking personage I remembered years before. She carried a little basket on her arm, of which her brother hastened to relieve her, and showed no little concern to remove out of sight. Being divested of this, she held out her hand, and saluted me with more cordiality than I looked for. Scarcely had our greetings been exchanged, when Bubbleton broke in—

"I have told him every thing, Anna Maria. He knows the whole affair—no use in boring him with any more. I say, isn't he grown prodigiously, and a captain already—just think of that."

"And so, sir, you've heard of the sad predicament his folly has brought us into?"

"Hush! hush! Anna Maria," cried Bubbleton; "no nonsense, old girl. Burke will put all to rights—he's aid-de-camp to Murat, and dines with him every day—eh, Tom?"

"What if he be?" interrupted the lady, without permitting me time to disclaim the honour. "How can he ever——"

"I tell you, it's all arranged between us; and don't make a fuss about nothing. You'll only make bad worse, as you always do. Come, Tom, the secret is, I shall be ruined if I don't get back to England soon. Heaven knows who receives my dividends all this time. Then that confounded tin-mine, they've mismanaged the thing so much, I hav'n't received five hundred pounds from Cornwall since this time twelvemonths."

"That you hav'nt," said the lady, as with clasped hands, and eyes fixed, she sat staring at the little stove, with the stern stoicism of a martyr.

"She knows that," said Bubbleton, with a nod, as if grateful for even so much testimony in his favour. "And as for that scoundrel, Thistlethwait, the West India agent, I've a notion he's broke—not a shilling from him either."

"Not sixpence," echoed the lady.

"You hear that," cried he, overjoyed at the concurrence. "And the fact is—you'll smile when I tell you—but, upon my honour it's true—I am actually hard up for cash."

The idea tickled him so much, and seemed so ludicrous withal, that he fell back on the sofa, and laughed till the tears ran down his face. Not so Miss Bubbleton, her grim face grew more fixed, every feature hardened, as if becoming stone, while gradually a sneer curled her thin lip, but she never spoke a word.

"I'll not speak of the annoyance of being out of England, nor the

loss of influence a man sustains after a long absence," said Bubbleton, as he paced the room with his hands deep thrust in his dressing-gown pockets. "These are things one can feel, and as for me, they weigh more on my mind than mere money considerations."

"But, General," said I——

"General!" echoed the lady, with a start round, and, holding up both her hands. "General! You hav'n't been such a fool—it's not possible you could be such a fool——"

"Will you please to be quiet, old damsel," said Bubbleton, with more of harshness than he had yet used in his manner. "Can you persuade yourself to mind your own household concerns, and leave George Frederick Augustus Bubbleton to manage his own matters as he deems best?"

Here he turned short round towards me, and throwing up his eyebrows to the full height, he touched his forehead knowingly with the tip of his fore-finger, and uttered the words, "You understand—poor thing!" concluding the pantomime with a deep sigh, from the very bottom of his chest, while he added something in a low whisper about "a fall from an elephant when she was a child."

"Mr. Burke, will you listen to me?" said the lady, with an energy of voice and manner there was no gainsaying—"listen to me for five minutes, and probably, short as the time is, I may be able to put you in possession of a few plain facts concerning our position, and if you have the inclination and the power to serve us, you may then know how best it can be done."

Bubbleton made me a sign to gratify her desire of loquaciousness, while with a most expressive shrug he intimated that I should probably hear a very incoherent statement. This done, he lighted his meerschaum, wrapped his ragged *robe de chambre* around him, and lay down full length on the sofa, with the air of a man who had fortified himself to undergo any sacrifices that might be demanded at his hands, taking care the while to assume his position in such a manner that he could exchange glances with me without his being observed by his sister.

"We came over, Mr. Burke, only a few months before the war broke out, and like the rest of our countrymen and women, were made *détenus*. This was bad enough, but my wise brother made it far worse; for instead of giving his name, with his real rank and position, he should call himself a Lieutenant-General, affect to have immense wealth, and great political influence. The consequence was, when others were exchanged and sent home, his name not being discoverable in any English list, was passed over; while his assumed fortune involved us in every expense and extravagance, and his mock importance made us the object of the secret police, who never ceased to watch and spy after us."

"Capital, excellent, by Jove!" cried Bubbleton, as he rolled forth a long curl of blue smoke from the angle of his mouth—"she's admirable!"

"I ought to have told you before," said the lady, not paying the least attention to his interruption, "that he was obliged to sell out of

the 45th; a certain Mr. Montague Crofts, whom you may remember, having won every shilling he possessed, even to the sale of his commission. This was the cause of our coming abroad; so that at the very moment that he was giving himself these airs of pretended greatness, we were ruined.

"Upon my life, she believes all that," whispered Bubbleton, with a wink at me. "Poor old thing! I must get Larrey to look at her."

"Happily or unhappily—who shall say which—there was a greater fool even than himself in the village, and he was the '*Maire*.' This wise functionary became alarmed at the piles of papers and rolls of manuscripts that were seen about our rooms, and equally suspicious about the dark hints and mysterious inuendos, he threw out from time to time. The Préfet was informed of it, and the result was, an order for our removal to Paris. Here then we are, with what destiny before us, who shall tell; for as he still persists in his atrocious nonsense, and calls himself major-general——"

"Lieutenant-general, my dear," said Bubbleton, mildly; "I never was major-general."

"Is it not too bad," said she—"could any patience endure this?"

"Don't be violent—take care, Anna Maria," said he, rebukingly; "Potts said I should use restraint again, if you showed any return of the paroxysm. That's the way she takes it," said he, in a low whisper —"with a blinking about the eyes and a pattering of the feet. Bathe your temples, dear, and you'll be better presently."

Anna Maria sat still, not uttering a word; and actually fearing by a gesture to encourage a commentary on her manner.

"Sometimes she'll mope for hours," muttered he in my ear; "at others, she's furious—there's no saying how it will turn. You wouldn't like a pipe?—I forgot to ask you."

"And worse than all, sir," said the lady, as if no longer able to restrain her temper; "he is supposed to be a spy of the police. I heard it myself this morning."

"Eh! what!" exclaimed Bubbleton, jumping up in an ecstacy of delight. "A spy! By Jove! I knew it. Lord! what fellows they are, these French: not two days here yet, and they discovered I was no common man. Eh, Burke. Maybe I haven't frightened them, my boy. It's not every one would create such a sensation, let me tell you—I knew I'd do it."

Miss Bubbleton looked at him for an instant with a sneer of the most withering contempt, and then rising abruptly, left the room; but the general little cared for such evidences of her censure; he danced about the room, snapping his fingers, and chuckling with self-satisfaction—the thought of being believed to be a police spy, giving him the most intense and heartfelt pleasure.

"She has moments, Tom, when she's downright clear—you'd not think it, but sometimes she's actually shrewd; you saw how she hit upon that."

Would that her brother was favoured with some of these lucid intervals, was the thought that ran through my head at the moment; for I

knew better than he did, how needful a clearer brain and sharper faculties than his would be, to escape the snares his folly and vanity were spreading around him.

"Shall we make a morning call at our friend, the countess's, Tom?" said Bubbleton. "She told me she received every day about this hour."

I felt no wise disposed for the visit; and so, having engaged my friend to dine with me at the Luxembourg the next day, we parted.

As I sauntered homewards, I was surprised how difficult I found it, to disabuse my mind of the absurd insinuations Bubbleton had thrown out against his sister's sanity; for, though well knowing his fondness for romance, and his taste for embellishment on every occasion, I yet could not get rid of the impression, that her oddity of manner might only be another feature of eccentricity, just as extravagant, but differing in its tendencies from his own.

To assist him, whose kindness to myself of old I never ceased to remember with gratitude, was my firm resolve; but to ascertain his exact position was all essential for this purpose, and I could not help saying half aloud, "If I had but Duchesne here now."

"Speak of the devil, *mon ami*," said he, drawing his arm within mine, while I was scarcely able to avoid a cry of astonishment.

"Where do you dine to-day, Burke?" said he, in his quiet easy tone.

"But where did you come from, Duchesne; are you long here?"

"Answer my question first. Can you dine with me?"

"To be sure—with pleasure."

"Then meet me at the corner of the Rue des Trois Têtes, at six o'clock, and I'll be your guide afterwards. This is *my* way now.—*Au revoir.*"

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE "MOISSON D'OR."

When I arrived at the rendezvous, I found Duchesne already awaiting me with a carriage, into which we stepped and drove rapidly away.

"A man of your word, Burke; and what is scarcely less valuable in the times we live in, a man of prudence too."

"As how the latter, may I ask?"

"You have not come in uniform, which is all the better, where we are going; besides it gives me the hope of presenting you to my respected aunt, the Duchesse de Montserrat, who will take your black coat as a compliment to the whole Bourbon dynasty. You must come with me there, if it only be for half an hour. And now tell me, have you ever dined at the 'Moisson d'Or?'"

"Never, not even heard of the house."

"Well, then, you shall to-day; and meanwhile I may tell you, that although in a remote and little-visited quarter of Paris, it stands unrivalled for the excellence of its fare, and the rare delicacy of its wines—a reputation not of yesterday, but of some years' standing. Nor is that the only thing remarkable about it, as I shall explain hereafter. But come, how are your friends at the Hotel Clichy? and how fares your suit with Mademoiselle?"

"My suit! it never was such. You know to the full as well as I do, my pretensions aspired not half so high."

"So much the better, and so much the worse. I mean the former for me, as I hate to have a friend for a rival; the latter for you, who ought to have learned by this time that a handsome girl and a million of francs, are more easily won than a cross of the legion, or a colonel's epaulette."

"And are you serious, Duchesne? Have you really intentions in that quarter?"

"*Morbleu!* to be sure I have. It is for that I am here in Paris in the dog days—travelled one hundred and twenty leagues—ay, and more, too, have brought with me my most aristocratic aunt, who never remembers in her life to have seen full-grown leaves in the Tuileries gardens. I knew what an ally she would be in the negociation, and so I managed, through some friends in the bureau of the minister, to give her a rare fright about an estate of hers, which by some accident escaped confiscation in the revolution, and which nothing but the greatest efforts on her part could now rescue from the fangs of the crown. You may be sure she is not particularly in love with the present government on this score; but the trick secures her speaking more

guardedly than she has the habit of doing, besides inducing her to make acquaintances nothing but such a threat would accomplish."

"You intend, then, she should know Madame de Lacostellerie?"

"Of course. I have already persuaded her that the Hotel Clichy is the pivot of all Paris, and that nothing but consummate tact and management on her part will succeed there."

"But I scarcely thought you cared for Mademoiselle, and never dreamed of your proposing to marry her."

"Nor I, till about a week ago. However, my plans require money, and would not be encumbered by my having a wife. I see nothing better at the moment, and so my mind is soon made up. But here we are, this is our resting-place."

The "Moisson d'Or," although not known to me, was then the most celebrated place for dining in Paris. The habits of the house, for there was no "table d'hôte," required that every thing should be ordered before hand, and the parties all dined separately. The expensive habits and extravagant prices secured its frequenters from meeting the class who usually dine at restaurants; and this gave it a vogue among the wealthy and titled, whose equipages now thronged the street, and filled the "porte cochère." I had but time to recognize the face of one of the marshals and a minister of state, as we pushed our way through the court, and entered a small pavilion beyond it.

"I'll join you in an instant," said Duchesne, as he left the room hastily after the waiter. In a couple of minutes he was back again. "Come along, it's all right," said he. "I wish to show you a corner of the old house, that only the privileged ever see, and we are fortunate in finding it unoccupied."

We recrossed the court, and mounted a large oak stair to a corridor, which conducted us, by three sides of a quadrangle, to a smaller stair, nearly perpendicular. At the top of this, a strong door, barred and padlocked, stood, which being opened, led into a large and lofty salon, opening by three spacious windows on a terrace, that formed the roof of the building. Some citron and orange trees were disposed tastefully along this, and filled the room with their fragrance.

"Here, Antoine, let us be served here," said Duchesne to the waiter; "I have already given orders about the dinner. And now, Burke, come out here. What think you of that view?"

Scarcely had I set foot on the terrace, when I started back in mingled admiration and amazement. Beneath us lay the great city, in the mellow light of an evening in September. Close, so close, as actually to startle, was the large dome of the "Invalides," shining like a ball of molten gold; the great court-yard in front, dotted with figures; beyond, again, was the Seine, the surface flashing and flickering in the sunlight. I traced it along to the Pont Neuf, and then my eye rested on Notre Dame, whose tall, dark towers stood out against the pinkish sky, while the deep-toned bell boomed through the still air. I turned towards the Tuileries, and could see the guard of honour in waiting for the emperor's appearing. In the gardens, hundreds were passing and repassing, or standing around the band, which played in front of

the pavilion. A tide of population poured across the bridges and down the streets, along which equipages and horsemen dashed impetuously onward. There was all the life and stir of a mighty city; its sounds dulled by distance, but blended into one hoarse din, like the far-off sea at night.

"You don't know, Burke, that this was a favourite resort of the courtiers of the last reign. The gay young 'garde du corps,' the gallant youths of the royal household, constantly dined here. This terrace we now stand on, once held a party, who came at the invitation of no less a personage than him whom men call Louis XVIII. It was a freak of the time, to pronounce the court dinners execrable; and they even go so far as to say, that Marie Antoinette herself once planned a party here—but this I cannot vouch for."

At this moment, Duchesne was interrupted by the entrance of the waiters, who came to serve the dinner. I had not a moment left me to admire the beauty and richness of the antique silver dishes which covered the table, when a gentle tap at the door attracted my attention.

"Ha! Jacotot himself!" said Duchesne, as rising hastily he advanced to meet the new arrival. He was a tall, thin old man, much stooped by years, but with an air and carriage distinctly well-bred; his white hair, brushed rigidly back, fastened into a queue behind, and his lace "jabot" and ruffles, bespoke him as the remnant of a date long past. His coat was of blue, a shade somewhat lighter than is usually worn. He wore also large buckles in his shoes, whose brilliancy left no doubt of their real value. Bowing with great ceremony, he advanced slowly into the room.

"You are come to dine with us—is it not so, Jacotot?" said Duchesne, as he still held his hand.

"Excuse me, my dear chevalier—the Count de Chambord and Edouard de Courcelles are below—I have promised to join them——"

"And is Courcelles here?"

"Yes," said the old man, with a timid glance towards where I sat, and a look as if imploring caution and reserve.

"Oh, fear nothing—and that reminds me, I have not presented my friend and brother-officer—Captain Burke, Monsieur Jacotot. You may feel assured, Jacotot, I make no mistake in the friends I introduce here."

The old man gave a smile of pleasure, while turning to me he said—

"He is discretion itself; and I am but too happy to make your acquaintance. And now, chevalier, one word with you."

He retreated towards the door, holding Duchesne's arm, and whispering as he went. Duchesne's face, however, expressed his impatience as he spoke, and at last he said—

"As you please, my worthy friend; I always submit to your wiser counsels—so farewell for the present."

He looked after the old man as he slowly descended the stairs, and then closing the door, and locking it, he exclaimed—

"*Parbleu!* I found it very hard to listen to his prosing with even a

show of patience; and was half tempted to tell him, that the Bourbons could wait, though the soup could not."

"Then, Monsieur Jacotot is a royalist, I presume?"

"Ay, that he is, and so are all they who frequent this house. Don't start—the police know it well, and no one is more amused at their absurd plottings and conspirings than Fouché himself. Now and then, to be sure, some fool, more rash and brainless than the others, will come up from La Vendée, and try to knock his head against the walls of the Temple, like De Courcelles there, who has no other business in Paris, except to be guillotined if it were worth the trouble. Then, the minister affects to stir himself and be on the alert, just to terrify them; but he well knows that danger lurks not in this quarter. Believe me, Burke, the present rulers of France have no greater security than in the contemptible character of all their opponents. There is no course for a man of energy and courage to adopt——But I ask your pardon, my dear friend, for this treasonable talk. What think you of the dinner—the royalists would never have fallen if they had understood government as well as 'cuisine.' Taste that '*supreme*,' and say if you don't regret the Capéts; a feeling you can indulge the more freely because you never knew them."

"I cannot comprehend, Duchesne, what are the grievances you charge against the present government of France. Had you been an old courtier of the last reign—a hanger-on of Versailles or the Tuileries—the thing is intelligible; but you, a soldier, a man of daring and enterprize——"

"Let me interrupt you. I am so, only because it is the taste of the day; but I despise the parade of military glory we have got into the habit of. I prefer the period when a 'mot' did as much and more than a discharge of 'mitraille,' and men's 'esprit' and talent succeeded better than a strong sword-arm or a seat on horseback. There were gentlemen in France once, my dear Burke—ay, *parbleu*, and ladies too. Not marchionesses of the drum-head, nor countesses of the bivouac; but women in whom birth heightened beauty—whose loveliness had the added charm of high descent, beaming from their bright eyes, and sitting throned on their lofty brows—before whom our moustached marshals had stood trembling and ashamed—these men who lounge so much at ease in the salons of the Tuileries! Let me help you to this *salmi*, it is *en Louis quinze*, and worthy of the regency itself. Well, then, a glass of burgundy."

"Your friend, Monsieur Jacotot, seems somewhat of an original," said I, half desirous to change a topic which I always felt an unpleasant one.

"You are not wrong—he is so. Jacotot is a thorough Frenchman; at least, he has had the fortune to mix up in his destiny those extremes of elevated sentiment and absurdity, which go very far to compose the life of my good countrymen. I must tell you a short anecdote; but shall we adjourn to the terrace, for to prevent the interruption of servants I have ordered our dessert there?"

This was a most agreeable proposal; and so, having seated ourselves

in a little arbour of orange shrubs, with the view of the river and the Palace gardens beneath us, Duchesne thus began :—

"I am going somewhat far back in history, but have no fears on that head, Burke, my story is a very brief one. There was once upon a time in France, a monarch of some repute, called Louis the Fourteenth ; a man, if fame be not unjust, who possessed the most kingly qualities of which we have any record in books. He was brave, munificent, high-minded, ardent, selfish, cruel, and ungrateful, beyond any other man in his own dominions ; and like people with such gifts, he had the good fortune to attach men to him just as firmly and devotedly, as though he was not in his heart devoid of every principle of friendship and affection. I need not tell you what the ladies of his reign thought of him—my present business is with the ruder sex. Among the courtiers of the day was a certain Vicomte Arnoud de Gençy ; a young man who, at the age of eighteen, won his grade of colonel at the siege of Besançon, by an act of coolness and courage worth recording. He deliberately advanced into one of the breaches, and made a sketch of the interior works of the fortification, while the enemy's shot was tearing up the ground around him. When the deed was reported to the king, he interrupted the relation, saying—

"'Don't tell me who did this, for I have made De Gençy a colonel for it.' So rapidly did Louis guess the author of so daring a feat.

"From that hour, the young colonel's fortune was made. He was appointed one of the gentlemen of the chamber to his majesty, and distinguished by almost daily marks of royal intimacy. His qualities eminently fitted him for the tone of the society he lived in—he was a most witty converser, a good musician, and had, moreover, a very handsome person ; gifts not undervalued at 'Saint Germain.'

"Such were his social qualities ; and so thoroughly did he understand the king's humour, that even La Valliere herself saw the necessity of retaining him at the court, and in fact, made a confidant of him on several occasions of difficulty. Still, with all these favours of fortune—when the object of envy to almost all the rest of the household—Arnoud de Gençy was suffering in his heart one of the most trying afflictions that can befall a proud man so placed: he was in actual poverty—in want so pressing, that all the efforts he could make, all the contrivances he could practise, were barely sufficient to prevent his misery being public. The taste for splendour in dress and equipage which characterized the period, had injured greatly his private fortune; while the habit of high play, which Louis encouraged and liked to see about him, completed his ruin. The salary of his appointments was merely enough to maintain his daily expenditure ; and thus was he, with a breaking heart, obliged not only to mix in all the reckless gaiety and frivolity of that voluptuous court, but still more, tax his talents and his energies for new themes of pleasure—fresh sources of amusement.

"Worn out at length by the long struggle between his secret sorrow and his pride, he resolved to appeal to the king, and, in a few words, tell his majesty the straits to which he was reduced, and implore his protection. To this he was impelled not solely on his own account, but

on that also of his only child, a boy of eight or nine years old, whose mother died in giving him birth.

"An occasion soon presented itself. The king had given orders for a hunting party at St. Cloud; and, at an early hour of the morning, De Gençy, in his hunting dress, took up his position in one of the antechambers through which the king must pass—not alone, however—at his side there stood a lovely boy, also dressed in the costume of the chase. He wore a velvet doublet of green, slashed with gold, and ornamented by a broad belt, from which hung his *couteau de chasse;* even to the falcon feather in his cap, nothing was forgotten.

"He had not waited long when the folding-doors were thrown wide, and a moment after Louis appeared, accompanied by a single attendant, the Marquis de Verneuil, unhappily one of the very few enemies Arnoud possessed in the world.

"'Ah, De Gençy—you here?' said the king gaily. 'They told me "Brelan" had been unfavourable lately, and that we should not see you.'

"'It is true, sire,' said he, with a sad effort at a smile; 'it is only on your majesty fortune always smiles.'

"'*Pardie!* you must not say so; I lost a rouleau last night. But whom have we here?'

"'My son, so please you, sire, my only son, who desires, at an earlier age than even his father did, to serve your majesty.'

"'How like his mother,' said the king, pushing back the fair ringlets from the boy's forehead, and gazing almost fondly on his handsome features—'how like her—she was a Courcelles.'

"'She was, sire,' said Arnoud, as the tears fell on his cheek-bone, and coursed slowly along his face.

"'And you want something for him,' said the king, resuming his wonted tone, while he busied himself with his sword-knot—'Is it not so?'

"'If I might dare to ask——'

"'Assuredly you may. The thing is, what can we do? Eh, Verneuil what say you? He is but an infant.'

"'True, sire,' replied the marquis, with a look of respect, in which the most subtle could not discover a trait of his sarcastic nature; 'but there is a place vacant.'

"'Ah, indeed,' said the king quickly. 'What is it?—he shall have it.'

"'Monsieur Jacotot, your majesty's head cook, stands in need of a turnspit,' said he in a low whisper, only audible to the king.

"'A turnspit!' said the king; and scarcely was the word uttered when, as if the irony was his own, he burst into a most immoderate fit of laughter, an emotion that seemed to increase as he endeavoured to repress it, when at the instant the *cor de chasse*, then heard without, gave a new turn to his thoughts; and he hurried forward with De Verneuil, leaving De Gençy and his son rooted to the spot—indignant passion in that heart which despair and sorrow had almost rendered callous.

Louis [illegible] and [illegible]

"His majesty was still laughing as he mounted his barb in the court-yard; and the courtiers, like well-bred gentlemen, laughed as became them, with that low, quiet laugh which is the meet chorus of a sovereign's mirth, when suddenly two loud reports, so rapidly following on each other as almost to seem one, startled the glittering cortège, and even made the Arab courser of the king plunge madly in the air.

"'*Par St. Denis!* messieurs,' said Louis passionately, 'this pleasantry of yours is ill thought of. Who has dared to do this?'

"But none spoke. A terrified look around the circle was the only reply to the king's question, when a page rushed forward, his dress spotted and blood-stained, his face pale with horror—

"'Your majesty—ah, sire!' said he kneeling—but sobs choked him, and he could not utter more.

"'What is this?—will no one tell?' cried the king, as a frown of dark omen shadowed his angry features.

"'Your majesty has lost a brave, an honest, and a faithful follower, sire,' said Monsieur de Coulanges. 'Arnoud de Gençy is no more.'

"'Why, I saw him this instant,' said the king. 'He asked me some favour for his boy.'

"'True, sire,' replied De Coulanges mournfully; but he checked himself in time: for already the well-known and dreaded expression of passion had mounted to the king's face.

"'Dismiss the "chasse," gentlemen,' said he in a low, thick voice; 'and do you, Monsieur de Verneuil, attend me.'

"The cortège was soon scattered; and the Marquis de Verneuil followed the king, with an expression where fear and dread were not to be mistaken.

"Monsieur de Verneuil did indeed seem an altered man when he appeared among his friends that evening. Whatever the king had said to him assuredly had worked its due effect; for all his raillery was gone; and even the veriest trifler of the party might have dared an encounter with wits, which then were subdued and broken. Next morning, however, the sun shone out brilliantly. The king was in high spirits, the game abounded; and his majesty with his own hand brought down eight pheasants. The Marquis de Verneuil could hit nothing: for, although the best marksman of the day, his hand shook, and his sight failed him; and the king won fifty louis from him before they reached Saint Germain.

"Never was there a happier day, nor followed by a pleasanter evening. The king supped in Madame de la Valliere's apartment; the private band played the most delicious airs during the repast; and when at length the party retired to rest, not one bright dream was clouded by the memory of Arnoud de Gençy.

"Here, now, were I merely recounting an anecdote, I should stop," said the chevalier, "but must continue a little longer, though all the romance of my story is over. The Marquis de Verneuil was a good hater; even poor De Gençy's fate did not move him; and he actually did do what he had only threatened in mockery—he sent the orphan child to be a turnspit in the royal kitchen. Of course he changed his

name. The title of an old and honoured family would soon have betrayed the foul deed; and the boy was called Jacotot, after the *chef* himself. The king inquired no further on the subject. Arnoud's name recalled too unpleasant a topic for the lips of a courtier ever to mention; and the whole circumstance was soon entirely forgotten.

"This same Jacotot was the grandfather of my old friend, whom you saw a few minutes since. Fate, that seems to jest with men's destinies, made them as successful at the fire of the kitchen as ever their ancestors were at that of a battery; and Monsieur Jacotot, our present host, has not his equal in Paris. Here for years the younger members of the royal family used to sup. This room was their favourite apartment; and one evening when, at a later sitting than usual, the ruler of the feast was carried beyond himself in his praise of an admirable plat, he sent for Jacotot, and told him whatever favour he should ask he himself would seek for him at the hands of the king.

"This was the long-wished-for moment of the poor fellow's life. He drew from his bosom the title-deeds of his ancient name and fortune, and placed them in the prince's hand without uttering a word.

"'What! and are you a De Gençy?' said the prince.

"'Alas! I shame to say it, I am.'

"'Come, gentlemen,' said the gay young prince, 'a bumper to our worthy friend, whom, with God's blessing, I shall see restored right soon to his fitting rank and station. Yes, De Gençy, my word upon it, the next evening I sup here I shall bring with me his majesty's own signature to these title-deeds. Make place, gentlemen, and let him sit down.'

"But poor Jacotot was too much excited by his feelings of joy and gratitude, and he rushed from the room in a torrent of tears.

"The evening the prince spoke of never came. Soon after that commenced the troubles of the royal family—the dreadful events of Versailles—the flight to Varennes—the 10th of August—a horrible catalogue I cannot bear to trace. There, yonder, where now the groups are loitering, or sitting around in happy knots—there died Louis XVI. The prince I spoke of is an exile. They call him Louis XVIII.; but he is a king without a kingdom.

"But Jacotot lives on in hope; he has waded through all the terrors of the Revolution; he has seen the guillotine erected almost before his door, and beheld his former friends led one by one to the slaughter. Twice was he himself led forth, and twice was his life spared by some admirer of his 'cuisine.' But, perhaps, all his trials were inferior to the heart-burning with which he saw the places once occupied by the blood of St. Louis, now occupied by the 'canaille' of the Revolution. Marat and Robespierre frequented his house; and Barras seldom passed a week without dining there. This, I verily believe, was a heavier affliction than any of his personal sufferings; and I have often heard him recount with no feigned horror the scenes which took place among the 'incroyables,' as they called themselves, whose orgies he contrasted so unfavourably with the more polished excesses of his regal visitors. Through all the anarchy of that fearful

period—through the scarce less sanguinary time of the Directory—through the long dreary oppression of the Consulate—and now, in the more grinding tyranny of the Empire, he hopes, ay, still hopes on, that the day will come when, from the hands of the king himself, he shall receive his long-buried rank, and stand forth a De Gençy. Poor fellow, there is something noble and manly in the long struggle with fortune—in that long-sustained contest, in which he would never admit defeat.

"Such are the followers of the Bourbons. Their best traits, their highest daring, their most long-suffering endurance, only elicited in the pursuit of some paltry object of personal ambition. They have tasted the cup of adversity, ay, drained it to the very dregs—they have seen carnage and bloodshed such as no war ever surpassed; and all they have learned by experience is, to wish for the long-past days of royal tyranny and frivolity back again—to see a glittering swarm of debauchees fluttering around a sensualist king, and to watch the famished faces of the multitude without a thought that the tiger is only waiting for his spring. As to a thought of true liberty, one single high or noble aspiration after freedom, they never dreamed of it. You see, my friend, I have no desire to win you over to the Bourbon cause. Neither, if I could, would I make you a Jacobin. But how is this—can it really be so late? Come, we have no time to lose—it is not accounted good-breeding to be late in a visit at the 'Faubourg.'"

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE TWO SOIREES.

Duchesne's story had unfortunately driven all memory of Bubbleton out of my head; and it was only as we entered the street where the Duchesse de Montserrat lived, that I remembered my friend, and thought of asking the Chevalier's advice about him.

In a few words I explained so much of his character and situation as were necessary, and was going on to express my fears lest a temperament so unstable and uncertain should involve its possessor in much trouble, when Duchesne interrupted me by saying:—

"Be of courage on that head; your friend, if the man you describe him, is the very person to baffle the police. They can see to any depth, if the water be only clear. Muddy it, and it matters little how shallow it be. This Bubbleton might be of the greatest service just now. You must present me to him, Burke."

"Most willingly. But first promise that you will not involve my

poor friend in the snares of any plot. Heaven knows, his own faculties are quite sufficient for his mystification."

"Plot! snares! Why, what are you thinking of? But come, this is our halting-place; and here we are, without my even having a moment to give you any account of my good aunt."

As he spoke he turned the handle of a large door, which led into a gloomy *porte cochere*, dimly illuminated by a single old-fashioned lantern. A fat unwieldy-looking porter peeped at us from his den in the conciergerie, and then, having announced our approach by ringing a bell, he closed the shutter, and left us to find the way ourselves.

Ascending the great spacious stair, the wall alongside which was covered with family portraits—grim-looking heroes in mail, or prim dames, with bouquets in their jewelled hands—we reached a species of gallery, from which several doors led off; here a servant, dressed in deep black, was standing to announce the visitors.

As the servant preceded us along the corridor, I could not help feeling the contrast of this gloomy mansion, where every footstep had its own sad echo, with the gorgeous splendour of the Hotel de Clichy. Here, all was dark, cold, and dreary;—there, every thing was lightsome, cheerful, and elegant. What an emblem, to my thinking, were they both of the dynasties they represented. But the reflection was only made as one half the folding-door was thrown open—the double door was the prerogative of the blood-royal—and we were announced.

The apartment—a large sombre-looking one—was empty, however, and we traversed this, and a second similar to it, our names being repeated as before, when, at length, the low tones of voices indicated our approach to the salon where the visitors were assembled.

Dimly lighted by a few lamps, far apart from each other, the apartment, as we entered, seemed even larger than it really was. At one end, and around a huge antique fire-place, sat a group of ladies, whom, in a glance, I recognized as of the class so distinctively called dowager. They were seated in deep-cushioned fauteuils, and were mostly employed in some embroidery work, which they laid down each time they spoke, and resumed, less to prosecute the labour, than as it were from mere habit.

With all the insinuating gracefulness of a well-bred Frenchman, Duchesne approached the seat next the chimney and respectfully kissed the hand extended towards him.

"Permit me, my dear aunt, to present a very intimate friend—Captain Burke," said he, as he led me forward.

At the mention of the word Captain, I could perceive that every hand dropped its embroidery-frame, while the group stared at me with no feigned astonishment. But already the Duchess had vouchsafed a very polite speech, and motioned me to a seat beside her, while the Chevalier insinuated himself among the rest, evidently bent on relieving the stiff and constrained reserve which pervaded the party. Not even his tact and worldly cleverness was equal to the task. The conversation, if such it could be called, was conducted almost in monosyllables; some stray question for an absent "Marquise," or a mut-

tered reply concerning a late Countess, was the burthen—not an allusion even being made to any topic of the day, nor any phrase dropped which could show that the speakers were aware of the year, or the nation, in which they lived and breathed.

It was an inexpressible relief to me when, gradually, some three or four other persons dropped in, some of them men, who, by their manner, seemed favourites of the party; and soon after, the entrance of the servant with refreshments permitted a movement in the group, by which I took the opportunity to stand up and approach Duchesne, as he bent over a table, listlessly turning over the leaves of a volume.

"Just think of the contradictions of human nature, Burke," said he in a low whisper. "These are the receptions, for which the new noblesse would give half their wealth—these melancholy visits of worn-out acquaintances—these sapless twigs of humanity are the envy of such houses as the 'Hotel Clichy;' and to be admitted to these gloomy, moth-eaten salons, is a greater honour than an invitation to the Tuileries. So long as this exists, depend upon it, there is rottenness in the core of society. But come, let us take our leave; I see you are well wearied of all this; and now for an hour at Madame de Lacostellerie's—'en revanche.'"

As we came forward to make our adieux to the Duchess, she rose from her seat, and in so doing her sleeve brushed against a small marble statue of Louis XVI. which, had I not opportunely caught, would have fallen to the ground.

"Thank you, sir," said she graciously. "You have prevented what I should have deemed a sad accident."

"Nay, more, aunt," said Duchesne, smiling; "he has shown his readiness to restore the Bourbon."

This speech, evidently spoken in jest, was repeated from lip to lip in the circle; and certainly I never felt my awkwardness more oppressive than when bowing to the party, whose elated looks and pleased countenances now were turned towards me.

"My poor bashful friend," said Duchesne, as we descended the stair, "get rid of the habit of blushing with all convenient despatch; it has marred more fortunes than pharo or bouillotte."

"This, assuredly, is well done," said the Chevalier, as he looked around him, while we slowly ascended the stairs of the Hotel Clichy. The brilliant light, almost rivalling day, the servants in gorgeous liveries—the air of wealth around on every side—so different from the sad-coloured mansion of the Faubourg—while, as the opening doors permitted it to be heard, the sound of delicious music came wafted to the ear.

"I say, Burke," said he, stopping suddenly, and laying his hand on my arm, "this might content a man who has seen as much as I have; and the game is well worth the playing—so here goes!"

The first person I saw as we entered the ante-chamber was Bubbleton. He was the centre of a knot of foreigners, who, whatever the topic, seemed highly amused at his discourse.

"That is your friend, yonder," said Duchesne. "He has the true type of 'John Bull' about him. Introduce me at once."

Duchesne scarcely permitted me to finish the introduction, when he extended his hand and saluted Bubbleton with great cordiality, while the "General" did not suffer the ceremony to interrupt the flow of his eloquence, but continued to explain, in the most minute and circumstantial manner, the conditions of the new peace, secretly concluded between France and England. The incredulity of the listeners was, I could perceive, considerably lessened by observing the deferential attention with which Duchesne listened, only interrupting the speaker by an occasional assent, or some passing question as to the political relations of some of the great powers.

"As for Prussia," said Bubbleton, pompously, "as to Prussia"——

"Well, what of Prussia, General?"

"We have our doubts on that subject," replied he, looking thoughtfully around him on the group, who, completely deceived by Duchesne's manner, now paid him marked attention.

"You'll not deprive her of Genoa, I trust," said the Chevalier, with a gravity almost inconceivable.

"That is done already," said Bubbleton. "For my own part, I told Lauderdale we were nothing without the Bosphorus—'the key of our house,' as your Emperor called it."

"He spoke of Russia, if I don't err," said Duchesne, with an insinuating air of correction.

"Pardon me, you are wrong. I know Russia well. I travelled through the steppes of Metchezaromizce, with Prince Drudeszitsch. We journeyed three hundred versts over his own estates, drawn on sledges by his serfs. You are aware they are always harnessed by the beard, which they wear long and plaited on purpose."

"That is towards the Crimea," interrupted the Chevalier.

"Precisely.—I remember a curious incident which occurred one night as we approached 'Chitepsk'—you know Chitepsk, it is where they confine the state prisoners—a miserable dreary tract, where the snow never melts, and the frost is so intense you often see a drove of wolves glued fast to the snow, by the feet, and howling fearfully—a strange sight, to be sure. Well, the night was falling, and a thin cutting snow-drift beginning to drop, when Dru,—I always call him so—short—said he to me:—

"'Bub,'—he did the same to me—'Bub,' said he, 'do you remark that off-side leader?'

"'I see him,' said I.

"'Well, I have been watching the fellow since the last stage, and confound me if he has ever tightened a trace; and you see he is a right active one, notwithstanding. He capers along gaily enough. I'll touch him up a bit;' and with that he gave a flourish of his knouted whip, and came down on him with a smarting cut. Lord, how he jumped—five feet off the ground in one spring—and, hang me, if he

didn't tear off his beard—there it was, hanging to the pole—a very shocking sight, I must confess, though Dru didn't seem to mind it. However, we were obliged to pull up and get out the team. Well, you would not believe what we saw when we got down. You'd never guess who was the off leader—it was the Princess Odoznovskoi. Poor thing! the last time I saw her, before that, she was dancing in the Amber Palace, with Prince Alexander. She and her husband had been banished to Chitepsk, and, as he was ill, she had put on a false beard, and was taking a short stage in his place."

I did not venture to wait for more, but leaving Duchesne to make the most of the General, passed onwards towards the salon, which already was rapidly filling with visitors.

The Countess received me with more than wonted kindness of manner, and Mademoiselle assumed a tone of actual cordiality I had never perceived before, while, as she exchanged greetings with me, she said in a low voice:—

"Let me speak with you, in the picture-gallery, in half an hour."

Before I could utter my assent she had passed on, and was speaking to another.

Somewhat curious to conceive what Mademoiselle de Lacostellerie might mean by her appointment in the gallery, I avoided the groups where I perceived my acquaintances were, and strolled negligently on towards the place of meeting. The gallery was but half lighted, as was customary on mere nights of visiting, and I found it quite deserted. I was sauntering slowly along, musing on the strange effects of the half-seen pictures, where all, save the most forcible and striking tints, were sombred down to blackness, when I heard a step behind me. I turned my head, and saw Mademoiselle herself. She was alone, and though she evidently had seen me, continued to walk onward, without speaking, towards a small boudoir, which occupied one angle of the gallery. I followed, and we entered it together.

There was something in the secret interview, which, while it excited my curiosity, served at once to convince me that had I indulged in any hope of succeeding to her affections, nothing could be less promising—this very proof of her confidence was the strongest earnest of her indifference. But, indeed, I had never indulged such an expectation. My pride might have been flattered by such a supposition—my heart could never have sympathized in the emotion.

"We are alone here," said she hurriedly, "and we may be missed, so let me be brief. It will seem strange that I should ask you to meet me here, but I could not help it. You, alone, of all who frequent this have never paid me the least attention, nor seemed disposed to flatter me. This leads me to trust you. I have no other reason but that, and because, I am friendless." There was a tremulous sadness in the last word which went to my heart, and I could mark that her breathing was hurried and irregular for some few seconds after. "Will you promise me your friendship in what I ask, or if that be too much, will you pledge yourself at least to secresy. Enough, I am quite satisfied. Now, tell me, who is this Chevalier Duchesne? What is he?"

I ran over in a few words all I knew of him, dwelling on whatever might most redound to his credit—his distinguished military career—his undoubted talent—and lastly, alluding to his family, to which I conceived the question might most probably apply.

"Oh, it is not that," said she vehemently, "I wish to know. I care not for his bravery, nor his birth either. Tell me, what are the sources of his power, how is he admitted every where, intimate with every one, with influence over all? Why does Fouché fear, and Talleyrand admit him? I know they do this—and can you give me no clue, however faint, to guide me? The Count de Lacostellerie was refused the Spanish contract—Duchesne interferes, and it is given him. There is a difficulty about a card for a private concert at St. Cloud; Duchesne sends it. Nor does it end here. *You* know," here her voice assumed a forced distinctness, as though it cost her an effort to speak calmly, "of his duel with the Prince Dobretski; but perhaps you may not know, how he has obtained an imperial order for his recall to St. Petersburg."

"Of that I never heard. Can it be possible?"

"Have you then never tasted of his arbitrary power," said she, smiling half superciliously, "that these things seem strange to you; or does he work so secretly, that even those most intimate with him are in ignorance; but this must be so." She paused for a second or two, and then went on. "And now, brief as our acquaintance with him has been, see what influence he already possesses over my mother. Even to her, I dare not whisper my suspicions — while to you, a stranger," added she, with emotion, "I must speak my fears."

"But are they not groundless?" said I, endeavouring to calm the agitation she suffered from. "In all that you have mentioned, I can but trace the devotion of one seeking to serve, not injure—to be loved, not dreaded."

Scarce had I said these words, when I heard a noise behind me, and before I could turn around, Duchesne stood beside us.

"I implore your pardon, Mademoiselle," said he, in a voice of well-affected timidity, "nor should I venture to interrupt so interesting a conference, but that the Countess de Lacostellerie had sent me to look for you."

"You could scarcely have come more apropos, sir; the conversation was entirely of yourself," said she, haughtily, as if in defiance of him.

"How could I possibly have merited so great an honour, Mademoiselle?" replied he, bowing with the deepest respect; "or is it to the kindness of a *friend* I am indebted for such interest?"

There was an evident sneer in the way he uttered the word "friend," while a side-long glance he gave beneath his deep eye-lashes was still more decisive of his feeling.

"Few probably owe more to their friends than the Chevalier Duchesne," said Mademoiselle, tauntingly, as she took my arm to return to the salon.

"True, most true," replied he, with a low and deferential bow,

"and I hope I am not the man to forget my debts to either friends or enemies."

I turned round rapidly as he said this; our eyes met, and we exchanged a short brief glance of open defiance. His, however, as quickly changed, and an easy smile of careless indifference succeeded, as he lounged after us towards the salon, where, now, a considerable number of persons were assembled, and a more than usual excitement prevailed. Some generals of the imperial staff were also there, and the rumour ran, that the negociations with England had been suddenly interrupted, and that the negociators had demanded their passports.

"That is not all, Madame," said an old officer to the Countess; "the accounts from Mayence are threatening. Large bodies of Prussian troops are reported on the march from the eastward. The telegraph has been actively at work since noon, and several couriers have been sent off from the war-office."

"What is to come next?" said the Countess, sighing, as she thought of Paris once more deserted by its gay court, and brilliant crowd of officers, the only society of the period.

"What next, Madame?" said Duchesne, taking up the word. "*Parbleu!* the thing is easily told: a conscription, a march, a bivouac, and a battle will form act the first; then, a victory, and a bulletin, and an imperial edict, showing that Prussia, both by her language and geographical position, was intended by Providence to belong to France—that Prussians have no dearer wish than to be thrashed and taxed. The honour of becoming a portion of the grand nation being an ample recompense for any misfortune."

"And so it is, Monsieur," broke in a bluff, hard-featured veteran, whose coarse and weather-beaten traits bespoke one risen from the ranks. "He is no Frenchman who says otherwise."

"To your good health, Colonel," said Duchesne, as he lifted a glass of champagne to his lips; "such patriotism is really refreshing in our degenerate days. I wish you every success in your campaign; though what is to reward your valour in that miserable land of beer and Protestantism, I cannot possibly conceive."

"To-morrow, let me see you to-morrow, in the afternoon," said Mademoiselle in a whisper, as she passed close to me.

As I nodded in acknowledgment, Duchesne turned slightly around, and I saw in his eyes he had overheard the words, though uttered in a mere whisper. Still he went on—

"As for us, who remain ingloriously behind you, we have nothing to do but read your exploits in the '*Moniteur*,' and would to heaven the worthy editor would print his battles in better fashion! The whole page usually looks more like a beaten, than a conquering army; wounded vowels and broken consonants at every step, and the capital letters awkward, hard-featured fellows, as though risen from the ranks."

"*Tonnerre de Dieu*, sir! do you mean an insult to me?" said the old colonel, in a voice which, though intended for a whisper, was heard over the whole circle.

"An insult, my dear colonel; nothing within a thousand leagues of such. I was only speaking of the 'type' of our army, which may be very efficient, but is scarcely too good looking."

No words can convey the sarcastic tone in which the speech was delivered, nor the mortification of the indignant colonel, who felt, but knew not how, to reply to such a taunt. Happily, Madame de Lacostellerie interposed, and by skilfully changing the topic of conversation, averted further unpleasantness.

My desire to learn something accurately, as to the state of events, made me anxious to reach my quarters, and I took the first opportunity of quitting the salon. As I passed through the outer room, Duchesne was standing against a side-board, holding a glass in his hand. It was necessary that I should pass him closely, and I was preparing to salute him with the distant courtesy of our present acquaintance, when he said in his former tone of easy raillery—

"Going so early? Won't you have a glass of wine before you leave?"

"No, I thank you," said I coldly, and passing on towards the door.

"Nor wait for the concert; Grassini will be here in half an hour."

I shook my head in negative, and as I passed out, I heard him humming, with an emphasis which there was no mistaking, the couplet of a popular song of the day, which concluded thus:—

> "To-day for me,
> To-morrow for thee,
> But will that to-morrow ever be?"

That Duchesne intended to challenge me, seemed now almost certain, and I ran over in my mind the few names of those I could ask to be my friends, on such an occasion, but without being able to satisfy myself on the subject. A moment's recollection might have taught me, that it was a maxim with the Chevalier never to send a message, but, in every case, to make the adversary the aggressor; he had told me so over and over himself. That, however, did not occur to me at the moment, and I walked onward, thinking of our meeting. Could I have known what was passing in *his* mind, I should have spared many serious and some sad thoughts to my own.

CHAPTER LXV.

A SUDDEN DEPARTURE.

So firmly had I persuaded myself, on my way homeward, that Duchesne intended a duel with me, that I dreamed of it all night, and awoke in the morning perfectly convinced that the event was prearranged between us. Now, although the habits of the service I lived in had, in a great measure, blunted the feelings I once entertained of duelling, still, enough of detestation of the practice remained, to make my anticipations far from satisfactory ; besides, I knew that Duchesne had in reality no cause of quarrel with me, but from misapprehension alone could demand a meeting, which, our military code of honour always decided, should be accepted first, and inquired into afterwards. I regretted also, and deeply too, that I should appear to his eyes in an unworthy part—as though betraying the interests he had confided to me. There were, as I have said, many things I liked not in the Chevalier—the unsated desire he felt for revenge, where he had once been injured—the spirit of intrigue he cherished—and, perhaps more than either, I shunned, the scoffing habit he had of depreciating what every one around him loved, or respected—of stripping off every illusion which made life valuable, and reducing to the miserable standard of mere selfish gratification all that was great, or noble, or venerable. Already had his evil influence done me injury in this way—even now I felt, that, of the few day dreams I once indulged in, he had robbed me of the best, and reduced me to the sad reflection which haunted me throughout my whole career, and embittered every passing enjoyment of my life—I mean, the sorrowful thought of being an alien—of having but the hireling's part in that career of glory which others followed. That I alone could have no thrill of patriotism, when all around me were exulting in its display—that I had neither home nor country ! Oh, if they who feel, or fancy that they feel the wrongs and oppressions of misgovernment at home—who, with high aspirations after liberty, and holy thoughts for the happiness of their fellow-men, war against the despotism which would repress one, or the cruelty which would despise the other—if they could but foresee, how, in changing allegiance, they did but shift the burden, not rid themselves of the load—that the service of a foreign land, is no requital for the loss of every feeling which ties a man to kindred and to friends—which links his manhood with his youth—his age with both—which gives him, in the language of his forefathers, a sympathy with the land that bore them—if they could but know and feel these things—if they could learn how, in surrendering them, they have made themselves mere waifs and strays upon life's ocean—that objects of purely selfish

and personal advancement must be to them for evermore in place of the higher and more ennobling thoughts which mix with other men's ambitions—they might hesitate ere they left home and country, to fight for the cause of the stranger.

If such thoughts found entrance into *my* heart, how must they have dwelt in many another's. I, who had neither family nor kindred—who, from earliest childhood, had never tasted the sweets of affection, nor known the blessings of a father's love—and yet, scarce a day crept by, without some thought of the far away land of my birth, some memory of its hills and valleys—of its green banks and changeful skies; and in my dreams, some long-forgotten air would bring me back in memory to the cottier's fire-side, where, around the red blazing turf were seated the poor, but happy peasantry, beguiling the time with song or story—now telling of the ancient greatness of their country—now breathing a hope of its one day prosperity.

"Captain Burke's quarters," said a voice without. At the same instant, the jingling of spurs, and the clank of a sabre, bespoke the questioner as a soldier. My door opened, and an officer in the full dress of the staff entered. As I requested him to be seated, I already anticipated the object of his visit, which he seemed determined to open in most diplomatic fashion—for, the first salutations over, he began coolly to ransack his sabertasch, and search among a heap of papers which crowded it.

"Ah! here it is," said he, at length. "I ask your pardon for all this delay. But, of course, you guess the reason of my being here?"

"I must confess I suspect it," said I, with a smile.

"Oh, that I am certain of. These things never are secrets very long—nor, for my part, do I think there is any need they should be. I conclude you are quite prepared."

"You shall find me so."

"So the Minister said," replied he; while, once more, his eyes were buried in the recesses of the sabertasch—leaving me in the most intense astonishment at the last few words. That the Minister, whoever he might be, should know of, and, as it seemed, acquiesce in my fighting a duel, was a puzzle I could make nothing of.

"Here is the note I looked for," said he, as he took forth a small slip of paper, written on both sides. "May I beg you will take down the details—they are brief, but important."

"You may trust my memory with them," said I, rather surprised at the circumstantial style of his conduct.

"As you please; so pay attention for one moment, while I read:—'Captain Burke, of the 8th, will proceed by extra post to Mayence, visiting the following garrisons, *en route*,'—here come the names, which you can copy—'where his attention will be specially directed to the points marked A.B. and——

"Forgive my interrupting you, but really I am unaware of what you are alluding to. You are not here on the part of the Chevalier Duchesne?"

"The Chevalier Duchesne? Duchesne?—No. This is a war

despatch, from the Minister. You must set out in two hours. I thought you said you were prepared."

"Hem! there has been a mistake here," said I, endeavouring to remember how far I might have committed myself by any unguarded expression.

"All my fault, Captain Burke," said he frankly. "I should have been more explicit at first. But I really thought from something—I forget precisely what, now—that you knew of the movement on the frontier, and were in fact prepared for your orders. Heaven knows how far our mystification might have gone on; for, when you spoke of Duchesne—the ex-captain of the Imperial Guard, I suppose,"—

"Yes;—what of him?"

"Why, it so chanced that he was closetted with the Minister this morning, and only left five minutes before your orders were made out. But, come, neither of us can well spare more time. This is your despatch for the Commandant of the troops at Mayence, to whom you will report verbally on the equipment of the smaller bodies of men, visited 'en route.' I shall give you my note, which, though hurriedly written, will assist your memory. Above all things, get speedily on the road, and reach Mayence by Wednesday. Half an hour's speed, in times like these, is worth a whole year in one's way to promotion; and so, now, good-bye."

I stood for several minutes after he left the room so confused and astonished, that had not the huge envelope, with its great seal of office confirmed the fact, I could have believed the whole a mere trick of my imagination.

The jingle of the postillion's equipment, in the court beneath, now informed me that a government calèche stood awaiting me, and I speedily began my preparations for the road.

One thought filled my mind, to the exclusion of all others. It was Duchesne's influence, on which my fortune now rested. The last few words he uttered as I left the salon were ringing in my ears, and here was their explanation. This rapid journey was planned by him, to remove me from Paris, where, possibly, he supposed my knowledge of him might be inconvenient, and where, in my absence, his designs might be prosecuted with more success. Happy as I felt to think that a personal rencontre was not to occur between us, my self-love was deeply wounded at the thought of how much I was in this man's power, and how arbitrarily he decided on the whole question of my destiny. If my pride were gratified on the one hand, by my having excited the Chevalier's vengeance, it was offended on the other, by feeling how feeble would my efforts prove to oppose the will of an antagonist who worked with such secret and such powerful means.

The same philosophy which so often stood my part in life, here came to my aid—to act well my own part, and leave the result to time; and, so, with this patient resolve, I mentally bid defiance to my adversary, and set out from Paris.

The ardent feeling which filled my heart on the approach of my

first campaign, was now changed into a soldierly sense of duty, which if less enthusiastic, was a steadier and more sustaining motive. I felt whatever distinctions it should be my lot to win, must be gained in the camp, not in the court—that my place was rather where squadrons were charging, and squares were kneeling, than among the intrigues of the capital, its wiles and its plottings. In the one, I might win an honourable name—in the other, I should be but the dupe of more designing heads, and less scrupulous hearts, than my own.

Early on the third morning, from the time of my leaving Paris, I reached Mayence. The garrisons which I visited on the road seldom detained me above half an hour. The few questions which I had to ask respecting the troops, were soon and easily answered; and, in most instances, the officers in command had been apprised that their reports would be required, and came ready at once to afford the information.

The disposable force at that time was not above eighty thousand new levies, the conscripts of the past year, who, although well-drilled and equipped, had never undergone the fatigues of a campaign, nor met an enemy in the field. But, beyond the frontier were the veteran legions of the Austrian campaign, who, while advancing on their return to France, were suddenly halted, and now, only awaited the Emperor's orders whither they should carry their victorious standards.

As at the outbreak of all Napoleon's wars, the greatest uncertainty prevailed regarding the direction of the army, and in what place, and against what enemy, the first blow was to be struck.

The Russian army, defeated and routed at Austerlitz, was said once more to be in the field, re-organized and strengthened. Austria, it was rumoured, was faltering in her fealty. But the military preparations of Prussia were no longer a secret; and to many it seemed as if, as in the days of the Republic, France was about to contend, single-handed, against the whole of Europe. In Prussia the warlike enthusiasm of the people was carried to the very highest pitch. The court, the aristocracy, but more powerful than either, the press, stimulated national courage, by recalling to their minds the famous deeds of the Great Frederic, and bidding them remember that "Rosbach" was won against an army of Frenchmen. The students—a powerful and an organized class—stood foremost in this patriotic movement. Their excited imaginations warmed by the spirit-stirring songs of Körner and Uhland, and glowing with the instincts of that chivalry which is a German's birthright, they spread over the country, calling upon their fellow-subjects to arise and defend the "Vaterland" against the aggression of the tyrant. So unequivocally was this feeling expressed, that even before the negociations had lost their pacific character, the youthful aristocracy of Berlin used to go and sharpen their swords at the door-sill of the French ambassador at Berlin.

To the exalted tone of patriotic enthusiasm the beautiful Queen of Prussia most powerfully contributed. The crooked and tortuous windings of diplomatic intrigue found no sympathy in her frank and

generous nature. Relying on the native energy of German character, she bade an open and a bold defiance to her country's enemy, and was content to stake all on the chances of a battle.

The colder and less confident mind of the King, was rather impelled by the current of popular opinion, than induced by conviction to the adoption of this daring policy. But, once engaged in it, he exhibited the rarest fortitude and the most unyielding courage.

Such, in brief, was the condition of that people, such the warlike spirit they breathed, when, in the autumn of 1806, the cry of war resounded from the shores of the Baltic to the frontiers of Bohemia.

Never was the effective strength of the Prussian army more conspicuous. Their cavalry, in number and equipment, was confessedly among the first, if not the very first, in Europe; while the artillery maintained a reputation which, since the days of Frederic, had proclaimed it the most perfect arm of the service. The Emperor knew these things well, and did not undervalue them; and it was with a very different impression of his present enemy, from that which filled his mind in the Austrian campaign, that he remarked to Soult:—"We shall want the mattock in this war." Thereby implying, that against such an adversary, field-works and intrenchments would be needed, as well as the dense array of squadrons, and the bristling walls of infantry.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE SUMMIT OF THE LANDGRAFENBERG.

After a brief delay at Mayence, it was with sincere pleasure I received my orders to push forward to the advanced posts at Wetzlar, where General D'Auvergne was with his division. Already the battalions were crossing the Rhine, and directing their steps to different rendezvous along the Prussian frontier; some, pressing on eastwards where the Saxon territory joins the Prussian, others, directly to the north, and taking up positions distant by a short day's march from each other. The same urgent haste which characterized the opening of the Austrian campaign a year before, was here conspicuous; many of the corps being obliged to march seven and eight leagues in the day, and frequently, whole companies being forwarded in waggons drawn by six or eight horses, in order to come up with the main body of their regiments. Every road eastward was covered with some fragment of the army. Now, an infantry corps of young conscripts, glowing with enthusiasm, and eager for the fray, would cheer the calèche in which I travelled, and which, as indicating a staff officer, was surmounted by

a small flag with an eagle. Now, it was the hoarse challenge of an outpost, some veteran of Bernadotte's army, which occupied the whole line of country from Dusseldorf to Nuremberg. Picquets of dragoons, with troops of led horses for remounts, hurried on; and long lines of waggons crammed the road.

At last, I joined General D'Auvergne, who, with all the ardour of the youngest soldier, was preparing for the march. The hardy veteran, disdaining he use of a carriage, rode each day at the head of his column, and went through the most minute detail of regimental duty with the colonels under his command.

From whatever cause proceeding I knew not, but it struck me as strange that he never alluded to my visit to Paris, nor once spoke to me of the Countess; and while this reserve on his part slightly wounded me, I felt relieved from the embarrassment the mere mention of her name would cause me, and was glad, when our conversation turned on the events of the war. Nor was he, save in this respect, less cordial than ever; manifesting the greatest pleasure at the prospect the war would open to my advancement, and kindly presaging for me, a success, I scarcely dared to hope for.

"Nor is the hour distant," said he to me one morning in the latter end of September, as we rode side by side; "the grand movement is begun."

Augereau, with his powerful *corps d'armée* of twenty thousand, pressed on from Francfort and Mayence; Bernadotte, moved up on his flank from Nuremberg and Bamberg; Davoust hastened, by forced marches, from the Danube; while Soult and Ney, with a strong force, remained in the south, and in observation on the Austrian frontier. Farther to the north again, were the new levies and the whole "Imperial Guard," strengthened by four thousand additional men; which, together with Murat's cavalry, formed a vast line embracing the Prussian frontier on the west and south, and converging with giant strides towards the very heart of the kingdom. Still, mid all the thunders of marching squadrons, and the din of advancing legions, diplomatists interchanged their respective assurances of a peaceful issue to their differences, and politely conveyed the most satisfactory sentiments of mutual esteem.

On the first of September, the Emperor left Paris, but, even then, covering his designs by an affected hope of peace, he was accompanied by the empress and her suite to Mayence, where all the splendour of a court was suddenly displayed amid the pomp and preparation of war. On the sixth, he started by day-break; relays of horses were in waiting along the road to Wetzlar; and with all speed he hastened forward to Bamberg, where he issued his grand proclamation to the army.

With all his accustomed eloquence he represented to the army, the insulting demands of Prussia, and called on them, as at Austerlitz, to reply to such a menace by one tremendous blow of victory, which should close the campaign.

"Soldiers," said he, "you were about to return to France, to enjoy

the well-won repose after all your victories, but an enemy is in the field. The road to Paris is no longer open to you—neither you, nor I, can tread it, save under an arch of triumph."

The day which succeeded the issue of this proclamation, a cavalry affair occurred at the advance posts, in which the Prussians were somewhat the victors. Two days later, a courier arrived at the Imperial head-quarters with the account of another, and still more important action, between the grenadiers of Lannes and a part of Suchet's corps, against the advanced guard of Prince Hohenlohe, commanded by the most daring general in the Prussian service, Prince Louis. A cavalry combat, which lasted for near an hour, closed this brief but bloody encounter, with the death of the brave prince, who, refusing to surrender, was run through the body by the sabre of a quarter-master of the tenth hussars.

General D'Auvergne's brigade had no share in this memorable action, for on the 9th, we were marched to Rudolstadt, some miles to the left of the scene of the encounter; but having made a demonstration in that quarter, were speedily recalled, and ordered with all haste to cross the Saale, and move on to the eastward. It was now that Napoleon's manœuvres became apparent. The same intrigue which succeeded at Ulm was again to be employed here: the enemy's flank was to be turned, the communication with his reinforcements cut off, and a battle engaged, in which defeat must prove annihilation. Such, then, was the complete success of the Emperor's movements, that on the 12th, the French army was posted with the rear upon the Elbe, while the Prussians occupied a line between them and the Rhine. This masterly movement at once compelled the enemy to fall back, and concentrate his troops around Jena, and Weimar, which, from that instant, Napoleon pronounced must be the scene of a great battle.

All this detail I have been obliged to force on my reader, and now again return to my story.

On the morning of the 13th, Murat appeared for the first time at our head-quarters, below Jena, and after a short consultation with the staff, our squadrons were formed, and ordered to push on with haste towards Jena.

Every thing now showed that the decisive hour could not be distant; couriers passed and repassed; messengers and orderlies met us at every step; while, as is ever the case, the most contradictory rumours were circulated about the number and position of the enemy. As we neared Lauznets, however, we learned that the whole Prussian army occupied the "plateau" of Jena, save a corps of twenty thousand men, which were stationed at Auerstadt. From the elevated spot we occupied, the columns of Marshal Bernadotte's division could be seen marching to the eastward. A halt was now commanded, and the troops prepared their bivouacs, when, as night was falling, a staff officer rode up, with orders, from the Emperor himself, to push on without delay for Jena.

The road was much cut up by the passage of cavalry and waggons, and as the night was dark, our pace was occasionally impeded. I was

riding with one of the leading squadrons, when General D'Auvergne directed me to take an orderly with me, and proceed in advance, to make arrangements for the quarters of the men at Jena. Selecting a German soldier as my guide, I dashed forwards, and soon left the squadron out of hearing. We had not gone far, when I remarked, from the tramp of the horses, that we were upon an earthen road, and not on the pavement. I questioned my orderly, but he was positive there had been no turning since we started. I paid no more attention to the circumstance, but rode on, hard as ever. At last, the clay became deeper and heavier, the sides of the way closer, and all the appearance, as well as the gloom would allow us to guess, rather those of a by-road, than the regular "*chaussée*." To return would have been hopeless; the darkness gave no prospect of detecting at what precise spot we had left the main road, and so I determined to make my way straight onwards, at all hazards.

After about an hour's fast trotting, the orderly, who rode some paces in advance, called out "A light," and then the moment after, he cried, "There are several lights yonder." I reined in my horse at once, for the thought struck me that we had come down upon the Prussian lines. Giving my horse to the soldier, with orders to follow me noiselessly at a little distance, I walked on for above a mile, my eyes steadily fixed upon the lights, which moved from place to place, and showed, by their taper glare, that they were not watch-fires. At length, I gained a little ridge of the ground, and could distinctly see that it was a line of guns and artillery waggons, endeavouring to force their way through a narrow ravine; a few minutes after, I heard the sounds of French, and relieved of all apprehensions, I mounted my horse, and soon came up with them.

They were four troops of Lannes' artillery, which, by a mistake similar to my own, had left the high road, and entered one of the field-tracks, which thus led them astray; and here they were, jammed up in a narrow gorge, unable to get back or forward. The officer in command was a young colonel, who was completely overwhelmed by his misfortune; for he informed me that the whole artillery of the division was following him, and would inevitably be involved in the same mishap. The poor fellow, who doubtless would have faced the enemy without a particle of fear, was now so horrified by the event, that he ran wildly from place to place, ordering and counter-ordering every instant, and actually increasing the confusion by his own excitement. Some of the leading trains were unharnessed, and efforts made to withdraw the guns from their position; but the axles were, on both sides, embedded in the rock, and seemed to defy every effort to disengage them.

At this moment, when the confusion had reached its height, and the horses unharnessed from the guns, the men standing in groups around, or shouting wildly to each other, a sudden silence spread itself over the whole, and a loud, but stern voice called out—

"Who commands this division?"

"General Latour," was the answer.

"Where is he?" said the first speaker, so close to my ear that I started round, and saw the short, square figure of a man in a great coat, holding a heavy whip in his hand.

"With the main body at the rear."

"Cannoniers, dismount!" said the other—"bring the torches to the front."

Scarcely was the order obeyed, when the light of the fire-wood fell upon his features, and I saw it was the Emperor himself. In an instant the whole scene was changed: the park tools were taken out—working parties formed; and the ravine began to echo to the strong blows of the brawny arms; while Napoleon, with a blazing torch in his hand, stood by, to light their labours.

Giving directions to the under-officers and the men, he never deigned a word to the officers, who now stood trembling around him, and were gradually joined by several more, who came up with the remainder of the train.

I think still I can see that pale, unmoved face, which, as the light flickered upon it, gazed steadfastly at the working party. Not a syllable escaped him, save once, which he muttered half to himself—

"And this was the first battery to open its fire to-morrow!"

Colonel Savary stood at his side, but never dared to address him. Too well he knew that his deepest anger showed itself by silence. By degrees the granite wall gave way, the axles once more became free, and the horses again harnessed. The gun-carriages moved slowly through the ravine; nor did the Emperor quit the spot before the greater part of the train passed. Then mounting his horse, he turned towards Jena; and, notwithstanding the utter darkness of the night, he rode at full speed. Following the clatter of the horse's hoofs, I rode on, and in less than an hour reached a small cluster of houses, where a cavalry picquet was placed, and several large fires were lighted; beside which, at small tables, sat above a dozen staff officers busily writing dispatches. The Emperor halted but for a second or two, and then dashed forward again; and I soon perceived we were ascending a steep hill, covered with ferns and brushwood. We had not gone far, when the single aid-de-camp who accompanied him, turned his horse's head, and rode rapidly down the mountain again.

Napoleon was now alone, some fifty paces in front. I could see the faint outline through the darkness, my sight guided by my hearing to the spot. His pace, wherever the ground permitted, was rapid; but constantly he was obliged to hold in, and pick his steps among the stones and dwarf wood that covered the mountain. Never shall I cease to think on the strange sensations I felt, as I followed him up that steep ascent. There was he, the greatest monarch of the universe, alone, wending his solitary way in darkness, his thoughts bent on the great event before him—the tremendous conflict in which thousands must fall. There was a sense of awe in the thought of being so near to one,

on whose slightest word the destiny of nations seemed to hang; and I could not look on the dark object before me, without a superstitious feeling, deeper than fear itself, for that mightiest of men.

My thoughts permitted my taking no note of time, and I know not how long it was before we reached the crest of the hill, over whose bleak surface a cold cutting wind was blowing. It seemed as if a great table-land extended now for some distance on every side, over which the Emperor took his way, as though accustomed to the ground. While I was wondering at the certainty, with which he appeared to determine on his road, I remarked the feeble flickering of a light far away towards the horizon, and by which, it was evident, he guided his steps. As we rode on, several watch-fires could be seen towards the north-west, stretching away to a great distance, and throwing a yellowish glare in the dark sky above them. Suddenly I perceived the Emperor halt and dismount, and as speedily again he was in the saddle; but now his path took a different direction, and he diverged considerably to the southward. Curious to learn what might have caused his change of direction, I rode up to the spot, and got off. It was the embers of a watch-fire; they were almost extinguished, but still, as the horse's hoof struck the wood, a few sparks were emitted. It was this, then, which altered his course; and once more he pressed his horse to speed. A steep ascent of some hundred yards lay before us now, but on gaining the top, a brilliant spectacle of a thousand watch-fires met the eye—so close did they seem, it looked like one great volcanic crater blazing on the mountain top; while above, the lurid glow reddened the black sky, and melted away into the darkness in clouds of faint yellowish hue. Far, very far away, and to the north, stretched another much longer line of fires; but at great intervals apart, and occupying, as well as I might guess, about two leagues in extent. Several smaller fires dotted the plain, marking the outpost positions; and it was not difficult to trace the different lines of either army even by these indications.

While I yet looked, the Emperor had gained a short distance in advance of me, and suddenly I heard the hoarse challenge of a sentry, calling out, "*Qui vive?*" Buried in his own thoughts—perhaps, far too deeply lost in meditation to hear the cry—Napoleon never replied, nor slackened his speed. "*Qui vive?*" shouted the voice again—and before I could advance, the sharp bang of a musket-shot rung out; another, and another followed—and then, a roll of fire swept along the plain, happily, not in the direction of the Emperor—but already he had thrown himself from his horse, and lay flat upon the ground. Not a moment was now to be lost. I dashed my spurs into my jaded horse, and rode forwards, calling aloud, at the top of my voice, "The Emperor," "the Emperor." Still, the panic overbore my words, and another discharge was given; with one bullet, I was struck in the shoulder, another killed my horse—but springing to my legs in an instant, I rushed on, repeating my cry—before I could do more than point to the spot, Napoleon came forward, leading his horse by the bridle—his step was slow and measured—and his face, for many a torch light was now gathered to the place, was calm and tranquil. "Ye

are well upon the alert, '*mes enfans,*'" said he, with a smile; "see that ye be as ready with your fire, to-morrow!" A wild cheer answered these words—while he continued: "These are the new levies, Lieutenant—the Guards would have had more patience—where is the officer who followed me?"

"Here, Sire," said I, endeavouring to conceal the appearance of being wounded.

"Mount, sir, and accompany me to head-quarters."

"My horse is killed, Sire."

"Yes, *parbleu*," said a young soldier, who had not learned much respect before his superiors—"and he has a ball in his neck, himself."

"Are you wounded?" said the Emperor, with a quickness in his manner.

"A mere flesh-wound in the arm, of no consequence, Sire."

"Let the surgeon of the detachment see to this at once, Lieutenant," said he to the officer of the party—"and, do you come to head-quarters when you are able." With this, the Emperor mounted again, and in a few seconds more was lost to our sight.

"*Ventre bleu*," said the old Lieutenant, who had served without promotion from the first battles of the republic—"you'll be a colonel, for that scratch on your epaulette, if we only beat the Prussians to-morrow—and here am I, with eight wounds, from lead and steel, and the "*petit Caporal*" never bade me visit him at his bivouac. Come, come, I don't wish to be unfriendly—it's not *your* fault, it's only *my* bad fortune—and here comes the surgeon."

The Lieutenant was right—the epaulette had the worst of the adventure—and in half an hour, I proceeded on my way to head-quarters.

CHAPTER LXVII.

L'HOMME ROUGE.

On my way to the Imperial quarters, I fell in with some squadrons of our dragoons, from whom I learned that General d'Auvergne had just received orders to repair to the Emperor's bivouac, to which several officers in command were also summoned. As I saw, therefore, that I could have no prospect of meeting the Emperor, I resolved merely to hold myself in readiness, should he—which seemed little likely—think of me; and accordingly I took up my post with some young under-officers of our brigade, at a huge fire, where a species of canteen had been established, and coffee, and corn brandy were served out to all comers.

The recent escape of Napoleon at the outposts was already known far and near, and formed the great topic of conversation, in which, I felt hurt to remark, no mention of the part I took was ever made, although there were at least a dozen different versions of the accident. In one, His Majesty was represented to have rode down upon, and sabred the advanced picquet. In another, it was the Prussians who fired, he having penetrated within their lines, to reconnoitre;—each agreeing in the one great fact, that the feat was something, which, no one, save himself, could have done or thought of. As for me, I felt it was not my part to speak of the incident at all, until His Majesty should first do so. I listened, therefore, with due patience, and some amusement, to the various narratives about me; which served to show me, by one slight instance, the measure of that exaggeration with which the Emperor's name was ever treated, and convince me, that it required not time nor distance to colour every incident of his life, with the strongest hues of romance. The topic was a fruitful and favourite one, and certainly few subjects could, with more propriety, season the hours around a bivouac fire than the exploits of the Emperor Napoleon.

Among those whose reminiscences went farthest back, was an old sergeant-major of infantry—a seared, and seamed, and weather-beaten little fellow—who, from fatigues and privations, was dried up to a mass of tendons and fibres. This little man presented one of those strange mixtures with which the army abounded—the shrewdest common sense on all ordinary topics, with a most credulous faith in any story where Napoleon's name occurred. It seemed, indeed, as though that one element, occurring in any tale, dispensed at once with the rules which should govern belief in common cases.

The invulnerability of the Emperor was, with him, a fruitful theme; and he teemed with anecdotes of the Egyptian and Italian campaigns, in which it was incontestably shown, that neither shot nor shell had any effect upon him. But of all the superstitions regarding Napoleon, none had such complete hold on his imagination, nor was more implicitly believed by him, than the story of that little "Red Man," who, it was asserted, visited the Emperor the night before each great battle, and arranged with him the manœuvres of the succeeding day.

"L'Homme Rouge," as he was called, was an article of faith in the French army that few of the soldiers ever thought of disputing. Some, from pure credulity—some, from the force of example—and some, again, from indolence, believed in this famed personage; but even the veriest scoffer on more solemn subjects would have hesitated, ere he ventured to assail the almost universal belief in this supernatural agency. The Emperor's well-known habit of going out alone, to visit picquets and outposts, on the eve of a battle, was a circumstance too favourable to this superstition not to be employed in its defence. Besides, it was well known that he spent hours by himself, when none, even of the Marshals, had access to him; and on these occasions it was said, "L'Homme Rouge" was with him. Sentinels had been heard to declare, that they could overhear angry words passing be-

tween the Emperor and his guest—that threats had been interchanged between them; and, on one occasion, it was said that the "Red Man" went so far as to declare, that if his advice were neglected, Napoleon should lose the battle, see his artillery fall into the hands of the enemy, and behold the "guard" capitulate.

"*Milles tonnerres!* What are you saying?" broke in the little man to the grim old soldier who was relating this. "You know nothing of 'L'Homme Rouge'—not a word—how should you? But *I* served in the twenty-second of the line—old Mongoten's corps—the 'Faubourg Devils,' as they were called. *He* knew him well. It was L'Homme Rouge had him shot for treason at Cairo. I was one of the company drawn for his execution; and when he knelt down on the grass, he held up his hand, this way, and cried out:—

"'Voltigeurs of the line, hear me! You have all known me many years: you have seen whether I could face the enemy like a man; and you can tell whether I cared for the heaviest charge that ever shook a square. You know, also, whether I was true to our General. Well, it is 'L'Homme Rouge' who has brought me to this. And now—carry arms!—all together—come, *mes enfans*, try it again—carry arms! —ay, that's better—present arms!—fire!'

"*Morbleu!* the word was not well out when he was dead, and there, through the smoke—as plain as I see you now—I saw the figure of a little fellow, dressed in scarlet—feather and boots all the same! —he was standing over the corpse, and threatening it with his hands; and that," said he, in a solemn voice, "that, was 'L'Homme Rouge.'"

This anecdote was conclusive. There was no gainsaying the assertions of a man who had, with his own eyes, seen the celebrated "Red Man;" and from that instant he enjoyed a decided monopoly of every thing that concerned his private history.

According to the Serjeant-Major's version—and who could venture to contradict him?—L'Homme Rouge was not the confidential adviser and friendly counsellor of the Emperor; but, on the contrary, his evil genius—perpetually employed in thwarting his plans and opposing his views. Each seemed to have his hour of triumph alternately. Now, it was the Red Man—now, Napoleon, who stood in the ascendant. Fortune for a long period had been constant to the Emperor, and victory crowned every battle. This had, it seemed, greatly chagrined L'Homme Rouge, who, for years past, had not been seen, nor heard of. The last tradition of him was a story told by one of the sentinels on guard at the General's quarters at Mont Thabor.

It was midnight—all was still and silent in the camp. The soldiers slept as men sleep before a battle—when the old grenadier who walked his short post before General Bonaparte's tent, heard a quick tread approaching him. "*Qui vive!*" cried he; but there was no reply.— "*Qui vive!*" called the sentry once more; but as he did so he leaped backwards and brought his musket to the charge, for, just then something brushed close by him and entered the tent.

For a moment or two he doubted what should be done. Should he turn out the guard? It was only to be laughed at—that would never

do. But what if it really were somebody who had penetrated to the General's quarters? As this thought struck him, he crept up close to the tent, and there, true enough, he heard the voices of two persons speaking.

"Ah! thou here?" said Bonaparte. "I scarce expected to see thee so far from France!"

"Alas!" said the other, with a deep sigh, "what land is now open to me—or whither shall I fly to? I took refuge in Brussels—well, what should I see one morning, but the tall shakos of your grenadiers, coming up the steep street. I fled to Holland—you were there, the day after. Come, thought I, he's moving northwards, I'll try the other extreme; so I started for the Swiss. *Sacre bleu!* the roll of your confounded drums resounded through every valley. I reached the banks of the Po—your troops were there the same evening. I pushed for Rome—they were preparing your quarters, which you occupied that night. Away, then, I start once more; I cross mountains, and rivers, and seas, and gain the desert at last. I thank my fortune that there are a thousand leagues between us—and here you are, now. For pity's sake, show me, on that map of the world, one little spot you don't want to conquer, and let me live there in peace, and be sure never to meet you more."

Bonaparte did not speak for some minutes, and it seemed as though he were intently considering the request of "L'Homme Rouge."

"There," said he at length, "there—you see that island in the great sea, with nothing near it—thou mayest go there."

"How is it called?" said L'Homme Rouge.

"St. Helena," said the General. "It is not very large—but I promise thee to be undisturbed there."

"You'll never come there, then? Is that a pledge?"

"Never: I promise it. At least if I do, thou, shalt be the master, and I, the slave."

"Enough! I go now. Adieu!" said the little man, and the same instant the sentinel felt his arm brushed by some one passing close beside him; and then, all was silent in the tent once more.

"Thus you see," said the Serjeant-Major, "from that hour it was agreed on, the Emperor should conquer the whole world, and leave that one little spot for L'Homme Rouge. *Parbleu!* he might well spare him that much."

"How big might it be—that island?" said an old grenadier, who listened with the deepest attention to the tale.

"Nothing to speak of;—about the size of one battalion drawn up in square."

"*Pardie!* a small kingdom too!"

"Ah! it would not do for the Emperor," said the Serjeant-Major, laughing; an emotion the others joined in at once; and many a jest went round at the absurdity of such a thought.

I sat beside the watch-fire, listening to the old campaigning stories, till, one by one, the speakers dropped off to sleep. The bronzed veteran, and the boy conscript—the old soldier of the Sambre, and

the beardless youth, lay side by side—to some of these it was the last time they should slumber on earth. As the night wore on, the sounds became hushed in the camp, and through the thin frosty air, I could hear, from a long distance off, the tramp of the patrols, and the challenge of the reliefs, as the outposts were visited. The Prussian sentries were quite close to our advanced posts, and when the wind came from that quarter, I often heard the sounds of the voices as they exchanged their signals.

Through the entire night, officers came and went, to and from the tent of the Emperor. To him, at least, it seemed no season of repose. At length, when nigh morning, wearied with watching, and tired out with expectancy, I leaned my head on my knees, and dropped into a half sleep. Some vague sense of disappointment at being forgotten by the Emperor, was the last thought I had as I fell off—and in its sadness, it coloured all my dreams. I remembered, with all the freshness of a recent event, the curse of the old hag on the morning I had quitted my home for ever—her prayer, that bad luck should track me, every step through life—and in the shadowy uncertainty of my sleeping thoughts, I believed I was predestined to misfortune.

Almost every man has experienced the fact, that there are times in life, when impressions, the slightest in their origin, will have an undue weight on the mind—when, as it were, the clay of our natures becomes softened, and we take the impress of passing events more easily. Some vague and shadowy conception, a doubt, a dream, is enough at moments like these, to attain the whole force of a conviction—and it is wonderful with what ingenuity we wind to our purpose every circumstance around us, and what pains we take to increase the toils of our self-deception. It would be a curious thing, to trace out how much of our good or evil fortune in life had its source in these superstitions—how far the frame of mind fashioned the events before it—and to what extent our hopes and fears were but the forerunners of destiny. My sleeping thoughts were of the saddest, and when I awoke, I could not shake them off. A heavy dense fog clothed every object around—through which, only the watch-fires were visible, as they flared with a yellow, hazy light, of unnatural size. The position of these signals was all to mark the inequality of the ground—and now I could perceive that we occupied the crest of a long and steep hill, adown the sides, and at the bottom of which, also, fires were burning—while in front, another mountain arose—whose summit, for a great distance, was marked out by watch-fires. This, I conjectured, from its extent and position, to be the Prussian line. At the front of the Emperor's quarters several led horses were standing, whose caparison bespoke them as belonging to the staff—and although not yet five o'clock, there was an appearance of movement which indicated preparation.

The troops, however, were motionless—the dense columns covered the ground like a garment, and stirred not. As I stood, uncertain what course to take, I heard the noise of voices, and the heavy tramp of many feet near—and on turning, perceived it was the Emperor who came forth from his tent, followed by several of his staff. A large

fire blazed in front of his bivouac, which threw its strong light on the group, where, even in a fleeting glance, I recognized General Gazan, and Nausouty, the commander of the Cuirassiers of the Guard.

"What hour is it?" said the Emperor to Duroc, who stood near him.

"Almost five o'clock, sire."

"It is darker than it was an hour ago. Maison, where is Bernadotte by this—at Domberg, think you?"

"Not yet, sire—he is no laggard, if he reach it in three hours hence."

"Ney would have been there now," was the quick reply of Napoleon. "Come, gentlemen, into the saddle, and let us move towards the front. Gazan, put your division under arms."

The general waited not a second bidding, but wheeled his horse suddenly round, and followed by his aide-de-camp, rode at full speed down the mountain.

"There is the first streak of day," said the Emperor, pointing to a faint grey light above the distant forest. "It breaks like Austerlitz."

"May it set as gloriously," said old Nausouty, in his deep low voice.

"And it will," said Napoleon. "What sayest thou, '*groynard?*'" continued he, turning with an affected severity of manner to the grenadier who stood sentinel on the spot, and who, with a French soldier's easy indifference, leaned on the cross of his musket, to listen to the conversation. "What sayest thou? art eager to be made corporal?"

"*Parbleu*," growled out the rough soldier, "the grade is little to boast of—were I even a general of division, there might be something to hope for."

"What, then?" said Napoleon sharply. "What, then?"

"King of Prussia, to be sure; thou'lt give away the title before this hour to-morrow."

The Emperor laughed loud at the conceit. Its flattery had a charm for him, no courtier's well turned compliment could vie with; and I could hear him still continuing to enjoy it, as he rode slowly forward, and disappeared in the gloom.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

JENA AND AUERSTADT.

"He has forgotten me," said I, half aloud, as I watched the retiring figures of the Emperor and his staff till they disappeared in the gloom. "He has forgotten me! Now to find out my brigade. A great battle is before us, and there may still be a way to refresh his memory." With such thoughts I set forward in the direction of the picquet-fires, full sure that I should meet some skirmishers of our cavalry there.

As I went, the drums were beating towards the distant left, and gradually the sounds crept nearer and nearer, as the infantry battalions began to form and collect their stragglers. A dense fog seemed to shut out the dawn, and with a thin and misty rain the heavy vapour settled down upon the earth, wrapping all things in a darkness deep as night itself.

From none could I learn any intelligence of the cavalry quarter, nor had any of those I questioned seen horsemen pass near them.

"The voltigeurs in the valley yonder may perhaps tell you something," said an officer to me, pointing to some fires in a deep glen beneath us; and thither I now bent my steps.

The dull rolling of the drums gradually swelled into one continued roar, through which the clank of steel and the tremulous tramp of marching columns could be heard. Spirit-stirring echoes were they, these awakening sounds of coming conflict; and how they nerved my heart, and set it bounding again with a soldier's ardour! As I descended the hill, the noise became gradually fainter, till at length I found myself in a narrow ravine, still and silent as the grave itself. The transition was so sudden and unexpected, that for a moment I felt a sense of loneliness and depression; and the thought struck me—what if I have pushed on too far? Can it be that I have passed our lines? But the officer spoke of the voltigeurs in front. I had seen the fires myself—there could be no doubt about it. I now increased my speed, and in less than half an hour gained a spot where the ground became more open and extended in front, and not more than a few hundred paces in advance were the watch-fires; and as I looked, I heard the swell of a number of voices singing in chorus on different sides of me. The effect was most singular, for the sounds came from various quarters at the same instant, and as they all chanted the same air, the *refrain* rung out and filled the valley. Beating time with their feet, they stepped to the tune, and formed themselves to the melody, as though it were the band of the regiment. I had often heard that this was a voltigeur habit, but never was witness to it before. The air was one well-known in that suburb of Paris whence the wildest and most

reckless of our soldiers came, and which they all joined in celebrating in this rude verse.

Picardy first, and then Champaigne—
France to the battle—on, boys, on.
Anjou, Bretagny, and Maine—
Hurrah for the Faubourg of St. Antoine!

I.

How pleasant the life of a voltigeur:
In the van of the fight he must ever be.
Of roughing and rations he's always sure—
With a comrade's share he may well make free.
Picardy first, and then Champaigne—
France to the battle—on, boys, on.
Anjou, Bretagny, and Maine—
Hurrah for the Faubourg of St. Antoine!

II.

The great guns thunder on yonder hill,
Closer than that they durst not go:
But the voltigeur comes nearer still—
With his bayonet fixed he meets the foe.

III.

The hussar's coat is slashed with gold,
He rides an Arab courser fleet:
But is the voltigeur less bold
Who meets his enemy on his feet?

IV.

The cuirassier is clad in steel,
His massive sword is straight and strong:
But the voltigeur can charge and wheel
With a step—his bayonet is just as long.

V.

The artillery-driver must halt his team
If the current be fast, or the water deep:
But the voltigeur can swim the stream,
And climb the bank, be it e'er so steep.

VI.

The voltigeur needs no trumpet sound—
No bugle has he to cheer him on:
Where the fire is hottest, that's his ground—
Hurrah for the Faubourg of St. Antoine!

As they came to the conclusion of this song, they kept up the air without words, imitating by their voices the roll of the drum in march-

ing-time. Joining the first party I came up with, I asked the officer in what direction of the field I should find the cuirassier brigade.

"That I can't tell you, comrade," said he; "no cavalry have appeared in our neighbourhood, nor are they likely, for all the ground is cut up and intersected so much they could not act. But our *Maitre d'armes* is the fellow to tell you. Holloa, François, come up here for a moment."

Before I could ask whether this was not my old antagonist at Elchingen, the individual himself appeared.

"Eh—what?" cried he, as he lifted a piece of firewood from the ground, and stared me in the face by its light. "Not my friend Burke? Eh? By Jove, so it is."

Our cordial greetings being over, I asked Maitre François if he could give me any intelligence of D'Auvergne's division, or put me in the way to reach them.

"They're some miles off by this time," said he coolly. "When I was below the Plateau de Jena last night, that brigade you speak of got their orders to push forward to Auerstadt, to support Davoust's infantry. I mind it well, for they were sorely tired, and had just picquetted their horses, when the orderly came down with the despatch."

"And where does Auerstadt lie?"

"About four leagues to the other side of that tall mountain yonder."

"What then shall I do? I am dismounted, to begin with."

"And if you were not—if you had the best horse in the whole brigade, what would it serve you now, except to pass the day riding between two battle-fields, and see nothing of either, for we shall have hot work here, depend upon it. No, no, stay with us; be a voltigeur for to-day, and we'll show you something you'll not see from your bearskin saddle."

"But I shall be in a sad scrape on account of my absence."

"Never mind that—the man that takes his turn with the voltigeurs of the 22d, won't be suspected of skulking. And here comes the major—report yourself to him at once."

Without waiting for any reply, Maitre François accosted the officer in question, and in a very few words explained my position.

"Nothing could come better timed," said the major. "One of ours has been sent with despatches to the rear, and we may not see him for some hours. Again, a light cavalry man must know how to skirmish, and we'll try your skill that way. Come along with me."

"To our next meeting, then," cried François, as I hurried on after the major, while once more the voltigeur ranks burst forth in full chorus, and the merry sounds filled the valley.

I followed the major down a somewhat steep and rugged path, at the foot of which, and concealed by a low copsewood, was a party consisting of two companies of the regiment, who formed the most advanced picquets, and were destined to exchange the first shots with the enemy.

Before us lay a defile, partly overgrown with trees on either side, which ascended by a gradual slope to the foot of the hill on which the Prussian infantry was stationed, and whose lines were tracked out by a

long train of watch-fires. A farm-house and its out-buildings occupied the side of the hill about half-way up, and this was garrisoned by the enemy, and defended by two guns in position in the defile. To surprise the post, and hold it until the main columns came up, was the object of the voltigeur attack; and for this purpose small bodies of men were assembling secretly and stealthily under cover of the brushwood, to burst forth on the word being given.

There was something which surprised me not a little in the way all these movements were effected. Officers and men were mixed up, as it seemed, in perfect confusion—not approaching in regular order, or taking up a position like disciplined troops, they came in twos and threes—crouching and creeping, and suddenly concealing themselves at every opportunity of cover the ground afforded.

Their noiseless and cautious gestures brought to my mind all that I had ever read of Indian warfare, and in their eager faces and quick piercing looks, I thought I could recognize the very traits of the red men. The commands were given by signals, and so rapidly interchanged were they from party to party, that the different groups seemed to move forward by one impulse, though the officer who led them was full a mile distant from where we were.

"Can you use a firelock, comrade?" said the major, as he placed in my hand a short musket, such as the voltigeurs carried. "Sling it at your back—you may find it useful up yonder. And now I must leave you: keep to this party. But what is this?—you musn't wear that shako—you'd soon be picked off with that tower of black fur on your head. Corporal, have you no spare foraging cap in your kit? Ah! that's something more becoming a 'tirailleur,' and, by Jove, I think it improves you wonderfully." The circumstance of becomingness was not exactly uppermost in my mind at the moment, but certainly I felt no small gratification at being provided with the equipment both of cap and fire-arms, which placed me on equality with those about me.

Scarcely had the major left us, when the corporal crept closely to my side, and with that mingled respect and familiarity a French "sous officier" assumes so naturally, said—"You wished to see something of a skirmish, captain, I suppose; well, you're like enough to be gratified—we're closing up rapidly now."

"What may be the strength of your battalion, corporal?"

"Twelve hundred men, sir, and they're every one at this instant in the valley, though I'll wager you don't see a bough move, nor a leaf stirring, to show where they lie hid. You see that low copse yonder—well, there's a company of ours beneath its shelter. But there goes the word to move on." A motion with his sword, the only command he gave, communicated the order, and the men, creeping stealthily on, obeyed the mandate, till, at another signal, they were halted.

From the little copse of brushwood where we now lay to the farmhouse, the ground was completely open, not a shrub nor a bush grew; a slight ascent of the road led up to the gate, which could not be more than three hundred paces in front of us. We were stationed at some distance to the right of the road, but the field presented no obstacle or

impediment to our attack, and thither now were our looks turned—the short road which should lead to victory or the grave.

From my ambush I could see the two field-pieces which commanded the road, and beside which the artillery men stood in patient attention. With what a strange thrill I watched one of the party, as from time to time he stooped down to blow the fuze beside the gun, and then seemed endeavouring to peer into the valley, where all was still and noiseless. As well as I could judge, our little party was nearest to the front, and although a small clump to the left of the road offered a safe shelter still nearer the enemy, I could not ascertain if it were occupied. Not a word was now spoken, all save the corporal looked eagerly towards the enemy; he was watching for the signal, and knelt down with his drawn sword at his side. The death-like stillness of the moment, so unlike the prelude to every movement in cavalry combat, the painful expectation which made minutes like years themselves, the small number of the party, so dissimilar to the closely crowded squadrons I was used to, but more than all, the want of a horse, that most stirring of all the excitements to heroism and daring, unnerved me; and if my heart were to have been interrogated, I sadly fear it would have brought little corroboration to the song of the voltigeurs, which attributed so many features of superiority to their arm of the service above the rest of the army.

A thousand and a thousand times did I wish to be at the head of a cavalry charge up that narrow road in face of those guns; ay, though the mitraille should sweep the earth, there was that in the onward torrent of the horseman's course that left no room for fear. But this cold and stealthy approach, this weary watching, I could not bear.

"See, see," whispered the corporal, as he pointed with his finger towards the clump to the left of the road, "how beautifully done; there goes another."

As he spoke, I could perceive the dark shadow of something moving close to the ground, and finally concealing itself in the brushwood, beneath which now above twenty men lay hid; at the same instant a deep rolling sound like far-off thunder was heard, and then louder still, but less deep in volume, the rattling crash of musketry. At first the discharges were more prolonged, and succeeded each other more rapidly, but, gradually, the firing became less regular; then after an interval swelled more fully again, and once more relaxed.

"Listen," said the corporal, "can't you hear the cheering? There again; the skirmishers are falling back, the fire is too heavy for them."

"Which, the Prussians?"

"To be sure the Prussians. Hark! there was a volley, that was no tirailleur discharge, the columns are advancing; down men, down," whispered he, as, excited by the sounds of musketry, some three or four popped up their heads to listen. At the same instant a noise in front drew our attention to that quarter, and we now saw that a party of horse artillery-men were descending the road with a light eight-pounder gun, which they were proceeding to place in position on a small knoll of ground about eighty yards from the coppice I have mentioned.

"How I could pick off that fellow on the grey horse," whispered a soldier beside me to his comrade.

"And bring the whole fire on us afterwards," said the other.

"What can we be waiting for?" said the corporal impatiently. "They are making that place as strong as a fortress, and there, see if that is not a reinforcement." While he spoke, the heavy tramp of men marching announced the approach of fresh troops, and by the bustle and noise within the farm-house, it was clear the preparations for its defence were making with all the activity the exigency demanded.

It was past seven o'clock, but as the day broke more out, the heavy fog increased, and soon grew so dense, as to shut out from our view the Prussian picquet, and the guns upon the road; meanwhile the firing continued at a distance, but, as it seemed, fainter than before.

"Ha! there it comes now," said the corporal, as a shrill whistle was heard to our left. "Look to your pieces, men—steady." There was a pause, every ear was bent to listen, every breath drawn short, when again he spoke. "That's it, 'en avant!' lads, 'en avant!'" with the word he sprang forward, but still crouching, he went as if the thick mist were not enough to conceal him.

The men followed their leader with cautious steps, their carbines in hand and bayonets fixed. For some minutes we ascended the hill, gradually nearing the road, along which a low bank offered a slight protection against fire.

The corporal halted here for a second or two, when another whistle, so faint as to be scarcely audible, was borne on the air. With a motion of his hand forwards, he gave the order to advance, and led the way along the road-side.

As we followed in single file, I found myself next the corporal, whose every motion I watched with an intensity of interest I cannot convey. At last he stopped and wheeled round, then kneeling down, he levelled his piece upon the low bank, a movement quickly followed by all the rest, who in silence obeyed his signal.

Directly in front of us now, and as it seemed not above a dozen yards distant, the yellow glare of the artillery fuze could be dimly discerned through the mist; thither every eye was bent and every musket pointed. Thus we knelt with beating hearts, when suddenly several shot rung out from the valley and the opposite side of the road, as quickly replied to by the enemy; and a smart but irregular clattering of musquetry followed. "Now," cried the corporal aloud, "now and all together;" and then, with one long, stunning report, every gun was discharged, and a wild cry of the wounded blended with the sounds, as we cleared the fence and dashed at the guns. "Down, men, down," called our leader, as we jumped into the road; the word was scarce uttered, when a bright flash gleamed forth, a loud bang succeeded, and we heard the grape-shot crashing down the valley, and tearing its way through the leaves and branches of the brushwood.

"En avant, lads, now's your time!" cried the corporal, as he sprang to his feet, and led towards the gun; with one vigorous dash, we pushed up the height, just as the cannoniers were preparing to load. The

gunners fell back, and a party of infantry as quickly presented themselves.

The mist happily concealed the smallness of our force, otherwise the Prussians might have crushed us at once. For a second there was a pause, then both sides fired, an irregular volley was discharged, and the muskets were lowered to the charge. What must have been the fate of our little party now there could be no doubt, when suddenly through the blue smoke which yet lingered near the guns, the bright gleaming of bayonets was seen to flash, while the loud "vivas" of our own soldiers rent the air. So rapid was the rush, and so thronging did they come, it seemed as if the very ground had given them up. With a cry of "Forward" on we went; the enemy retired and fell back behind the cover of the road, where they kept up a tremendous fire upon the gun, to which now all our efforts were directed, to turn against the walls of the farm-house.

The mist by this was cleared away, and we were exposed to the shattering fire which was maintained not only along the road, but from every window and crevice in the walls of the farm-house; our men fell fast—several badly wounded, for the distance was less than half musket-range, even to the farthest.

"The bayonet, men, the bayonet; leave the gun, and sweep the road of those fellows yonder," said the major, as vaulting over the fence he led the way himself. We were now reinforced, and numbered fully four companies, so that our attack soon drove in the enemy, who retreated, still firing within the court-yard around the farm-house.

"Bring up the gun; lads, and we'll soon breach them!" said the major, but unhappily the party to whom it was committed being annoyed at the service which kept them back, when their companions were advancing, had hurled the piece off its carriage, and rolled it down the mountain.

With a muttered "*sacré*" on their stupidity, the officer cried out to scale the walls. If honour, and rank, and wealth had lain on the opposite side, and not death and agony, they could not have obeyed with more alacrity; raised on each other's shoulders, the brave fellows mounted the wall, but it was only to fall back again into their comrades' arms, dead or mortally wounded; still they pressed on. A reckless defiance of danger had shut out every other thought, and their cheers grew wilder and fiercer as the fire told upon them, while the shouts of triumph from those within, stimulated them to the verge of madness.

"Stand back, men—stand back," called the major, "down I say;" as he spoke, a dead silence followed, the men retreated behind the cover of the fence, and lay down flat with their faces to the ground; a low hissing noise was then heard, and then, with a clap like thunder, the strong gate was rent into fragments, and scattered in blazing pieces about the field. The crash of the petard was answered by a cheer wild as a war-whoop, and onward the infuriated soldiers poured through the still burning timbers; and now began a scene of carnage, which only a hand-to-hand encounter can ever produce. From every door and window the Prussians maintained a deadly fire, but the onward tide of

victory was with us, and we poured down upon them with the bayonet, and as none gave, none asked for quarter, the work of death was speedy. To the wild shouts of battle, the crash, the din, the tumult of the fight, a dropping irregular fire succeeded, and then came the low wailing cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, and all was over. We were the victors; but what a victory!—the garden was strewn with our dead, the hall, the stairs, every room was covered with bodies of our brave fellows, their rugged faces sterner than even in life.

For some minutes it seemed as though our emotions had unnerved us all, as we stood speechless, gazing on the fearful scene of bloodshed, when the low rolling of drums, heard from the mountain side, started every listener.

"The Prussians! the Prussians!" called out three or four voices together.

"No, no," shouted François. "I was too long a 'tambour' not to know that beat. They're our fellows."

The drums rolled fuller and louder, and soon the head of a column appeared peering over the ascent of the road. The sun shone brightly on their gay uniforms and glancing arms, and the tall and showily dressed "tambour major" stepped in advance with the proud bearing of a conqueror.

"Form, men, and to the front," said the major of the voltigeurs, who knew that his place was in the advance, and felt a noble pride that he had won it bravely.

As the column came up the road, the voltigeurs, scattered along the fields at either side, advanced at a run; but no longer was there any obstacle to their course, no enemy presented themselves in sight, and we mounted the ascent without a single shot being fired.

As I stopped for time to recover breath, I could not help turning to behold the valley, which, now filled with armed men, was a grand and a gorgeous sight. In long columns of attack they came; the artillery filling the interspaces between them. A brilliant sun-light shone out, and I could distinguish the different brigades, with whose colours I was now familiar. Still my eye ranged over the field in search of cavalry, the arm I loved above all others, that which, more than all the rest, revived the heroic spirit of the chivalrous ages, and made the horseman feel the ancient ardour of the belted knight. But none were within sight. Indeed the very nature of the ground offered an obstacle to their movement, and I saw that here, as at Austerlitz, the day was to the infantry.

Meanwhile we toiled up the height, and at length reached the crest of the ridge, and then burst forth a sight, such as all the grandeur I had ever beheld of war, had never presented the equal. On a vast table-land, slightly undulating on the surface, was drawn up the whole Prussian army, in battle array—a splendid force of nigh thirty thousand infantry, flanked by ten thousand sabres, the finest cavalry in Europe. By some inconceivable error of tactics, they had offered no other resistance to the French ascent of the mountain, than the skirmishing troops, which fell back as we came on; and even now they seemed

to wait patiently for the enemy to form, before the conflict should begin. As our columns crowned the hill, they instantly deployed, to cover the advance of those who followed; but the precaution seemed needless, for, except at the extreme left, where we heard the firing before, the Prussian army never moved a man, nor showed any disposition to attack.

It was now nine o'clock; the sky clear and cloudless, and a bright autumnal day permitted the eye to range for miles on every side. The Prussian army, but forty thousand strong, was drawn up in the form of an arch, presenting the convexity to our front, while our troops, ninety thousand in number, overlapped them on either flank, and extended far beyond them.

The battle began by the advance of the French columns, and the retreat of the enemy, both movements accomplished without a shot being fired, and the whole seeming the manœuvres of a field day.

At length, as the Prussians took up the position they intended to hold, their guns were seen moving to the front, squadrons of cavalry disengaged themselves from behind the infantry masses, and then, a tremendous fire opened from the whole line. Our troops advanced *en tirailleurs*, that is, whole regiments thrown out in skirmishing order, which, when pressed, fell back, and permitted the columns to appear.

The division to which I found myself attached, received orders to move obliquely across the plain, in the direction of some cottages, which I soon heard was the village of Vierzehn Heiligen, and the centre of the Prussian position. A galling fire of artillery played upon the column, as it went; and before we accomplished half the distance our loss was considerable. More than once, too, the cry of "Cavalry!" was heard, and, quick as the warning itself, we were thrown into square, to receive the impetuous horsemen, who came madly on to the charge. Ney himself stood in the squares, animating by his presence the men, and cheering them at every volley they poured in.

"Yonder, men, yonder is the centre of their position," said he, pointing to the village, which now bristled with armed men, several guns upon a height beyond it commanding the approach, and a cloud of cavalry hovering near, to pounce down upon those who might be daring enough to assail it. A wild cheer answered his words, both general and soldiers understood each other well.

In two columns of attack the division was formed, and then the word forward was given. "Orderly time, men," said General Dorsenne, who commanded that with which I was; and obedient to the order, the ranks moved as if on parade. And now let me mention a circumstance, which, though trivial in itself, presents a feature of the peculiar character of courage which distinguished the French officer in battle.

As the line advanced, the fire of the Prussian battery, which by this had found out our range most accurately, opened severely on us, but more particularly on the left; and, as the men fell fast, and the grapeshot tore through the ranks, a wavering of the line took place, and in several places a broken front was presented. Dorsenne saw it at

once, and placing himself in front of the advance, with his back towards the enemy, he called out as if on parade, "Close order—close order. Move up there—left, right—left, right;" and so did he retire step by step, marking the time with his sword, while the shot flew past and around him, and the earth was scattered about by the torrent of the grape-shot. Courage like this would seem to give a charmed life, for while death was dealing fast around him, he never received a wound.

The village was attacked at the bayonet point, and at the charge the enemy received us. So long as their artillery could continue its fire, our loss was fearful; but, once within shelter of the walls and close in with the Prussian ranks, the firing ceased and the struggle was hand to hand. Twice did we win our way up the ascent, twice were we beaten back; strong reinforcements were coming up to the enemy's aid, when a loud rolling of the drums and a hoarse cheer from behind revived our spirits—it was Lannes' division advancing at a run. They opened to permit our retiring masses to re-form behind them, and then rushed on. A crash of musketry rung out, and through the smoke the glancing bayonets flashed and the red flame danced wildly.

"*En avant! en avant!*" burst from every man, as, maddened with excitement, we plunged into the fray. Like a vast torrent tumbling from some mountain gorge, the column poured on, overwhelming all before it, now struggling for a moment, as some obstacle delayed, but could not arrest its march; now headlong rushing, it swept along. The village was won, the Prussians fell back, their guns opened fiercely on us, and cavalry tore past, sabring all who sought not shelter within the walls. But the post was ours, the key of their position was in our hands, and Ney sent three messengers one after the other to the Emperor to let him know the result, and enable him to push forward and attack the Prussian centre. Suddenly a wild cry was heard from the little street of the village, the houses were in flames, the Prussians had thrown in heated shells, and the wooden roofs of the cottages caught up the fire. For an instant all became, as it were, panic-struck, and a confused movement of retreat was begun; but the next moment order was restored—the sappers scaled the walls of the burning houses, and with their axes severed the timbers, and suffered the blazing mass to fall within the buildings. But by this time the Prussians had re-formed their columns and once more advanced to the attack—the moment was in their favour, the disorder of our ranks, and the sudden fear inspired by an unlooked-for danger still continued, when they came on. Then indeed began a scene of bloodshed the most horrible to witness—through the narrow streets, within the gardens, the houses themselves, the combatants fought hand to hand—neither would give way, neither knew on which side lay their supporting columns—it was the terrible carnage of deadly animosity on both sides.

Meanwhile the flames burst forth anew, and amid the crackling of the burning timbers and the dense smoke of the lighted thatch, the fight went on. "Vandamme! Vandamme!" cried several voices in ecstasy, "here come the grenadiers." And true enough the tall shakos peered through the blue cloud.

"Hurrah for the Faubourg!" shouted a wild voltigeur as he waved his cap and sprung forward. "Let us not lose the glory now, boys."

The appeal was not made in vain. From every window and doorway the men leaped down into the street, and rushed at the Prussian column which was advancing at the charge. Suddenly the column opened, a rushing sound was heard, and down with the speed of lightning rode a squadron of cuirassiers. Over us they tore, sabring as they went, nor halted till the head of Vandamme's column poured in a volley. Then wheeling, they galloped back, trampling on our wounded, and dealing death with their broadswords. As for me, a sabre-cut in the head had stunned me; and while I leaned for support against the wall of a house, a horseman tore past, and with one vigorous cut he cleft open my shoulder. I staggered back, and fell, covered with blood, upon the door-sill. I saw our column pass on cheering, and heard the wild cry, "*en avant! en avant!*" swelling from a thousand voices, and then faint and exhausted, my senses reeled, and the rest was like an indistinct dream.

CHAPTER LXIX.

A FRAGMENT OF A MAITRE D'ARMES' EXPERIENCES.

Stunned, and like one but half-awake, I followed the tide of marching men which swept past like a mighty river, the roar of the artillery and the crash of battle increasing the confusion of my brain. All distinct memory of the remainder of the day is lost to me. I can recollect the explosion of several waggons of the ammunition-train, and how the splinters wounded several of those around me. I also have a vague dreamy sense of being hurried along at intervals, and then seeing masses of cavalry dash past; but the great prevailing thought above all others is, of leaning over the edge of a "charrette," where I lay with some wounded soldiers, to watch the retreat of the Prussians, as they were pursued by Murat's cavalry. François was at my side, and described to me the great events of the battle; but though I seemed to listen, the sounds fell unregarded on my ear. Even now, it seems to me like a dream, and the only palpable idea before me is, the heated air, the dark and louring sky, and the deafening thunder of the guns.

It is well known how the victory of Jena was crowned by the glorious issue of the battle of Auerstadt, where the main body of the Prussians, under the command of the king himself, was completely beaten by Davoust, with a force not half their number. The two routed armies crossed in their flight, while the headlong fury of the French

cavalry pressed down on them, nor did the terrible slaughter cease till night gave respite to the beaten.

The victors and the vanquished entered Weimar together, a distance of full six leagues from the field of battle. All struggle had long ceased —an unresisting massacre it was; and such was the disappointment and anger of the people of the country, that the Prussian officers were frequently attacked and slain by the peasantry, whose passionate indignation made them suspect treachery in the result of the battle.

All whose wounds were but slight, and whose health promised speedy restoration, were mounted into waggons taken from the enemy, and sent forward with the army. Among this number I found myself, and that same night slept soundly and peacefully in the straw of the "charrette" in which I travelled from Jena.

The Emperor's head-quarters were established at Weimar, and thither all the "ambulances" were conveyed; while the marshals, with their several divisions, were sent in pursuit of the enemy. As for myself, before the week elapsed, I was sufficiently recovered to move about, for happily the stunning effects which immediately followed the injury were its worst consequences, and my wound in the shoulder proved but trifling.

"And so you are determined to join the cavalry again," said François, as he sat by my side under a tree, where a cheerful fire of blazing wood had drawn several to enjoy its comfort. "That is what I cannot comprehend by any stretch of ingenuity, how a man who has once seen something of voltigeur life, can go back to the dull routine of dragoon service."

"Perhaps I have had enough of skirmishing, François," said I smiling.

"Is it for that knock on the pate you speak?" said he contemptuously. "Bah! The heavy shako you wear would give a worse headache. Come, come, think better on't. I can tell you,"—here he lowered his voice to a whisper,—"I can tell you, Burke, the major noticed the manner you held your ground in the old farm-house. I heard him refuse to send a reinforcement, when the Prussians made their second attack. 'No, no,' said he, 'that hussar fellow yonder does his work so well, he wants no help from us.' When he said that, my friend, be assured your promotion is safe enough. You were made for a voltigeur."

"Come, François, it's no use—all your flattery won't make me desert. I'll try and join my brigade to-morrow—that is, if I can find them."

"You never told me in what way you first became separated from your corps. How was it?"

"There's something of a secret there, François—you mustn't ask me."

"Ah, I understand," said he, with a knowing look, and a gesture of his hand, as if making a pass with a sword. "Did you kill him?"

"No, not exactly," said I, laughing.

"Merely gave him that pretty lunge '*en tierce*,' you favoured me with," said he, putting his hand on his side.

"Nor even that."

"*Diable!* then how was it?"

"I have told you it was a secret."

"Secret! Confound it, man, there are no secrets in a campaign, except when the military chest is empty, or the commissary falls short of grub. These are the only things one ever thinks of hushing up. Come, out with it."

"Well, if it must be, I may as well have the benefit of your advice. So draw closer, for I don't wish the rest to hear it."

In as few words as I was able I explained to François the circumstances of the night march, and the manner of my meeting with the Emperor at the ravine, where the artillery-train was stopped; but when I came to the incident of the picquet, and mentioned how, in rescuing the Emperor, my horse had been killed under me, he could no longer restrain himself, but turned to the rest, who, to the number of fifteen or sixteen, sat around the fire, and burst forth—

"*Mille tonnerres!* but the boy is a fool!" and then, before I could interpose a word, blurted out the whole adventure to the company.

There was no use now to attempt any concealment at all; neither was there to feel anger at his conduct—one would have been as absurd as the other; and so I had to endure, as best I could, the various comments that were passed on my behaviour, on the prudence of which certainly no second opinion existed.

"You must be right certain of promotion, captain," said an old serjeant, with a grey beard and moustache, "or you wouldn't refuse such a chance as that."

"*Diable!*" cried François, "don't you see he wouldn't accept of it—he is too proud to wait on the '*Petit Caporal*,' though he asked him to do so."

"He'd have given you the cross of the Legion any how," said another.

"Ay, by Jove!" exclaimed the riding-master of a dragoon regiment, "and sent him a re-mount from his own stud."

"And you think that modesty!" said François, whose indignation at my folly knew no bounds. "*Par St. Joseph!* if I'd been as modest, it's not *Maitre d'armes* of a voltigeur battalion I'd be to-day, though I may say, without boasting, I'm not afraid to cross a rapier with any man in the army. No, no; that's not the way I managed."

"How was that, Maitre François?" said a young officer, who felt curious to learn the circumstance to which he seemed to attach a story.

"If the honourable society cares to hear it," said François, uncovering, and bowing courteously to all around, "I shall have great pleasure in recounting a little incident of my life."

A general cry of acclamation and bravo met the polite proposal; while François, accepting a "goutte" from a canteen presented to him, began thus:—

"I began my soldier's life at the first step of the ladder. I was a drummer-boy at Jemmape; and when I grew old enough to exchange the drum-stick for the sword, I was attached to the *Chasseurs-à-chéval*,

and went with them to Egypt. I could tell you some strange stories of our doings there—I don't mean with the Turks, mark you, but amongst ourselves—for we had little affairs with the sword almost every day; and I soon showed them I was their master—but that is not to the purpose. What I am about to speak of happened in this wise.

"At break of day, one morning, the picquet to which I was joined received orders to mount, and accompany the General along the bank of the Nile to the village of Chebrheis, where we heard that a Mameluke force were assembling, whose strength and equipment it was important to ascertain. Our horses were far from fresh when we started; the day previous had been spent in a fatiguing march from Rhemanieh, crossing a dreary desert, with hot sands and no water. But General Bonaparte always expected us tó turn out, as if we had got a general re-mount; and so we made the best of it, and set out in as good style as we could. We had not gone above a league and a half, however, when we found that the slapping pace of the General had left the greater part of the escort out of sight; and of a force of four squadrons, not above twenty horsemen were present.

"The Emperor—you know he was only general then, but it's all the same—laughed heartily, when he found he had outridden the rest—indeed for that matter he laughed at our poor blown beasts, that shook on every limb, and seemed like to push their spare, gaunt bones through the trappings with which for shame's sake we endeavoured to cover them; but his joke was but short-lived, for just then, from behind the wall of an old ruined temple—whiz—there came a shattering volley of musketry in the midst of us—the only miracle is, how one escaped: the next moment there was a wild hurrah, and we beheld some fifty Mameluke fellows, all glittering with gold, coming down full speed on us, on their Arab chargers. *Mille cadavres*! what was to be done, nothing, you'd say, but run for it, and so we should have done, if the beasts were able, but not a bit of it, they couldn't have raised a gallop, if Mourad Bey had been there, with his whole army, and so we put a good face on it, and drew up across the way, and looked as if going to charge. Egad, the Turks were amazed, they halted up short, and stared about them to see what infantry or artillery there might be coming up to our assistance, so boldly did we hold our ground.

"'We'll keep them in check, General,' said the officer of the picquet. 'Lose no time now, but make a dash for it, and you'll get away;' and so without more ado, Bonaparte turned his horse's head round, and driving his spurs into him, set out at top speed.

"This was the signal for the Mameluke charge, and down they came. *Sacristi!* how the infidels rode us down; over and over our fellows rolled, men and horses together, while they slashed with their keen scimitars on every side—few needed a second cut, I warrant you.

"By some good fortune, my beast kept his legs in the melée, and with even better luck, got so frightened, that he started off, and struck out in full gallop after the General, who about two hundred paces in front of me, was dashing along, pursued by a Mameluke, with a

scimitar held over his head. The Turk's horse, however, was wounded, and could not gain even on the tired animal before him, while mine was at every stride overtaking him.

"The Mameluke hearing the clatter behind, turned his head, I seized the moment, and discharged my only remaining pistol at him, alas! without effect. With a wild war-cry, the fellow swerved round and came down upon me, intending to take my horse in flank, and hurl me over; but the good beast plunged forward, and my enemy passed behind, and only grazed the haunches as he went; the moment after he was at my side—*Parbleu*, I didn't like the companionship; I knew every turn of a broad sword or a rapier well, but a curved scimitar, keen as a razor, of Damascus steel, glittering and glistening over my head, was a different thing—the great dark eyes of the fellow, too, glared like balls of fire, and his white teeth were clenched. With a swing of his blade over his head, so loosely done I thought he had almost flung the weapon from his hand, he aimed a cut at my neck, but quick as lightning, I dropped upon the mane, and the sharp blade shaved the red feather from my shako, and sent it floating in the air, while, with a straight point I ran him through the body, and heard his death-shout as he fell bathed in blood upon the sands. The general saw him fall and cried out something, but I could not hear the words, nor to say truth did I care much at the time—my happiest thought just then was to see the remainder of the escort, which we had left behind, coming up at a smart canter. The Turks no sooner perceived them, than they wheeled and fled, and so we returned to the camp, with a loss of some twenty brave fellows, and none the wiser for all our trouble.

"'What shall I do for you, friend?' said the General to me as I stood by his orders at the door of his tent, 'what shall I do for you?'

"'*Ma foi*,' said I, with a shrug of my shoulders, 'I can't well say at a moment; perhaps the best thing would be, to promise you'd never take me as one of your escort, when you make such an expedition as this morning's.'

"'No, no, I'll not say that; who are you, what's your grade?'

"'François, Maitre d'armes of the fourth chasseurs of the guard,' said I proudly, and indeed I thought he might have known me without the question.

"'Ah indeed!' replied he gravely, 'promotion is then of no use here—a Maitre d'armes, like a general of division, is at the top of the tree. Come, I have it, a fellow of your sort is never out of scrapes, always duelling and quarrelling, under arrest three days in every week—I know you well. Now, Maitre François, I'll forgive you the first time you ask me, for any offence within my power to pardon. Go, you are satisfied with that promise, is it not so?'

"'Yes, General, and I'll soon jog your memory about it,' said I saluting and retiring from the tent.

"I see some old 'braves' of the pyramids about me now," continued François, "and so I need not dwell on the events of the campaign. You all know how General Bonaparte left the army to Kleber and went back to France, and somehow we never had much luck after that, but so it

was, I came back with the regiment, and was at the battle of Marengo, when our brigade captured four guns of Skal's battery, and carried off eleven of their officers our prisoners. You'd wonder now, comrades, how that piece of good fortune should turn out so ill for me, but such was the case. After the battle was gained, General Bonaparte retired to Gerofola with his staff, and I was ordered to proceed after him, with the Hauptmann Klingenswert of the Austrian army, one of our prisoners who had served on Melas' staff, and knew every thing about the effective strength of the army and all their plans.

"We set off at day-break, it was in June, and a lovely morning too, and as my prisoner was an officer and a man of honour, I took no escort, but rode along at his side; we halted at noon to dine in a little grove of cedars, where I opened my canteen and spread the contents on the grass, and after regaling ourselves pleasantly, we lighted our meerschaums and chatted away like old comrades over the war and its chances. A more agreeable fellow than the Austrian I never met; he told me his whole history, and I told him mine, and we drank Bruderschaft together, and swore I don't know how many eternal friendships. The devil was just amusing himself with us all this time though, as you'll see presently, for we soon got into an argument about the charge in which our brigade captured the guns. He said, that if the ammunition had not failed, we never would have dared the attack, and I swore that the discharges were pouring in, while we rode down on the battery.

"We grew warm with the dispute, and drank deeper to cool us; and, what between the wine and our own passion, we became downright angry, and went so far as to interchange something not like 'Bruderschaft.'

"'Ah, how unfortunate I always am,' said I, sighing. 'If I had only the good luck to be the prisoner now, and you the escort——'

"'What then?' said he.

"'How easily, and how pleasantly too, could we settle this little affair. The ground is smooth as velvet—there is no sun—all still, and quiet, and peaceful.'

"'No, no,' said the Austrian, 'I couldn't do what you propose—I should be dishonoured for ever, if I took such an advantage of you. You must know, François,' for he called me so, recurring at once to his tone of kindliness, 'I am the first swordsman of my brigade.'

"I could scarcely avoid throwing myself into his arms as he spoke—never was there such a piece of fortune. 'And I,' cried I in ecstasy, 'I, the first of the whole French army!' You know, comrades, I only said that *en gasçon*, and to afford him the greater pleasure in our rencontre.

"We soon measured our swords, and threw off our jackets. 'François,' said he, 'I ought to mention to you, that my lunge *en tierce* is my famous stroke—I rarely miss running my adversary through the chest with it.'

"'I know the trick well,' said I, 'take care of my "pass" outside the guard.'

"'Oh! if that's your game,' said he, laughing, 'I'll make short work of it—now, to begin.'

"'All ready,' said I, *en garde*, and we crossed our weapons—for a German, he was a capital swordsman, and had a very pretty trick of putting in his point over the hilt, and wounding the sword arm; but if it had not been for all the wine I drank, the affair would have been over in a second or two. As it was, we both fenced loose, and without any judgment whatever.

"'Ah! you got that,' said I, 'at last,' as I pierced him in the back, outside the guard. 'No, no,' cried he, passionately; for his temper was up—and he would not confess a touch. 'Well, then, that's home,' said I, thrusting beneath his hilt, till the blood spurted out along my blade, and even in my eyes.

"'Yes; that's home,' said he, staggering back, while one of his legs crossed over the other, and he fell heavily on the grass. I stooped down to feel his heart, and as I did so, my senses failed—my limbs tottered—and I rolled headlong over him. Truth was, I was badly wounded, though I never knew where—for his sword had entered my chest, beneath a rib, and cut some large vessels in the lungs.

"The end of it all was—the Austrian was buried, and I was broke the service, without pay or pension—my wound being declared by the doctors an incapacity to serve in future.

"Comrades, we often hear men talk of the happy day before them, when they shall leave the army, and throw off the knapsack, and give up the musket for the mattock. Well, trust me—it's no such pleasure as they deem it, after all. There was I, turned loose upon the world, with nothing but a suit of ragged clothes, my comrades made up amongst them—my old rapier, and a bad asthma. Such was my stock in trade, to begin life anew, at the age of forty-seven—and so, I set out on my weary way back to Paris."

"Didn't you try your chance with the *Petit Caporal*, first?" asked one of the listeners.

"To be sure, I did. I sent him a long petition, setting forth the whole circumstance, and detailing every minute particular of the duel, but I received it back, unopened—with Duroc's name, and the word 'rejected' on the back."

"It is strange how unfit we old soldiers are for any occupation in a civil way, when we've spent half a life-time campaigning. When I reached Paris, I could almost have wedged myself into the scabbard of my sword. Long marches, and short rations had told heavily on me—and the custom-house officer at the barrier told me to pass on, without ever stopping to see that I carried no contraband goods about me.

"I had a miserable time enough of it for twelve or fourteen months. The only way of support I could find, was teaching recruits the sword exercise—and you know they couldn't be very liberal in their rewards for the service; but even this poor trade was soon interdicted, as the police reported that I encouraged the young soldiers to fight duels—a great offence, truly—but you see everything went unluckily with me at that time.

"What was to become of me now I couldn't tell; when an old

comrade, pensioned off from Moreau's army, had interest to get me appointed supernumerary, as they call it, in the Grand Opera, where I used to perform as a Roman soldier, or a friar, or a peasant, or some such thing, for five francs a week—not a sous more had I, and the duty was heavier than on active service.

"After two years, the 'big drum' died of a rheumatic fever, from beating a great solo in a new German opera, and I was promoted to his place; for, by this time, I was quite recovered from the effects of my wound, and could use my arms as well as ever. Some of the honourable company may remember the first night that Napoleon visited the Grand Opera, after he was named Emperor. It was a glorious sight, and one can never forget it—the whole house was filled with generals and field-marshals—it was a grand field-day, by the glare of ten thousand wax-lights; and the Empress was there, and her whole suite, and all the prettiest women in France. Little time I had to look at them, though; for there was I, in the corner of the orchestra, with my big drum before me, on which I was to play the confounded thing that killed the other fellow. It was a strange performance, sure enough—for in the midst of a great din and crash, came a dead pause, and then, I was to strike three solemn bangs on the drum, to be followed by a succession of blows, fast as lightning, for five minutes. This was the composer's notion of a battle—distant firing—Heaven bless his heart! I was wishing he'd seen some of it.

"This was to come on in the second act, up to which time I had nothing to do. Why do I say nothing? I had to gaze at the *Petit Caporal*, who sat there in the box over my head, looking as stern and as thoughtful as ever, and not minding much what the Empress said, though she kept prattling into his ear all the time, and trying to attract his attention. *Parbleu*, he was not thinking of all the nonsense before him—his mind was on real battles—he had seen real smoke—that he had! He was fatter and paler than he used to be, and I thought, too, his frown was darker than when I saw him last: but, to be sure, that was at Marengo, and he ever looked pleased on the field of battle. I couldn't take my eyes from him—his fine thoughtful face, so full of determination and energy, reminded me of my old days of campaigning. I thought of Arcola, and Rivoli, of Cairo, and the Pyramids, and the great charge at Marengo, when Dessaix's division came up, and my heart was nigh bursting when I remembered that I wore the epaulette no longer. I forgot, too, where I was—and expected every instant to hear him call for one of the marshals, or see him stretch out his hand to point to a distant part of the field; and so absorbed was I in my reveries, that I had neither eyes nor ears for any thing around me; when, suddenly, all the din of the orchestra ceased—not a sound was heard—and a hand rudely shook me by the arm, while a voice whispered, 'Now, now.' Mechanically I seized the drum-sticks, but my eyes still were rivetted on the Emperor—my whole heart and soul was centered in him. Again, the voice called to me to begin, and a low murmur of angry meaning ran through the orchestra. I sprang to my legs, and in the excitement of the moment, losing all memory

[illegible] State of [illegible]

of time and place, I rolled out the '*pas de charge*.' Scarce had the first *roulade* of the well-known sounds reverberated through the house, when one cry of '*Vive l'Empereur!*' burst forth. It was not a cheer—it was the heart-given outbreak of ten thousand devoted followers. Marshals, generals, colonels, ambassadors, ministers, all joined—and the vast assembly rocked to and fro, like the sea in a storm, while Napoleon himself, slowly rising, bent his proud head in acknowledgment, and then sat down again, amid the thundering shouts of acclamation. It was full twenty minutes before the piece could proceed, and even then, momentary outbreaks of enthusiasm would occur to interrupt it, and continued to burst forth till the curtain fell. Just then, an aid-de-camp appeared beside the orchestra, and ordered me to the Emperor's box.

"*Sacristi*, how I trembled! I didn't know what might come of it.

"'Ah, *coquin!*' said he, as I stood ready to drop with fear at the door of the box—'This has been one of thy doings, eh?'

"'Yes, Sire,' muttered I, in a half whisper.

"'And how hast thou dared to spoil an opera in this fashion?' said he, frowning fiercely. 'Answer me, sirrah.'

"'It was your majesty's fault,' said I, becoming reckless of all consequences. 'You didn't seem to care much for all their scraping and blowing, and so I thought the old "*roulade*" might rouse you a bit. You used to like it once, and might still, if the times be not altered.'

"'And they are not,' said he, sternly. 'Who art thou, that seem'st to know me thus well?'

"'Old François, that was *Maitre d'armes* of the 4th in Egypt, and who saved you from the stroke of a Mameluke sabre at Chebrheis.'

"'What! the fellow who killed an Austrian prisoner after Marengo. Why, I thought thee dead.'

"'Better for me I had been,' said I. 'You wouldn't read my petition. Yes, you may frown away, general,' said I to Duroc, who kept glowering at me like a tiger—'I began life at the tambour—I have come down to it again—you can't bring me lower, *parbleu*.'

"The Emperor whispered something to the Empress, who turned round towards me, and laughed, and then he made a sign for me to withdraw. Before I had got a dozen paces from the box, an aid-de-camp overtook me.

"'François,' said he, 'you are to appear before the medical commission to-morrow, and if their report be favourable, you are to have your old grade of *Maitre d'armes*.'

"And so it was. Not only was I restored, but they even placed me in the same regiment I served in, during the campaigns of Egypt and Italy. The corps, however, was greatly changed since I knew it before; and so I asked the Emperor to appoint me to a voltigeur battalion, where discipline is not so rigid, and pleasant comrades are somewhat more plentiful. I had my wish, gentlemen; and now, with your permission, we'll drink the 'Faubourg St. Antoine,' the cradle of our arm of the service."

In repeating "Maitre François'" tale, I could only ask if it might

have one-half the success with my reader, it met with from his comrades of the bivouac—this, however, I cannot look for; and must leave it and him to his fortunes, and now turn to follow the course of my own.

François was not the only one who felt surprised at my being able to resist the pleasures of a voltigeur's life; and my companion the corporal looked upon my determination to join the hussar brigade as one of those extraordinary instances of duty predominating over inclination—"Not," said he, "but there may be brave fellows and good soldiers among the dragoons; though having a horse to ride is a sore drawback on a man's courage;" and, "when one has felt the confidence of standing face to face, and foot to foot, with the enemy, I cannot see how he can ever bring himself to fight in any other fashion."

"A man can accustom himself to anything, corporal," said an old, hardy-looking soldier, who sat smoking with the most profound air of thoughtful reflection. "I remembe rbeing in the 'dromedary brigade' at Cairo—few of us could keep our seats at first—and when we fell off, it was often hard enough to resist the Mamelukes and hold the beasts beside; but even that we learned with time."

This explanation, little flattering as it was to the cavalry, seemed to convince the listeners that time, which smoothes so many difficulties, will even make a man content to be a dragoon.

"Well, since you will not be 'of ours,'" said François, "let us drink a parting cup, and say good bye, for I hear the bugles sounding the call."

"A health to the 'Faubourg St. Antoine,' boys," cried I, and a hearty cheer re-echoed the toast; and with many a shake hands, and many a promise of welcome, whenever I saw the error of my ways sufficiently to doff the dolman for the voltigeur's jacket, I took leave of the gallant twenty-second, and set out towards Weimar.

CHAPTER LXX.

BERLIN AFTER "JENA."

As the battle of Austerlitz was the death-blow to the empire of Austria, so with the defeat at Jena did Prussia fall, and that great kingdom become a prey to the conquering Napoleon. Were this a fitting place, it might be curious to inquire into the causes which involved a ruin so sudden and so complete, and how, a vast and highly organized army seemed at one fell stroke annihilated and destroyed.

The victories of Jena and Auerstadt, great and decisive as they were, were nevertheless inadequate to such results; and if the genius of the Emperor had not been as prompt to follow up as to gain a battle, they never would have occurred. But scarcely had the terrible contest ceased, when he sent for the Saxon officers who were taken prisoners, and addressing them in a tone of kindness, declared at once that they were at liberty and might return to their homes, first pledging their words not to carry arms against France or her allies. One hundred and twenty officers of different grades, from lieutenant-general downwards, gave this promise, and retired to their own country, extolling the generosity of Napoleon. This first step was soon followed up by another and more important one: negociations were opened with the Elector of Saxony and the title of king offered to him, on condition of his joining the confederacy of the Rhine; and thus once more the artful policy already pursued with regard to Bavaria in the south, was here renewed in the north of Germany; and with equal success.

This deep-laid scheme deprived the Prussian army of eighteen thousand men, and that, on the very moment when defeat and disaster had spread their demoralizing influences through the entire army: several of their greatest generals were killed, many more dreadfully or fatally wounded—Prince Louis, Rüchel, Schmettau, among the former; the Duke of Brunswick and Prince Henry both severely wounded —the duke survived but a few days, and these in the greatest suffering; Marshal Müllendorf, the veteran of nigh eighty years, had his chest pierced by a lance. Here was misfortune enough to cause dismay and despair, for unhappily the nation itself was but an army in feeling and organization, and with defeat every hope died out, and every arm was paralysed. The patriotism of the people had taken its place beneath a standard, which when once lowered before a conqueror, nothing more remained. Such is the destiny of a military monarchy; it's only vitality is victory—the hour of disaster is it's death-blow.

The system of whole corps capitulating, which the Prussians had

not scrupled to sneer at, when occurring in Austria, now took place here, with even greater rapidity. Scarcely a day passed that some regiment did not lay down their arms, and surrender *en parole*. A panic spread through the whole length and breadth of the land; places of undoubted strength were surrendered as insecure and untenable. No rest nor respite was allowed the vanquished; the gay plumes of the lancers fluttered over the vast plains in pursuit; columns of infantry poured in every direction through the kingdom, and the eagles glittered in every town and every village of conquered Prussia. Never did the spirit of Napoleon display itself more pitiless than in this campaign, for, while in his every act he evinced a determination to break down and destroy the nation, the *Moniteur* at Paris teemed with articles, in derision of the army whose bravery he should never have questioned. Even the gallant leaders themselves, old and scarred warriors, were contemptuously described as blind and infatuated fanatics, undeserving of clemency or consideration. Not thus should he have spoken of the noble Prince Louis, and the brave Duke of Brunswick. They fought in a good cause, and they met the death of gallant soldiers. "I will make their nobles beg their bread upon the highways," was the dreadful sentence he uttered at Weimar, and the words were never forgotten.

The conduct and bearing of the Emperor was the more insulting, from its contrast with that of his marshals and generals, many of whom could not help acknowledging in their acts, the devotion and patriotism of their vanquished foes. Murat lost no occasion to evince this feeling, and sent eight colonels of his own division to carry the pall at General Schmettau's funeral, who was interred with all the honours due to one who had been the companion of the Great Frederick himself.

Soult, Bernadotte, Augereau, Ney, and Davoust, with the several corps under their command, pursued the routed forces with untiring hostility. In vain did the king of Prussia address a supplicating letter, asking for a suspension of arms. Napoleon scarcely deigned a reply, and ordered the advanced guard to march on Berlin.

But a year before, and he had issued his royal mandates from the palace of the Cæsars—and he burned now to date his bulletin from the palace of the great Frederick: and on the tenth day after the battle of Jena, the troops of Lannes' division bivouacked in the plain around Potsdam.

I had joined my brigade the day previous, and entered Berlin with them on the morning of the 23rd of October.

The preparations for a triumphal entry were made on the day before—and by noon, the troops approached the capital, in all the splendour of full equipment. First came the grenadiers of Oudinot's brigade, one of the finest corps in the French army—their bright yellow facings and shoulder knots had given them the *soubriquet* of the '*Grénadiers jaunes*.' They formed part of Davoust's force at Auerstadt, and were opposed to the Prussian guard in the greatest shock of the entire day. After them came two battalions of the

Chasseurs à Pied, a splendid body of infantry, the remnant of four thousand, who went into battle on the morning of the 15th. Then followed a brigade of artillery, each gun-carriage surmounted by a Prussian standard. These again were succeeded by the red lancers of Berg—with Murat himself at their head—for they were his own regiment, and he felt justly proud of such followers. The Grand Duke was in all the splendour of his full dress, and wore a Spanish hat, looped up, with an immense brilliant in front, and a plume of ostrich feathers floated over his neck and shoulders. Two hundred and forty chosen men of the imperial guard marched two and two after these, each carrying a colour taken from the enemy in battle. Nansouty's cuirassiers came next—they had suffered severely at Jena, and were obliged to muster several of their wounded men, to fill up the gaps in their squadrons. Then, there were the horse artillery brigade, whose uniforms and equipments, notwithstanding every effort to conceal it, showed the terrible effects of the great battle. General D'Auvergne's division, with the hussars and the light cavalry attached, followed—these succeeded by the voltigeurs, and eight battalions of the imperial guard, whose ranks were closed up with the *grénadiers à cheval,* and more artillery—in all, a force of eighteen thousand—the *élite* of the French army. Advancing in orderly time, they came, no sound heard, save the dull reverberation of the earth as it trembled beneath the columns, when the hoarse challenge to 'halt,' was called from rank to rank, as often as those in the rear pressed on the leading files—but, as they reached the Brandenburg gate, the band of each regiment burst forth, and the wide Platz resounded with the clang of martial music.

In front of the palace stood the Emperor, surrounded by his staff, which was joined in succession by each general of brigade, as his corps moved by. A simple acknowledgment of the military salute was all Napoleon gave as each battalion passed, until the small party of the Imperial Guard appeared, bearing the captured colours; then his proud features relaxed—his eye flashed and sparkled, and he lifted his chapeau straight above his head, and remained uncovered the whole time they were marching past. This was the moment when enthusiasm could no longer be restrained, and a cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" burst forth, that, caught up by those behind, rose in ten thousand echoes along the distant suburbs of Berlin.

To look upon that glorious and glittering band, bronzed with battle, —their proud faces lit up with all the pride of victory, was indeed a triumph; and one instinctively turned to see the looks of wondering and admiration such a sight must have inspired. But with what sense of sadness came the sudden thought—this is the proud exultation of the conqueror over the conquered—here come no happy faces and bright looks, to welcome those who have rescued them from slavery—here are no voices calling welcome to the deliverer. No: it was a people crushed and trodden down—their hard-won laurels tarnished and dishonoured—their country enslaved—their monarch a wanderer, no one knew where.

Little thought they who raised the statue of brass to the memory of the great Frederick, that the clank of French musketry would be heard around it. Rosbach was indeed, avenged—and cruelly avenged.

Never did a people behave with more dignity under misfortune than the Prussians on the entrance of the French into their capital. The streets were deserted—the houses closed—the city was in mourning, and none stooped to the slavish adulation which might win favour with the conqueror. It was a triumph—but there were none to witness it. Of the nobles scarce one remained in Berlin. They had fallen in battle, or followed the fortunes of their beaten army, now scattered and dispersed through the kingdom.

Their wives and daughters, in deepest mourning, bewailed their ruined country as they would the death of a dearest friend. They cut off their blonde locks, and sorrowed like those without a hope. Their great country was to be reduced to the rank of a mere German province—their army disbanded—their king dethroned. Such was the contrast to our hour of triumph—such the sad reverse to the gorgeous display of our armed squadrons.

Scarcely had the Emperor established his head quarters at Potsdam, than the whole administration of the kingdom was begun to be placed under French rule. Prefects were appointed to different departments of the kingdom—a heavy contribution was imposed upon the nation, and all the offices of the state were subjected to the control of persons named by the Emperor. Among these, the first in importance was the post-office; for while every precaution was taken that no interruption should occur in the transmission of the mails as usual, a "Cabinet Noir" was established here, as at Paris, whose function it was to open the letters of suspected persons, and make copies of them—the latter, indeed, were often so skilfully executed as to be forwarded to the address, while the originals were preserved as "proofs" against parties, if it were found necessary to accuse them afterwards. And here I might mention, that the art of depositing metals in a mould by galvanic process, was known and used in imitating and fabricating the seals of various writers, many years before the discovery became generally known in Europe.

The invasion of private right involved in this breach of trust gave, as might be supposed, the greatest offence throughout the kingdom; but the severity with which every case of suspicious meaning was followed up and punished, converted the feelings of indignation and anger into those of fear and trepidation—for this was ever part of Napoleon's policy: the penalty of any offence was made to exclude the sense of ridicule its own littleness might have created, and men felt indisposed to jest where their mirth might end in melancholy.

The most remarkable case, and that which, more than any other, impressed the public mind of the period, was that of the Prince de Hatzfeld, whose letter to the King of Prussia was opened at the post-office, and made the subject of a capital charge against him. Its contents were, as might be imagined from the channel of transmission, not such as could substantiate any treasonable intention on

his part. A respectful homage to his dethroned sovereign—a detail of the mournful feeling experienced throughout his capital—and some few particulars of the localities occupied by the French troops, was the entire; and for this he was tried and condemned to death—a sentence which the Emperor commanded to be executed before sunset that same day. Happily for the fate of the noble prince, as for the fair fame of Napoleon, both Duroc and Rapp were ardently attached to him, and at their earnest entreaties his life was spared; but the impression which the circumstances made upon the minds of the inhabitants was deep and lasting, and there was a day to come when all these insults were to be remembered and avenged. If I advert to the occurrence here, it is because I have but too good reason to bear memory of it, influencing, as it did, my own future fortunes.

It chanced that one evening, when sitting in a café with some of my brother-officers, the subject of the Prince de Hatzfeld's offence was mooted; and in the unguarded freedom with which one talks to his comrades, I expressed myself delighted at the clemency of the Emperor, and conceived that he could have no part in the breach of confidence which led to the accusation, nor countenance in any way his prosecution. My companions, who had little sympathy for Prussians, and none for aristocracy whatever, took a different view of the matter, and scrupled not to regret that the sentence of the court-martial had not been executed. The discussion grew warm between us, the more, as I was alone in my opinion, and assailed by several, who overbore me with loud speaking. Once or twice, too, an obscure taunt was thrown out against aliens and foreigners, who, it was alleged, never could at heart forgive the ascendancy of France and Frenchmen.

To this I replied hotly, for while not taking to myself an insult which my conduct in the service palpably refuted, I was hurt and offended. Alas! I knew too well in my heart what sacrifices I had made in changing my country—how I had bartered all the hopes which attach to one's fatherland, for a career of mere selfish ambitiom. Long since had I seen that the cause I fought in, was not that of liberty, but despotism. Napoleon's glory was the dazzling light which blinded my true vision; and my following had something of infatuation, against which reason was powerless. I say, that I answered these taunts with hasty temper; and, carried away by a momentary excitement, I told them, that they it was, not I, who would detract from the fair renown of the Emperor.

"The traits you would attribute to him," said I, "are not those of strength, but weakness. Is it the conqueror of Egypt, of Austria, and now of Prussia, who need stoop to this? We cannot be judges of his policy, or the great events which agitate Europe. We would pronounce most ignorantly on the greatness of his plans regarding the destinies of nations; but on a mere question of high and honourable feeling, of manly honesty, why should we not speak; and here I say, this act was never his."

A smile of sardonic meaning was the only reply this speech met with, and one by one the officers rose and dropped off, leaving me to ponder

over the discussion, in which I now remembered, I had been betrayed into a warmth beyond discretion.

This took place early in November, and as it was not referred to in any way afterwards by my comrades, I soon forgot it. My duties occupied me from morning till night; for General D'Auvergne being in attendance on the Emperor, had handed me over for the time to the department of the adjutant-general of the army, where my knowledge of German was found useful.

On the 17th of the month a general order was issued, containing the names of the various officers selected for promotion, as well as of those on whom the cross of the "Legion" was to be conferred. Need I say with what a thrill of exultation I read my own name among the latter, nor my delight at finding it followed by the words—"By order of his majesty the Emperor, for a special service on the 13th October, 1806." This was the night before the battle, and now I saw that I had not been forgotten, as I feared—here was proof of the Emperor's remembrance of me. Perhaps the delay was intended to test my prudence as to secrecy, and perhaps it was deemed fitting that my name should not appear except in the general list; in any case, the long-wished reward was mine—the proud distinction I had desired for so many a day and night.

The distribution of the "cordons" was always made the occasion of a grand military spectacle, and the Emperor determined that the present one should convey a powerful impression of the effective strength of his army, as well as of its perfect equipment; and accordingly, orders were despatched to the different generals of division within twelve or fifteen leagues of Berlin, to march their corps to the capital. The 28th of November was the day fixed for this grand display, and all was bustle and preparation for the event.

On the morning of the 22d, I received an official note from the bureau of the adjutant-general, desiring me to wait on him before noon that same day. Concluding it referred to my promised promotion to the "Legion," it was with somewhat of a fluttered and excited feeling I found myself, at some few minutes after eleven o'clock, in the antechamber, which already was crowded with officers, some seeking, some summoned to an interview.

In the midst of the buzz of conversation, which, despite the reserve of the place, still prevailed, I heard my name called, and followed an aid-de-camp along a passage into a large room, which opened into a smaller apartment, where, standing with his back to the fire, I perceived Marshal Berthier, his only companion being an officer in a staff uniform, busily engaged writing at a table.

"You are Captain Burke of the 8th Hussars, I believe, sir?" said the Marshal, reading slowly from a slip of paper he held twisted round one finger.

"Yes, sir."

"By birth an Irishman," continued the Marshal—"entered at the Polytechnique in August, 1801. Am I correct?" I bowed. "Subsequently accused of being concerned in the conspiracy of Georges and

Pichegru," resumed he, as he raised his eyes slightly from the paper, and fixed them searchingly upon me.

"Falsely so, sir," was my only reply.

"You were acquitted—that's enough: a reprimand for imprudence, and a slight punishment of arrest, was all. Since that time, you have conducted yourself, as the report of your commanding officer attests, with zeal and steadiness."

He paused here, and seemed as if he expected me to say something; but as I thought the whole a most strange commencement to the ceremony of investing me with a cross of the Legion, I remained silent.

"At Paris, when attached to the *élite*, you appear to have visited the Duchess of Montserrat, and frequented her soirées."

"Once, sir, but once, I was in the house of the Duchess; my visit could scarcely have occupied as many minutes as I have spent here this morning."

"Dined occasionally at the Moisson d'Or," continued the marshal, not noticing in any way my reply. "Well, as I believe you are now aware that there are no secrets with his majesty's government, perhaps you will inform me what are your relations with the Chevalier Duchesne?"

For some minutes previous my mind was dwelling on that personage, and I answered in a few words the question, by stating the origin of our acquaintance and briefly adverting to its course.

"You correspond with the chevalier?" said he, interrupting.

"I have never done so, nor is it likely from the manner in which we parted last that I ever shall."

"This scarcely confirms that impression, sir," said the marshal, taking an open letter from the table and holding it up before me. "You know his hand-writing—is that it?"

"Yes; I have no doubt it is."

"Well, sir, that letter belongs to you; you may take and read it. There is enough there, sir, to make your conduct the matter of a court martial; but I am satisfied that a warning will be sufficient. Let this be such then. Learn, sir, that the plottings of a poor and mischievous party harmonize ill with the duties of a brave soldier, and that a captain of the guards might choose more suitable associates than the dupes and double-dealers of the Faubourg St. Germain. There is your brevet to the Legion, signed by the Emperor; I shall return it to his Majesty. Mayhap at some future period your conduct may merit differently. I need hardly say that a gentleman so very little particular in the choice of his friends, would be a most misplaced subject for the honour of the "Legion."

He waved his hand in sign for me to withdraw, and overwhelmed with confusion, I bowed and left the room; nor was it till the door closed behind me that I felt how cruelly and unjustly I had been treated; then suddenly the blood rushed to my face and temples, my head seemed as if it would burst at either side, and forgetting every circumstance of place and condition, I seized the handle of the door and wrenched it open.

"Marshal," said I, with the fearlessness of one resolved at any risque to vindicate his character, "I know nothing of this letter—I have not read one line of it. I have no further intimacy with the writer than an officer has with his comrade; but if I am to be the subject of 'espionage' to the police—if my chance acquaintances in the world are to be matter of charges against my fealty and honour—if I who have nothing but my sword and my epaulette——"

When I had got thus far, I saw the marshal's face turn deathly pale, while the officer at the table made a hurried sign to me with his finger to be silent. The door closed nearly at the same instant, and I turned my head round, and there stood the Emperor. The figure is still before me—he was standing still, his hands behind his back, and his low chapeau deeply pressed upon his brows. His gray frock was open, and looked as if disordered from haste.

"What is this?" said he, in that hissing tone he always assumed when in moments of passion—"What is this? Are we in the bureau of a minister, or is this the *salle de police?* Who are you, sir?"

It was not until the question had been repeated that I found courage to reply. But he waited not for my answer, as snatching the open letter from my fingers, he resumed—

"It is not thus, sir, you should come here. Your petition or memorial——Ha! *parbleu!* what is this?"

At the instant his eyes fell upon the writing, and as suddenly his face grew almost livid. With the rapidity of lightning he seemed to peruse the lines. Then waving his hand, he motioned towards the door, and muttered "Wait without."

Like one awaking from a dreadful dream, I stood, endeavouring to recall my faculties, and assure myself how much there might be of reality in my wandering fancies, when I perceived that a portion of the letter remained between my fingers as the Emperor snatched it from my hand.

A half-finished sentence was all I could make out; but its tone made me tremble for what the rest of the epistle might contain:—

"Surpassed themselves, of course, my dear Burke; and so has the Emperor too. It remained for the campaign in Prussia to prove that one hundred and eighty-five thousand prisoners can be taken from an army numbering one hundred and fifty-four thousand men.——As to Davoust, who really had all the fighting, though he wrote no bulletin, all Paris feels——"

Such was the morsel I had saved—such a specimen of the insolence of the entire.

The dreadful fact then broke suddenly upon me, that this letter had been written by Duchesne to effect my ruin; and, as I stood stupified with terror, the door was suddenly opened, and the Emperor passed out. His eyes were turned on me as he went, and I shrunk back from their expression of withering anger.

"Captain Burke!" said a voice from within the room, for the door continued open.

I entered slowly, but with a firm step. My mind was made up; and,

in the force of a resolute determination, I found strength for whatever might happen.

"It would appear, sir," said the Marshal, addressing me with a stern and severe expression of features—"It would appear that you permit yourself the widest liberty in canvassing the acts of his Majesty, the Emperor; for I find you here mentioned—he took a paper from the table as he spoke—as declaiming, in a public *café*, on the subject of the Prince de Hatzfeld, and expressing, in no measured terms, your disapproval of his imprisonment."

"All that I said upon the subject, sir, so far as I can recollect, was in praise of the Emperor for clemency so well bestowed."

"There was no high-flown sentiment on the breach of honourable confidence effected in opening private letters," said the Marshal sarcastically.

"Yes, sir, I do remember expressing myself strongly on that head."

"I am not surprised, sir," interrupted he, "at your indignation; your own conscience must have prompted you on the occasion. When a gentleman has such correspondents as the Chevalier Duchesne, he may well feel on a point like this. But enough of this. I have his Majesty's orders regarding you, which are as follow——

"Forgive me, I beg you, sir, the liberty of interrupting you for one moment. I am an alien, and therefore little versed in the habits and usages of the land for whose service I have shed my blood; but I am sure a Marshal of France will not refuse a kindness to an officer of the army, however humble his station. I merely ask the answer to one question."

"What is it?" said the Marshal quickly.

"Am I, as an officer, at liberty to resign my grade, and quit the service?"

"Yes, *parbleu!*" said he, reddening—"Yes, that you are."

"Then here I do so," rejoined I, drawing my sword from its scabbard. "The career I can no longer follow honourably and independently, I shall follow no more."

"Your corps, sir?" said the Marshal.

"The 8th Hussars of the Guard."

"Take a note of that, Gardanne."

"I shall spare you all unnecessary delay, in tendering a written resignation of your rank. I accept it now. You leave Berlin in twenty-four hours."

I bowed, and was silent.

"Your passport shall be made out from Paris; you shall receive it to-morrow morning." He motioned with his hand towards the door as he concluded, and I left the room.

The moment I felt myself alone, the courage which had sustained me throughout, at once gave way, and I leaned against the wall, and covered my face with my hands. Yes, I knew it in my heart, the whole dream of life was over. The path of glory was closed to me for ever. All the hopes on which, in sanguine hours, I used to feed my heart, were scattered; and to the miseries of my exiled lot were

now added the sorrows of an unfriended, companionless existence. The thought that no career was open to me came last; for at first I only remembered all I was leaving, not the dark future before me; yet, when I called to mind the injustice with which I had been treated—the system of "espionage" to which, as an alien more particularly, I was exposed, I felt I had done right, and that to have remained in the service at such a sacrifice of my personal independence, would have been base and unworthy.

With a half-broken heart and faltering step I regained my quarters, where again my grief burst forth with more violence than at first. Every object about recalled to me the career I was leaving for ever; and wherever my eye rested, some emblem lay, to open fresh stores of sorrow.

The pistols I carried at Elchingen, a gift from General D'Auvergne; an Austrian sabre I had taken from its owner, still ornamented with a little knot of ribbon, Minette had fastened to the hilt, hung above the chimney; and I could scarce look on them without tears. On the table still lay open the "ordre du jour," which named me to the legion of honour; and now——the humblest soldier that carried his musket in the ranks was my superior. Not all the principle on which I founded my resolve was proof against this first outburst of my sorrow.

The chivalrous ardour of a soldier's life had long supplied to me the place of those appliances to happiness which other men possess. Each day I followed it the path grew dearer to me. Every bold and daring feat, every deed of enterprize or danger, seemed to bring me, in thought at least, nearer to him whose greatness was my idolatry; and now, all this was to be as a mere dream—a thing which had been, and was to be no more.

While I revolved such sad reflections, a single knock came to my door. I opened it, and saw a soldier of my own regiment. His dress was travel-stained and splashed, and he looked like one off a long journey. He knew me at once, and accosted me by name, as he presented a letter from General D'Auvergne.

"You've had a smart ride," said I, as I surveyed his flushed face and disordered uniform.

"Yes, captain, from the 'Oder.' Our division is full twelve leagues from this. I left on yesterday morning, for the General was particular that the charger should not suffer on the way; as if a beast like that would mind double the distance."

By this time I had opened the letter, which merely contained the following few lines:—

"My dear Burke—Every new arrival here has brought me some fresh intelligence of you, and of your conduct at Jena; nor can I say with what pride I have heard that the Emperor has included you among the list of the 'decorés.' This is the day I often prophesied for you, and the true and only refutation against the calumnies of the false-hearted and the envious. I send you a Polish charger for your gala

review. Accept him from me, and believe that you have no warmer friend, nor more affectionate than yours,

"D'AUVERGNE, Lieut.-Gen.

"Encampment on the Oder, Nov. 24, 1806."

Before I had finished reading the letter, my eyes grew so dimmed I could scarcely trace the letters. Each word of kindness—every token of praise, now cut me to the heart. How agonising are the congratulations of friends on those events in life where our own conscience bears reproach against us—how poignant the self-accusation that is elicited by undeserved eulogy! How would *he* think of my conduct? By what means should I convince *him* that no alternative remained to me? I turned away, lest the honest soldier should witness my trouble, and as I approached the window, I beheld, in the court-yard beneath, the beautiful charger, which, with the full trappings of a hussar saddle, stood proudly flapping his deep flanks with his long silken tail. With what a thrill I surveyed him!—how my heart leaped, as I fancied myself borne along on the full tide of battle, each plunge he gave responsive to the stroke of my sword arm! For an instant I forgot all that had happened, and gazed on his magnificent crest and splendid shape with an ecstasy of delight.

"Ay," said the dragoon, whose eyes were rivetted in the same quarter, "there's not a marshal of France so well mounted; and he knows the trumpet call like the oldest soldier of the troop."

"You will return to-morrow," said I, recovering myself suddenly, and endeavouring to appear composed and at ease. "Well, then, to-night, I shall give you an answer for the general. Be here at eight o'clock."

I saw that my troubled air and broken voice had not escaped the soldier's notice, and was glad when the door closed, and I was again alone.

My first care was to write to the general; nor was it till after many efforts I succeeded to my satisfaction in conveying, in a few and simple words, the reasons of that step which must embitter my future life. I explained how deeply continued mistrust had wounded me—how my spirit, as a soldier and a gentleman, revolted at the "espionage" established over my actions—that it was in weighing these insults against the wreck of all my hopes, I had chosen that path which had neither fame, nor rank, nor honour, but still left me an untrammelled spirit, and a mind at peace with itself.

"I have now," said I, "to begin the world anew, without one clue to guide me. Every illusion with which I had invested life has left me—I must choose both a career and a country, and bear with me from this nothing but the heartfelt gratitude I shall ever retain for one, who befriended me through weal and woe, and whose memory I shall bless while I live."

I felt relieved and more at ease when I finished this letter—the endeavour to set my conduct in its true light to another had also its effect upon my own convictions. I knew, besides, that I had sacrificed

to my determination all my worldly prospects, and believed, that where self-interest warred with principle, the right course could scarcely be doubtful.

All this time, not one thought ever occurred to me of how I was to meet the future. It was strange, but so perfectly had the present crisis filled my mind, there was not room for even a glance at what was to come.

My passport was made out for Paris, and thither I must go. So much was decided for me without intervention on my part; and now it only remained for me to dispose of the little trappings of my former estate, and take the road.

The Jews who always accompanied the army offered a speedy resource in this emergency. My anxiety to leave Berlin by daybreak, and thus avoid a meeting of any acquaintances there, made me accept of the sums they offered. To them such negociations were of daily occurrence, and they well knew how to profit by them. My whole worldly wealth consisted of two hundred Napoleons, and with this small pittance to begin life, I sat myself down tothink whither I should turn, or what course adopt.

The night passed over thus, and when day dawned, I had not closed my eyes. About four o'clock, the diligence in which I had secured a place for Weimar drew up at my door. I hurried down, and mounting to a seat beside the conducteur, I buried my face in the folds of my cloak, nor dared to look up until we had passed beyond the precincts of the city, and were travelling along on that vast plain of sand which surrounds Berlin.

The conducteur was a Prussian, and divining my military capacity in my appearance, he maintained a cold and distant civility—never speaking, except when spoken to, and even then, in as few words as possible. This was itself a relief to me—my heart was too full of its own sufferings to find pleasure in conversation, and I dreamed away the hours till nightfall.

CHAPTER LXXI.

A FOREST PATH.

When I reached Weimar, I quitted the diligence, resolved to make the remainder of the journey on foot, for thus I should both economize the little means I possessed, and escape many of the questionings and inquiries to which, as a traveller by public conveyance, I was exposed. Knapsack on shoulder, then, and staff in hand, I plodded onward ; and although frequently coming up with others on their way homeward, I avoided all companionship with those whom I could no longer think of as comrades.

The two tides of population which met upon that great highway, told the whole history of war. Here came the young soldiers, fresh enrolled in the conscription, glowing with ardour, and bounding with life and buoyancy, and mingling their village songs with warlike chants. There, foot-sore and weary, with tattered uniform and weather-beaten look, toiled along the tired veteran, turning, as he went, a glance of compassionate contempt on those whose wild "*vivas*" burst forth in greeting. As for me, I could neither partake of the high hopes of the one, nor sympathize with the war-worn nature of tne other. Disappointment, bitter disappointment in every cherished expectation, had thrown a chill over me, and I wanted even the energy to become reckless. In this state, I did not dare to face the future, but in moody despondence reflected on the past. Was this the destiny Marie de Meudon predicted for me? was the ever-present thought of my mind. Is it thus I should appear before her?

A hundred times came the thought to join the new levies as a soldier, to carry a musket in the ranks; but then came back, in all its force, the memory of the distrust and suspicion my services had met with—the conviction hourly became clearer to me, that I fought not for liberty, but despotism—that it was not freedom, but slavery, in whose cause I shed my blood.

To avoid meeting with the detachments which each day occupied the road, I turned from the chaussée on passing Eisenach, and took a forest path, that led through Murbach, to Fulda. My path led through the Creutz Mountains, a wild and unfrequented tract of country, where few cottages were to be seen, and scarcely a village existed. Vast forests of dark pines, or bleak and barren mountains, stretched away on either side—a few patches of miserable tillage, here and there, met the view—but the scene was one of saddening influence, and harmonized but too nearly with my own despondence.

To reach a place of shelter for the night, I was more than once obliged to walk twelve leagues during the day, and had thus to set out

before daylight. This exertion, however, brought its own reward: the stimulant of labour, the necessity of a task, gradually allayed the mental irritation I suffered under; a healthier and more manly tone of thinking succeeded to my former regrets, and with a heart elevated, if not cheered, I continued my way.

The third day of my toilsome journey was drawing to a close—a mass of heavy and louring clouds, dark and thunder-charged, slowly moved along the sky—and a low, moaning sound, that seemed to sigh along the ground, boded the approach of a storm. I was still three leagues from my halting-place, and began to deliberate within myself, whether the dense pine wood, which came down to the side of the road, might not afford a safer refuge from the hurricane, than the chances of reaching a house before it broke forth.

The shepherds who frequented these dreary tracts often erected little huts of bark, as a shelter against the cold and severity of the wintry days, and to find out one of these now was my great endeavour. Scarcely had I formed the resolve when I perceived a small path opening into the wood, at the entrance to which a piece of board nailed against the trunk of a tree, gave tidings that such a place of security was not far distant. These signs of forest life I had learned in my wanderings, and now strode forward with renewed vigour.

The path led gradually upwards, along the mountain side, which soon became so encumbered with brushwood, that I had much difficulty in pushing my way—and at last began to doubt, whether I might not have wandered from the track. The darkness was now complete—night had fallen, and a heavy crashing rain poured down upon the tree tops, but could not penetrate through their tangled shelter. The wind, too, swept in loud gusts above, and the long-threatened storm begun. A loud, deafening roar, like that of the sea itself, arose, as the leafy branches bent before the blast, or snapped with sudden shock beneath the hurricane; clap after clap of thunder resounded, and then the rain descended in torrents—the heavy drops, at last, trickling from leaf to leaf, reaching me as I stood. Once more I pushed forward, and had not gone many paces, when the red glare of a fire caught my eye: steadfastly fastening my gaze upon the flame, I hurried on, and at length perceived with ecstacy that the light issued from the window of a small hovel, such as I have already mentioned. To gain the entrance of the hut I was obliged to pass the window, and could not resist the temptation to give a glance at the interior, whose cheerful blaze betokened habitation.

It was not without surprise that, instead of the figure of a shepherd reposing beside his fire, I beheld that of an old man, whose dress bespoke the priest, kneeling in deep devotion at the foot of a small crucifix attached to the wall. Not all the wild sounds of the raging storm seemed to turn his attention from the object of his worship—his eyes were closed, but the head thrown backwards, showed his face upturned, when the lips moved rapidly in prayer. Never had I beheld so perfect a picture of intense devotional feeling—every line in his marked countenance indicated the tension of a mind filled with one

engrossing thought—while his tremulous hands, clasped before him, shook with the tremor of strong emotion.

What a contrast to the loud warring of the elements, that peaceful figure, raised above earth and its troubles, in the spirit of his holy communing—how deeply touching the calm serenity of his holy brow, with the railing crash of falling branches, and the deep baying of the storm! I did not dare to interrupt him, and when I did approach the door, it was with silent step and noiseless gesture. As I stood, the old priest—for now I saw that he was such—concluded his prayer, and detaching his crucifix from the wall, he kissed it reverently, and placed it in his bosom—then, rising slowly from his knees, he turned towards me. A slight start of surprise, as quickly followed by a smile of kindly greeting, escaped him, while he said in French—

"You are welcome, my son—come in, and share with me the shelter, for it is a wild night."

"A wild night, indeed, father," said I, casting my eyes around the little hut, where nothing indicated the appearance of habitation—"I could have wished you a better home than this against the storms of winter."

"I am a traveller like yourself," said he, smiling at my mistake—"and a countryman, too, if I mistake not."

The accents in which these words were spoken pronounced him a Frenchman, and a very little sufficed to ratify the terms of our companionship; and having thrown a fresh billet on the fire, we both seated ourselves before it. My wallet was, fortunately, better stored than the good father's, and having produced its contents, we supped cheerfully, and like men who were not eating their first bivouac meal.

"I perceive, father," said I, as I remarked the manner in which he disposed his viands, "I perceive you have campaigned ere now—the habits of the service are not easily mistaken."

"I did not need that observation of yours," replied he, laughing slightly, "to convince me you were a soldier—for, as you truly say, the camp leaves its indelible traces behind it. You are hastening on to Berlin, I suppose?"

I blushed deeply at the question—the shame of my changed condition had been hitherto confined to my own heart, but now it was to be confessed before a stranger.

"I ask your pardon, my son, for a question I had no right to ask—and even there, again, I but showed my soldier education. I am returning to France, and in seeking a short path from Eisenach, found myself where you see as night was falling, well content to be so well lodged—all the more, if I am to have your companionship."

Few and simple as these words were, there was a tone of frankness in them, not less than the evidence of a certain good breeding, by which he apologized for his own curiosity in speaking thus freely of himself, that satisfied me at once; and I hastened to inform him, that circumstances had induced me to leave the service, in which I had been a captain, and that I was now, like himself, returning to France.

"You must not think, father," added I, with some eagerness—"you

must not think that other reasons than my own free-will have made me cease to be a soldier."

"It would ill become me to have borne such a suspicion," interrupted he quickly. "When one so young and full of life as you are, leaves the path where lie honour, and rank, and fame, he must have cause to make the sacrifice—for I can scarce think that, at your age, these things seem nought to your eyes."

"You are right, father, they are not so; they have been my guiding stars for many a day—alas! that they can be such no longer."

"There are higher hopes to cherish than these," said he, solemnly; "ay, even with the longings of mere ambition, for we all of us cling to the things of life, till in their perishable nature they wean us off with disappointment and sorrow. From such a trial am I now suffering," added he in a low voice, while the tears rose to his eyes and slowly coursed along his pale cheeks.

There was a pause neither of us felt inclined to break, when at length the priest said—

"What was your corps in the service?"

"The 8th hussars of the guard," said I, trembling at every word.

"Ah, *he* was in the 'guides,'" repeated he mournfully to himself; "you knew the regiment?"

"Yes, they belonged to the guard also; they wore no epaulettes, but a small gold arrow on the collar."

"Like this," said he, unfastening the breast of his cassock and taking out a small package, which, among other things, contained the designation of the *corps des guides* in an arrow of gold embroidery. "Had he not beautiful hair, long and silky as a girl's," said he, as he produced a lock of light and sunny brown. "Poor Alphonse! thou wouldst have been twenty hadst thou lived till yesterday. If I shed tears, young man, it is because I have lost the great earthly solace of my solitary life; others have kindred and friends, have happy homes, which even when bereavements come, time will heal up the wound—I had but him!"

"He was your nephew, perhaps?" said I, half fearing to interfere with his sorrow.

The old man shook his head in token of dissent, while he muttered to himself—

"Auerstadt may be a proud memory to some. to me it is a word of sorrow and mourning. The story is but a short one—alas! it has but one colour throughout.

"Count Louis de Meringues—of whom you have doubtless heard that he rode as postilion to the carriage of his sovereign in the celebrated flight to Varennes—fell by the guillotine the week after the king's trial; the countess was executed on the same scaffold as her husband—I was the priest who accompanied her at the moment, and in my arms she placed her only child, an infant boy of two years. There was a cry among the crowd to have the child executed also, and many called out that the spawn would be a serpent one day, and it were better to crush it while it was time; but the little fellow was so handsome, and looked so win-

ningly around him on the armed ranks and the glancing weapons, that even *their* cruel hearts relented, and he was spared. It is to me like yesterday, as I remember every minute circumstance; I can recall even the very faces of that troubled and excited assemblage, that at one moment screamed aloud for blood, and at the next were convulsed with savage laughter. As I forced my way through the dense array, a rude arm was stretched out from the mass, and a finger dripping with the gore of the scaffold was drawn across the boy's face, while a ruffian voice exclaimed—'The Meringues were ever proud of their blood, let us see if it be redder than other people's. The child laughed, and the mob with horrid mockery laughed too.

"I took him home with me to my presbytère at Sevres, for that was my parish, and we lived together in peace until the terrible decree was issued which proclaimed all France atheist; then we wandered southwards towards that good land which through every vicissitude was true to its faith and its king, La Vendee. At Lyons we were met by a party of the revolutionary soldiers, who, with a 'Commissaire' of the government, were engaged in raising young men for the conscription. Alphonse, who was twelve years old, felt all a boy's enthusiasm at the warlike display before him, and persuaded me to follow the crowd into the 'Place de Terreaux,' where the numbers were read out.

"'Paul Ducos,'' cried a voice aloud, as we approached the stage on which the commissary and his staff were standing—'where is this Paul Ducos?'

"'I am here,' replied a fine frank-looking youth of some fifteen years; 'but my father is blind, and I cannot leave him.'

"'We shall soon see that,' called out the commissary. 'Clerk, read out his *signalement*.'

"'Paul Ducos, son of Eugene Ducos, formerly calling himself Count Ducos de la Breche——'

"'Down with the royalists—*a bas!* the tyrants!' screamed the mob, not suffering the remainder to be heard.

"'Approach, Paul Ducos,' said the commissary.

"'Wait here, father,' whispered the youth; 'I will come back presently;' but the old man, a fine and venerable figure, the remnant of a noble race, held him fast, and as his lips trembled, said, 'Do not leave me, Paul—my child, my comforter, stay near me.'

"The boy looked round him for one face of kindly pity in this emergency, when turning towards me, he said rapidly, 'Stand near him,' he broke from the old man's embrace, and rushing through the crowd, mounted the scaffold.

"'You are drawn for the conscription, young man,' said the commissary; 'but in consideration of your father's infirmity, a substitute will be accepted—have you such?'

"The boy shook his head mournfully and in silence.

"'Have you any friend who would assist you here? Bethink you awhile,' rejoined the commissary, who, for his station and duties, was a kind and benevolent man.

"'I have none; they have left us nothing, neither home, nor

friends,' said the youth bitterly; 'and if it were not for his sake, I care not what they do with me.'

"'Down with the tyrants!' yelled the mob, as they heard these haughty words.

"'Then your fate is decreed,' resumed the commissary.

"'No, not yet,' cried out Alphonse, as breaking from my side, he gained the steps and mounted the platform—'I will be his substitute.'

"Oh! how shall I tell the bitter anguish of that moment, which at once dispelled the last remaining hope I cherished, and left me destitute for ever. As I dashed the tears from my eyes and looked up, the two boys were locked in each other's arms. It was a sight to have melted any heart, save those around them; but bloodshed and crime had choked up every avenue of feeling, and left them, not men, but tigers.

"'Alphonse de Meringues,' cried out the boy, in answer to a question regarding his name.

"'There is no such designation in France,' said a grim-looking, hard-featured man, who, wearing the tricoloured scarf, sat at the table beside the clerk.

"'I was never called by any other,' rejoined the youth proudly.

"'Citizen Meringues,' interposed the commissary mildly, 'what is your age?'

"'I know not the years,' replied he; 'but I have heard that I was but an infant when they slew my father.'

"A fierce roar of passion broke from the mob below the scaffold as they heard this, and again the cry broke forth—'Down with the tyrants.'

"'Art thou, then, the son of that base sycophant who rode courier to the Capet to Varennes?' said the hard-featured man at the table.

"'Of the truest gentleman of France,' called out a loud voice from below the platform.—'*Vive le roi!*' It was the blind man who spoke, and waved his cap above his head.

"'To the guillotine, to the guillotine!' screamed a hundred voices, in tones wilder than the cries of famished wolves, as seizing the aged man, they tore his clothes to very rags. In an instant all attention was turned from the platform to the scene below it, where, with shouts and screams of fury, the terrible mob yelled aloud for blood. In vain the guards endeavoured to keep back the people, who twice rescued their victim from the hands of the soldiery, and already a confused murmur rose that the commissary himself was a traitor to the public, and favoured the tyrants, when a dull, clanking sound rose above the tumult, and a cheer of triumph proclaimed the approach of the instrument of torture.

"In their impetuous torrent of vengeance they had dragged the guillotine from the distant end of the 'Place,' where it usually stood, and there now still knelt the figure of a condemned man, lashed with arms behind him on the platform, awaiting the moment of his doom. Oh! that terrible face, whereon death had already set its seal. With glazed, lack-lustre eye, and cheek leaden and quivering, he gazed around on the fiendish countenances like one awakening from a dream, his lips parted as though to speak, but no sound came forth.

"'Place, place for Monsieur le Marquis!' shouted a ruffian, as he assisted to raise the figure of the blind man up the steps, and a ribald yell of fiendish laughter followed the brutal jest.

"'Thou art to make thy journey in most noble company,' said another to the culprit on the platform.

"'An he see not his way in the next world better than in this, thou must lend him a hand, friend,' said a third; and with many a ruffian joke they taunted their victims, who stood on the last threshold of life.

"Among the crowd upon the scaffold of the guillotine I could see the figure of the blind man as it leaned and fell on either side, as the movement of the mob bore it.

"'*Parbleu!* these royalists would rather kneel than stand,' said a voice, as they in vain essayed to make the old man place his feet under him; and ere the laughter which this rude jest excited ceased, a cry broke forth of 'He is dead! he is dead!' and with a heavy sumph the body fell from their hands, for when their power of cruelty ended, they cared not for the corpse.

"It was true—life was extinct, none knew how—whether from the violence of the mob in its first outbreak, or that a long suffering heart had burst at last—but the cord was snapped; and he whose proud soul lately defied the countless thousands around, now slept with the dead.

"In a few seconds it seemed as though they felt that a power stronger than their own had interposed between them and their vengeance, and they stood almost aghast before the corpse, where no trace of blood proclaimed it to be their own; then rallying from this stupor, with one voice they demanded that the son should atone for the crimes of the father.

"'I am ready,' cried the youth, in a voice above the tumult. 'I did not deem I could be grateful to ye for aught, but I am for this.'

"To no purpose did the commissary propose a delay in the sentence; he was unsupported by his colleagues—the passions of the mob rose higher and higher—the thirst for blood unslaked, became intense and maddening, and they danced in frantic glee around the guillotine, while they chanted one of the demoniac songs of the scaffold.

"In this moment, when the torrent ran in one direction, Alphonse might have escaped all notice, but that the condemned youth turned to embrace him once more before he descended from the platform.

"'They are so sorry to separate, it is a shame to part them,' cried a ruffian in the crowd.

"'You forget, citizen, that this boy is his substitute,' said the commissary, mildly; 'the republic must not be cheated of its defenders.'

"'*Vive la republique!*' cried the soldiers, and the cry was re-echoed by thousands, while amid their cheers there rose the last faint sigh of an expiring victim.

"The scene was over, the crowd dispersed, and the soldiers marched back to quarters, accompanied by some hundred conscripts, among whom was Alphonse, a vague—troubled expression betokening that he scarce knew what had happened around him.

"The regiment to which he was appointed was at Toulon, and there

I followed him. They were ordered to the north of Italy soon after, and thence to Egypt. Through the battle fields of Mount Thabor and the Pyramids I was ever beside him; on the heights of Austerlitz I staunched his wounds, and I laid him beneath the earth on the field of Auerstadt."

The old man's voice trembled and became feeble as he finished speaking, and a settled expression of grief clothed his features, which were pale as death.

"I must see Sevres once more," said he, after a pause; I must look on the old houses of the village, and the little gardens, and the venerable church—they will be the only things to greet me there now, but I must gaze on them ere I close my eyes to this world and its cares."

"Come, come, father," said I, "to one who has acted so noble a part as yours, life is never without its own means of happiness."

"I spoke not of death," replied he mildly; "but the holy calm of a convent will better suit my scared and worn heart than all that the world calls its joys and pleasures. You, who are young and full of hope——"

"Alas! father, speak not thus; one can better endure the lowering skies of misfortune as the evening of life draws near, than when the morn of existence is breaking. To me, with youth and health, there is no future—no hope."

"I will not hear you speak thus," said the priest; "fatigue and weariness are on you now. Wait until to-morrow, we shall be fellow-travellers together, and then, if you will reveal to me your story, may-hap my long experience of the world may suggest comfort and consolation, where you can see neither."

The storm by this time had abated much of its violence, and across the moon the large clouds were wafted speedily, disclosing bright patches of light at every moment.

"Such is our life here," said the father, "alternating with its days of happiness and sorrow. Let us learn, then, in the dark hour of our destiny, to bear the glare of our better fortunes, for, believe me, that when our joys are greatest so are our trials also."

He ceased speaking, and I saw that soon afterwards his lips moved as if in prayer. I now laid myself down in my cloak beside the fire, and was soon buried in a sleep too sound even for a dream.

CHAPTER LXXII.

A CHANCE MEETING.

With the good priest of Sevres I journeyed along towards the frontier of France, ever selecting the least-frequented paths, and such as were not likely to be taken by the troops of soldiery which daily moved towards Berlin. The frankness of my companion had made me soon at ease with him, and I told him, without reserve, the story of my life, down to the decisive moment of my leaving the army.

"You see, father," said I, "how completely my career has failed—how, with all the ardour of a soldier, with all the devotion of a follower, I have adhered to the Emperor's fortunes—and yet——"

"Your ambition, however so great it was, could not stifle conscience. I can believe it well. They who go forth to the wars, with high hopes and bounding hearts—who picture to their minds the glorious rewards of great achievements—should blind their eyes to the horrors and injustice of the cause they bleed for. Any sympathy with misfortune would sap the very principle of that heroism, whose essence is success. Men cannot play the double game, even in matters of worldly ambition. Had you not listened to the promptings of your heart, you had been greater; had you not followed the dazzling glare of your hopes, you had been happier—both, you could scarcely be. Be assured of this, my son, the triumphs of a country can only be enjoyed by the child of the soil—the brave soldier, who lends his arm to the cause, feels he has little part in the glory."

"True, indeed—most true—I feel it."

"And were it otherwise, how unsatisfying is the thirst for that same glory—how endless the path that leads to it—how many regrets accompany it—how many ties broken—how many friendships forfeited! No, no; return to your own land—to the country of your birth—some honourable career will always present itself to him who seeks but independence, and the integrity of his own heart. Beneath the conquering eagles of the Emperor, there are men of every shade of political opinion—for the conscription is pitiless. There are Royalists, who love their king, and hate the usurper; there are Jacobins, who worship freedom, and detest the tyrant; there are stern Republicans—Vendéans, and followers of Moreau—but yet, all are Frenchmen. '*La belle France*,' is the watchword that speaks to every heart—and patriotism is the bond between thousands. *You* have no share in this. The delusion of national glory can never throw its deception around you. Return, then, to your country; and be assured that, in *her* cause your least efforts will be more ennobling to yourself, than the boldest deeds the hand of a mercenary ever achieved."

The inborn desire to re-visit my native land needed but the counsels of the priest to make it all powerful; and as, day by day, I plodded onward, my whole thoughts turned to the chances of my escape, and the means by which I could accomplish my freedom—for the war still continued between France and England, and the blockade of the French ports was strictly maintained by a powerful fleet. The difficulty of the step only increased my desire to effect it; and a hundred projects did I revolve in my mind, without ever being able to fix on one where success seemed likely. The very resolve, however, had cheered my spirits, and given new courage to my heart—and an object suggested a hope—and with a hope, life was no longer burthensome.

Each morning now I set forward with a mind more at ease, and more open to receive pleasure from the varied objects which met me as I went. Not so, my poor companion; the fatigue of the journey, added to great mental suffering, began to prey upon his health, and brought back an ague he had contracted in Egypt, from the effect of which his constitution had never perfectly recovered.

At first the malady showed itself only in great depression of spirits, which made him silent for hours of the way—but soon it grew worse; he walked with much difficulty—took but little nourishment—and seemed impressed with a sad foreboding that the disease must be fatal.

"I wanted to reach my village—my own quiet churchyard should have been my resting-place," said he, as he sank wearied and exhausted on a little bank at the road side—"But this was only a sick man's fancy. Poor Alphonse lies far away in the dreary plain of Auerstadt."

The sun was just setting, of a clear day in December, as we halted on a little eminence, which commanded a distant view on every side: behind, lay the dark forests of Germany, the tree-tops presenting their massive wavy surface, over which the passing clouds threw momentary shadows; before, but still some miles away, we could trace the Rhine, its bright silver current sparkling in the sun; beyond, lay the great plains of France, and upon these the sick man's eyes rested with a steadfast gaze.

"Yes," said he, after a long silence on both sides, "the fields and the mountains, the sunshine and the shade, are like those of other lands—but the feeling which attaches the heart to country is an inborn sense—and the very word 'home' brings with it the whole history of our affections. Even to look thus at his native country, is a blessing to an exile's heart."

I scarcely dared to interrupt the reverie which succeeded these few words; but when I perceived that he still remained seated, his head between his hands, and lost in meditation, I ventured to remind him that we were still above a league from Heimbach, the little village where we should pass the night—and that, on a road so wild and unfrequented, there was little hope of finding shelter any nearer.

"You must lean on me, father—the night air is fresh and bracing, and after a little it will revive you." The old man rose, without speaking, and taking my arm, began the descent of the mountain—his

steps, however, were tottering and uncertain, his breathing hurried and difficult, and his carriage indicated the very greatest debility.

"I cannot do it, my son," said he, sinking upon the grassy bench that skirted the way; "you must leave me. It matters little now where this frail body rests; a few hours more, and the rank grass will wave above it, and the rain beat over it unfelt. Let us part here; an old man's blessing for all your kindness will follow you through life, and may cheer you to think on hereafter."

"Do you then suppose I could leave you thus?" said I reproachfully; "is it so you think of me?"

"My minutes are few now, my child," replied he more solemnly, "and I would pass the last moments of my life alone.—Well then, if you will not—leave me now for a little and return to me; by that time my mind will be calmer, and mayhap, too, my strength greater, and I may be able to accompany you to the village."

I acceded to this proposal the more willingly because it afforded me the hope of finding some means to convey him to Heimbach; and so having wrapped him carefully in my cloak, I hastened down the mountain at the top of my speed.

The zig-zag path by which I went discovered to me from time to time the lights of the little hamlet, which twinkled star-like in the valley; and as I drew nearer, the confused hum of voices reached me. I listened, and to my amazement heard the deep, hoarse bay of a trumpet. How well I knew that sound—it was the night-call to gather in the stragglers. I stopped to listen, and now, in the stillness, could mark the tramp of horsemen and the clank of their equipments; again the trumpet sounded, and was answered by another at some distance. The road lay straight below me at some hundred yards off, and, leaving the path, I dashed directly downwards just as the leading horsemen of a small detachment came slowly up. To their loud "*Qui vive*" I answered by giving an account of the sick man, and entreating the sergeant who commanded the party to lend assistance to convey him to the village.

"Yes, *parbleu*, that we will," said the honest soldier; "a priest who has made the campaign of Egypt and Austria is worthy of all our care. Where is he?"

"About a mile from this, but the road is not practicable for a horseman."

"Well, you shall have two of my men; they will soon bring him hither;" and as he spoke he ordered two troopers to dismount, who quickly disencumbering themselves of their sabres, prepared to follow me.

"We shall expect you at the bivouac," cried the sergeant, as he resumed his way, while I, eager to return, breasted the mountain with renewed energy.

"You belong to the guard, my friends," said I, as I paused for breath at a turn of the path.

"The fourth cuirassiers of the guard," replied the soldier I addressed—"Milhaud's brigade."

How my heart leaped as he said these words. They were part of the division General D'Auvergne once commanded—it was the regiment of poor Pioche, too, before the dreadful day of Austerlitz.

"You know the fourth, then?" rejoined the man, as he witnessed the agitation of my manner.

"Know the fourth?" echoed his comrade in a voice of half indignant meaning—"*sacrebleu!* who does not know them?—does not all the world know them by this time?"

"It is the fourth who wear the motto '*dix contre un*,' on their caps," said I, desirous to flatter the natural vanity of my companions.

"Yes, Monsieur, I see you have served also."

I answered by a nod, for already every word, every gesture recalled to me the career I had quitted; and my regrets, so late subdued by reason and reflection, came thronging back, and filled my heart to bursting.

Hurrying onward now, I mounted the steep path, and soon regained the spot I sought. The poor father was sleeping; overcome by fatigue and weariness, he had fallen on the mossy bank, and lay in a deep, soft slumber. Lifting him gently, the strong troopers crossed their hands beneath, and bore him along between them. For an instant he looked up; but seeing me at his side, he merely pressed my hand, and closed his eyes again.

"*Ma foi!*" said one of the dragoons in a low voice, "I should not be surprised if this were the Père Arséne who served with the army in Italy. We used to call him old 'Scapulaire.' He was the only priest I ever saw in the van of a brigade. You knew him too, Auguste."

"Yes, that I did," replied the other soldier; "I saw him at Elkankah, where one of ours was unhorsed by a Mameluke, spring forward, and, seizing a pistol at the holster, shoot the Turk through the head, and then kneel down beside the dying man he was with before, and go on with his prayers. *Ventre bleu!* that's what I call discipline."

"Where was that, comrade?"

"At Elkankah."

"At Quoreyn rather, my friend, two leagues to the southward," whispered a low voice.

"*Tonnerre de ciel!*" cried the two soldiers in a breath, "it is himself;" for the words were spoken by the priest, who was no other than the Père Arséne they spoke of. The effort of speech and memory was, however, a mere passing one; for to all their questions he was now deaf, and lay apparently unconscious between them. On me therefore they turned their inquiries, but with little more of success; and thus we descended the mountain, eager to reach some place of succour for the good father.

As we approached the village, I was soon made aware of the objects of the party who occupied it. The little street was crowded with cattle, bullocks, and sheep, fast wedged up amid huge wagons of forage and carts of corn, mounted dragoons urging on the jaded

animals, regardless of the angry menaces or the impatient appeals incessantly making by the peasantry, who in great numbers had followed their stock from their farms.

The soldiers, who were detachments of different corps, were also quarrelling among themselves for their share of the spoil; and these altercations, in which more than once I saw a sabre flash, added to the discord. It was indeed a scene of tumult and confusion almost inconceivable. Here were a party of cuirassiers, carbine in hand, protecting a drove of sheep, around which the country people were standing, seemingly irresolute whether they should essay an attack, a movement often prompted by the other soldiers, who hoped in the *melée* to seize a part of the prey. Many of the oxen were bestrode by hussars or lancers, whose gay trappings formed a strange contrast with the beasts they rode on; while more than one stately horseman held a sheep before him on the saddle, for whose protection a cocked pistol seemed no ineffectual guarantee.

The task of penetrating this dense and turbulent mob seemed to me almost impossible; and I expressed my fears to the soldiers; but they replied that there were too many "braves" of Egypt there not to remember the Père Arséne—saying which, one of the soldiers, whispering a word to his companion, laid the priest gently upon the ground, and then mounting rapidly on a forage-cart, he shouted, in a voice heard above the din, "Comrades of the fourth, we have found an old companion—the Père Scapulaire is here. Place for the good father—place there!"

A hundred loud vivas welcomed this announcement, for the name was well known to many who never had seen the priest; and cheer after cheer for the "Bon Père" now rung through this motley assemblage.

To the wild confusion of a moment before, the regularity of discipline at once succeeded, and a lane was quickly formed for the soldiers to advance with the priest between them, each horseman saluting as he passed, as if to his general on parade.

"To the Trauben—the Trauben," cried several voices as we went along; and this I learned was the little inn of the village, where the non-commissioned officers in charge of the several parties were seated in council to arrange the subdivision of the booty.

Had not a feeling stronger than mere personal consideration occupied me, I would have now left the good priest among his old comrades, with whom he was certain to meet kindness and protection; but I could not so readily part with one whom, even in the few hours of our intercourse, I had learned to like; and therefore, enduring as well as I was able the rugged insubordination of a soldiery free from the restraint of discipline, I followed on, and soon found myself at the door of the Trauben.

A dismounted dragoon, with drawn sword, guarded the entrance, around which a group of angry peasants were gathered, loudly protesting against the robbery of their flocks and farm-yards. It was with great difficulty I could persuade the sentry to suffer me to enter; and when I at last succeeded, I found none willing to pay any attention to

my request regarding a billet for the priest, for unhappily his name and character were unknown to those to whom I addressed myself. In this dilemma I was deliberating what step to take, when one of the soldiers who with such zealous devotion had never left us, came up to say that his corporal had just given up his own quarters for the good father's use; and this happily was a small summer-house in the garden at the back of the inn.

" He cannot come with us himself," said the soldier, " for he is engaged with the forage rations, but I have got his leave to take the quarters."

A small wicket beside the inn led us into a large wildly-grown orchard, through which a broad path led to the summer-house in question—at least such we guessed to be the little building from whose windows there gleamed the bright glare of a cheerful fire.

The door lay open into a little hall, from which two doors led into different chambers. Over one of these was marked in chalk " quartier general," in imitation of the title assigned to a general's quarters, and this the soldiers pronounced must belong to the corporal. I opened it accordingly and entered. The room was small and neatly furnished, and with the blazing wood upon the hearth, looked most comfortable and inviting.

" Yes, we are all right here—I know his helmet, this is it," said the dragoon, " so here we must leave you. You'll tell the good father it was two troopers of the fourth who carried him hither, won't ye? Ay, and say Auguste Prevot was one of them—he'll know the name; he nursed me in a fever I had in Italy."

" I wish he were able to give me his blessing again," said the other; " I had it before that affair at Brescia, and there were four of my comrades killed about me, and never a shot touched me. But good night, comrade, good night;" and so saying, having left the father at his length upon a couch, they made their military salute and departed.

A rude-looking flagon of beer which stood on the table was the only thing I could discover in the chamber, save a canvas bag of tobacco and some pipes. I filled a goblet with the liquor and placed it to the priest's lips: he swallowed a little of it, and then opening his eyes, slowly looked around him, while he murmured to my question a faint sound of " better, much better." I knew enough of such matters to be aware that perfect rest and repose were the greatest aids to his recovery, and so, replenishing the fire, I threw myself down on the large dragoon cloak which lay on the floor, and prepared to pass my night where I was.

The long-drawn breathings of the sleeping man, the perfect quiet and stillness of all around—for, though not far distant from the village, the thick wood of trees intercepted every sound from that quarter—and my fatigue combined, soon brought on drowsiness.

I struggled, so long as I was able, against the tendency, but a humming sound filled my ears, the objects grew fainter before my vision, and I sank into that half-dreamy state when consciousness remains, but clouded and indistinct in all its perceptions. Twice the door was

opened and some persons entered, but though they spoke loudly, I heard not their words, nor could I recognise their appearance; to this succeeded a deep, sound sleep, the recompense of great fatigue.

The falling of a piece of fire-wood on the hearth awoke me—I opened my eyes and looked about. The room had no other light than from the embers of the wood fire and the piece of blazing pine which had just fallen, but even by that uncertain glare I could see enough to amaze and confuse me.

On the couch where I had left the priest sleeping, the old man was now seated, his head uncovered, and a scarf of light blue silk across his shoulders and falling to his feet; before him, and kneeling, was a figure, of which for some minutes I in vain endeavoured to ascertain the traits, for while in the military air of the dress there was something to mark the soldier, a waving mass of hair loosely falling on the back bespoke another sex. While I yet doubted, the flickering flame burst forth and showed me the small and beautifully shaped foot which from beneath a loose trowser peeped forth, and in the neat boot and tastefully ornamented spur, I recognized in an instant it was a "Vivandiere" of the army —one of those who, amid all the reckless abandon of the life of camps and battle-fields, can yet preserve some vestige of coquetry and feminine grace.

So strange the sight—so complete the heavy stupor of my faculties, that again and again I doubted whether the whole might not be the creation of a dream; but the well-known tones of the old man's voice soon reassured me, as I heard him say—

"I know it too, my child; I have followed too long the fortunes of an army not to feel and to sorrow for these things, but be comforted."

A passionate burst of tears from her who knelt at his feet interrupted him here, nor did it seem that all he could speak of consolation was able to assuage the deep sorrow of the poor girl, whose trembling frame bespoke her agony.

By degrees, however, she grew calmer—a deep sob or a long-drawn sigh alone would be heard, as the venerable father with impassioned eloquence depicted the happiness of those who sought the blessings of religion, and could tear themselves from the world and its ambitions; warming with his theme, he descanted on the lives of those saints on earth, whose every minute was an offering of heavenly love; and contrasted the holy calm of a convent with the wild revelry of the camp, or the more revolting carnage of the battle-field.

"Speak not of these things, father; your own voice trembles with proud emotion at the mention of glorious war. Tell me, oh! tell me that I may have hope, and yet leave not all that makes life endurable."

The old man spoke again, but his tones were low, and his words seemed a reproof, for she bowed her head between her hands and sobbed heavily.

To the long and impassioned appeal of the priest, there now succeeded a silence, only broken by the deep-drawn sighs of her who knelt in sadness and penitence before him.

"And his name?" said the father; "you have not told his name."

A pause followed, in which not even a breathing was heard—then a low murmuring sound came, and it seemed to me, as though I heard my own name uttered—I started at the sound, and with the noise the "Vivandiere" sprang to her feet.

"I heard a noise there," said she resolutely.

"It is my companion of the journey," said the priest, "poor fellow, he is tired and weary—he sleeps soundly."

"I did not know you had a fellow-traveller, father."

"Yes, we met in the Creutz Mountains—and, since that, have wended our way together. A soldier——"

"A soldier! is he wounded, then?"

"No, my child—he is leaving the army."

"Leaving the army, and not wounded—he is old and disabled, perhaps."

"Neither—he is both young and vigorous."

"Shame on him, then, that he turn his back on fame and fortune—and leave the path that brave men tread. He never was a soldier. No, father. He, in whose heart the noble passion once has lived, can never forget it."

"Hush, child, hush!" said the priest, motioning with his hand to her, to be silent.

"Let me look on him," said the Vivandiere, as she stooped down, and took from the hearth a piece of lighted wood—"let me see this man—and learn the features of one, who can be so craven of spirit, so poor of heart, as to fly the field—while thousands are flocking towards it."

Burning with shame and indignation, I arose, just as she approached me. The pine branch threw its red gleam over her bright uniform, and then upon her face. "Minette! Minette!" I exclaimed, but with a wild shriek, she let fall the burning wood, and fell senseless to the ground.

It was some time before, with all our care, she recovered consciousness—and even then, in her wild, excited glance, one might read the struggles of her mind to credit what had occurred. A few broken, unconnected phrases would escape her at intervals, and she seemed labouring to regain the lost clue to her recollections—when, again, she turned her eyes towards me. At the same instant, the trumpet sounded without, for *reveillée*, and was answered by many a call from other parties around. With a steadfast gaze of wonderment she fixed her look on me—and twice passed her hands across her eyes, as though she doubted the evidence of her senses.

"Minette, hear me, let me speak but one word."

"There it is again," cried she, as the blast rang out a second time, and the clatter of horsemen resounded from the street. "Adieu, sir, our roads lie not together. Father, your blessing—if your good counsel, this night, has not made its way to my heart—the lesson has come elsewhere. Good-by! good-by!" She pressed the old man's hand to her lips, and darted from the room.

Phiz

Stunned, and like one spell-bound, I could not move for a few seconds—and then, with a wild cry, I bounded after her through the garden. The wicket, however, was fastened on the outside, and it was some time before I could scale the wall, and reach the street.

The day was just breaking, but already the village was thronged with soldiers, who were preparing for the march, and arranging their parties to conduct the wagons. Hurrying on through the crowded and confused mass, I looked on every side for the "Vivandiere," but in vain. Groups of different regiments passed and repassed me—but to my questions they returned either a jeering reply, or a mere laugh of derision. But a few days ago, thought I, and these fellows had scarce dared to address me—and now——. Oh! the blighting misery of that thought—I was no longer a soldier—the meanest horseman of his troop was my superior. I passed through the village, and reached the high road: before me was a party of dragoons, escorting a drove of cattle—I hastened after them, but on coming near, discovered they were a light cavalry detachment. Sick at heart, I leaned against a tree at the way-side—when again I heard the tramp of horses approaching—I looked, and saw the tall helmets of the fourth, who were coming slowly along, conducting some large wagons, drawn by eight or ten horses. In front of the detachment rode a man, whose enormous stature made him at once remarkable, as well as the air of soldierly bearing he displayed; beside him was Minette—the reins had fallen on her horse's neck, and her face was buried in her hands.

"Ah! if I had thought that priest would have made thee so sad, Mademoiselle, I'd have let him spend his night beneath a wagon, rather than in my quarters," said a deep hollow voice, I at once recognized as that of Pioche. "But the morning air will revive thee; so let us forward—by threes—open order—trot." The word was obeyed—the heavy tramp of the horses, with the dull roll of the wagons, drowned all other sounds—the cortege moved on, and I was alone.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE "PENSION DE LA RUE MI-CAREME."

When I returned to the garden, I found that the Père Arséne was seized by an access of that dreadful malady, whose intervals of comparative release are but periods of dread or despondence. The tertian of Egypt, so fatal among the French troops, now numbered him among its victims—and he looked worn and exhausted, like one after weeks of illness.

My first care was to present myself to the official, whose business it was to inspect the passports, and by explaining the condition of my poor friend, to entreat permission to delay my journey—at least until he should be somewhat recovered. The gruff old sergeant, however, deliberately examined my passport, and as rigidly decided that I could not remain. The words of the minister were clear and definite—"Day by day, without halt, to the nearest frontier of France," was the direction—and with this I must comply. In vain I assured him, that no personal convenience, no wish of my own, urged the request, but the duty of humanity towards a fellow-traveller, and one who had strong claims on every soldier of the empire.

"Leave him to me, Monsieur," was the only reply I could obtain; and the utmost favour he would grant, was the permission to take leave of my poor friend before I started.

Amid all the sufferings of his malady, I found the good priest dwelling in his mind on the scene with the "Vivandiere"—which, perhaps from the impressionable character of a sick man's temperament, had entirely filled his thoughts—and thus he wandered from the subject of his own sorrows to hers, with scarcely a transition between them. When I mentioned the necessity of our parting, he seemed to feel it more on my account than his own.

"I wished to have reached Paris with you," he repeated over and over. "It was not impossible I could have arranged your return home. But you must go down to Sevres—the priest there, whoever he may be, will know of me—tell him every thing without reserve. I am too ill to write, but if I get better soon——. Well, well, that poor girl is an orphan too—and Alphonse was an orphan. With what misery have we struggled in France since this man has ruled our destinies—how have the crimes of a people brought their retribution to every heart and every home!—none too low, none too humble, to feel them. Leave this land, no blessing can rest upon it now. Poor thing, how worthy of a better lot she is. If this same officer should know—it is not impossible—but, why do I say this? No, no; you'll never meet him now." He continued to mutter thus some broken and disjointed sentences, half aloud, for some minutes—apparently unconscious of my presence.

"He was in a regiment of the guard—alas, she told me which, but I forget it now—but his name, surely I remember his name. Well, well, it is a sad story. Adieu, my dear child—good by; we have each a weary road before us—but *my* journey, although the longest, will be soonest accomplished. Do not forget my words to you—your own country, and your country's cause, above every other—all else is the hireling's part; the sense of duty alone can sustain a man in the trials which fit him for this world, or that better one which is to follow. Adieu." He threw his arm around me as he said this, and leaned exhausted and faint upon my shoulder.

The few who journey through life with little sympathy or friendship from their fellow-men, may know how it rent my heart to part with one to whom I clung every hour closer; my throat swelled and throbbed, and I could only articulate a faint good-by as we parted. As the door was closing, I heard his voice again.

"Yes; I have it now—I remember it well—'Le Capitaine Burke.'"

I started in amazement, for during all our intercourse he had never asked, nor had I told my name—and I stood unable to speak, when he continued—

"You'll think of the name. She said, too, he was on the staff—'Burke'—poor girl."

I did not wait for more, but like one flying from some dreaded enemy I rushed through the garden, and gained the road—my heart torn with many a conflicting thought; the bitterest of all, being the memory of Minette, the orphan girl, who alone of all the world cared for me. Oh! if strong, deep-rooted affection—the love of a whole heart, can raise the spirit above the every-day contentions of the world—can ennoble thought, refine sentiments, and divest life of all its meaner traits, making a path of flowers among the rocks and briars of our worldly pilgrimage—so does the possession of affection, for which we cannot give requital, throw a gloom over the soul, for which there is no remedy. Better, a thousand times better, had I borne all the solitary condition of my lot, unrelieved by one token of regard, than think of her who had wrecked her fortunes on my own.

With many a sad thought I plodded onward—the miles passed over seemed like the events in some troubled dream—and of my journey I have not a recollection remaining. It was late in the evening when I reached the *Barriere de l'Etoile*, and entered Paris. The long lines of lamps along the quays—the glittering reflection in the calm river—the subdued, but continual hum of a great city—awoke me from my reverie, and I bethought me that my career of life must now begin anew, and all my energies must be called on, to fashion out my destiny.

On the morning after my arrival I presented myself, in compliance with the requisite form, before the minister of police. Little information of mine was necessary to explain the circumstances under which I was placed. He was already thoroughly acquainted with the whole, and seemed in no wise disposed to evince any undue lenity towards one who had voluntarily quitted the service of the Emperor.

"Where do you purpose to remain, sir?" said the prefet, as he concluded a lengthened and searching scrutiny of my appearance.

"In Paris," I replied briefly.

"In Paris, I suppose," said he, with a slight derisive curl of the lip—"of that, I should think there can be little doubt; but I wished to ascertain more accurately your address—in what part of the city."

"As yet, I cannot tell—I am almost a stranger here; a day or two will, however, enable me to choose—and then I shall return here with the intelligence."

"That is sufficient, sir—I shall expect to see you soon." He waved his hand in sign to me to withdraw, and I was but too happy to follow the indication. As I hastened down the stairs, and forced my way through the crowd of persons who awaited an audience with the prefet, I heard a voice close to my ear whisper, "A word, one word with you, Monsieur;" conceiving, however, it could not have been intended for me, to whom no face there was familiar, I passed on, and reached the court.

The noise of footsteps rapidly moving on the gravel behind me induced me to turn, and I beheld a small, miserably-dressed man, whose spare and wasted form bespoke the sorest trials of poverty, advancing towards me, hat in hand. "Will you deign me one word, Monsieur?" said he, in a voice, whose tone, however that of entreaty, was yet remote from the habitual accent of one asking alms.

"You must mistake me," said I, desirous to pass on, "I am unknown to you."

"True, sir—but it is as a stranger I take the liberty of addressing you. I heard you say, just now, that you had not fixed on any place of abode in Paris; now, if I might venture to entreat your preference for this establishment, it would be too much honour for me, its poor master."

Here he placed in my hands a small card, inscribed with the words, "*Pension Bourgeois, Rue de Mi-Carême, Boulevard Mont Parnasse, No.* 46," at top; and beneath was a paragraph, setting forth the economical fact—that a man might eat, drink, and sleep, for the sum of twelve francs a week—enjoying the delights of "agreeable society, pleasant environs, and all the advantages of a country residence."

It was with difficulty I could avoid a smile at the shivering figure who ventured to present himself as an inducement to try the fare of his house. Whether my eyes did wander from the card to his countenance, or any other gesture of mine betrayed my thoughts—the old man seemed to divine what was passing in my mind, and said—

"Monsieur will not pronounce on the '*Pension*,' from the humble guise of its master. Let him but try it—and I promise that these poor rags, this miserable figure, has no type within the walls."

There was a tone of deep dejection, mingled with a sense of conscious pride, in which he said these few words, that at once decided me not to grieve him by a refusal.

"You may count on me, then, Monsieur," said I; "my stay here

is so far uncertain, that it depends not altogether on myself—but for the present I am your guest." I took my purse from my pocket as I spoke, knowing the custom in these humbler boarding-houses was to pay in advance—but the old man reddened slightly, and motioned with his hand a refusal.

"Monsieur is a captain in the guards," said he proudly, "no more is necessary."

"You mistake, friend, I am no longer so—I have left the army."

"Left it, *en retraite?*" said he, inquiringly.

"Not so. Left it at my own free-will and choice—and now, perhaps, I had better tell you, that as I may not enjoy any considerable share of good-will from the police authorities here—my presence might be less acceptable to your other guests, or to yourself."

The old man's eyes sparkled as I spoke, and his lips moved rapidly, as though he were speaking to himself—then, taking my hand, he pressed it to his lips, and said—

"Monsieur could not be more welcome than at present. Shall we expect you to-day at dinner?"

"Be it so. Your hour?"

"Four o'clock—to the moment. Do not forget the number, 46—Monsieur Rubichon—the house with a large garden in front."

"Till then," said I, bowing to my host, whose ceremonious politeness made me feel my own salute an act of rudeness in comparison.

As I parted from the old man, I was glad at the relief to my own thoughts which even thus much of speculation afforded, and sauntered on, fancying many a strange conceit about the *Pension*, and its inhabitants. At last the hour drew near; and having placed my few effects in a cabriolet, I set out for the distant boulevard of Mount Parnasse.

I remarked with pleasure that as we went along, the streets and thoroughfares became gradually less and less crowded: scarcely a carriage of any kind was to be met with. The shops were, for the most part, the quiet, unpretending looking places one sees in a provincial town; and an air of peacefulness and retirement prevailed, strongly at variance with the clamour and din of the heart of the capital. This was more than ever so as we emerged upon the boulevard itself; on one side of which, houses, at long, straggling intervals, alone were to be seen; at the other, the country lay open to the view, with its orchards and gardens, for miles away.

"Saperlote," said the driver, who, like so many of his calling, was a blunt son of Alsace—"Saperlote; we have come to the end of the world here. How do you call the strange street you are looking for?"

"The 'Rue de Mi-Carême.'"

"Mi-Carême? I'd rather you lived there than me. That name does not promise much in regard to good feeding. Can this be it?"

As he spoke he pointed with his whip to a narrow, deserted-looking street, which opened from the boulevard. The houses were old and dilapidated, but stood in small gardens, and seemed like the remains

of the villa residences of the Parisians, in times long past. A few more modern edifices, flaring with red brick fronts, were here and there scattered amongst them; but, for all the decay and dismantlement of the others, they seemed like persons of rank and condition in the company of their inferiors.

Few of the larger houses were inhabited. Large placards, "a louer," on the gateways or the broken railings of the garden, set forth the advantages of a handsome residence, situated between court and garden; but the falling roofs and broken windows were in sad discordance with the eulogy.

The unaccustomed noise of wheels, as we went along, drew many to the doors to stare at us, and in the gathering groups I could mark the astonishment so rare a spectacle as a cabriolet afforded in these secluded parts.

"Is this the 'Rue Mi-Carême?'" said the driver to a boy, who stood gazing in perfect wonderment at our equipage.

"Yes," muttered the child—"yes. Who are you come for now?"

"Come for, my little man? Not for any one. What do you mean by that?"

"I thought it was the *Commissaire*," said the boy.

"Ah, Sapermint! I knew we were in a droll neighbourhood," murmured the driver. "It would seem they never see a cabriolet here, except when it brings the *Commissaire de Police* to look after some one."

If this reflection did not tend to allay my previous doubts upon the nature of the locality, it certainly aided to excite my curiosity, and I was determined to persist in my resolution of at least seeing the interior of the "*Pension*."

"Here we are at last," cried the driver, throwing down his whip on the horse's back, as he sprung to the ground, and read aloud from a board fastened to a tree, "'Pension Bourgeois. M. Rubichon, Propriétaire.' Shall I wait for Monsieur?"

"No. Take out that portmanteau and cloak. I'm not going back now."

A stare of most undisguised astonishment was the only reply he made, as he took forth my baggage, and placed it at the little gate.

"You'll be coming home at night," said he at length; "shall I come to fetch you?——Not to-night," repeated he, in amazement. "Well, adieu, Monsieur—you know best; but I'd not come a pleasuring up here, if I was a young fellow like you."

As he drove away, I turned to look at the building before me, which, up to this time, I had not sufficiently noted. It was a long, two-storied house, which evidently, at an early period, had been a mansion of no mean pretension. The pilasters which ornamented the windows, the balustrades of the parapet, and the pediment above the entrance, were still remaining, though in a dilapidated condition. The garden in front showed also some signs of that quaint taste, originally borrowed from the Dutch, and the yew trees still preserved some faint resemblance to the beasts and animals after which they had once been

fashioned, though time and growth had altered the outlines, and given to many a goodly lion or stag, the bristly coat of a porcupine.

A little fountain, which spouted from a sea-monster's nostrils, was grass-grown and choked with weeds. Every thing betokened neglect and ruin; even the sun-dial had fallen across the walk, and lay moss-grown and forgotten, as though to say, that Time had no need of a record there.

The *jalousies*, which were closed in every window, permitted no view of the interior; nor did any thing, save a faint curl of light blue smoke from one chimney, give token of habitation.

I could not help smiling to myself at the absurd fancy which had suffered me to feel that this deserted quarter, this lonesome dwelling, contained any thing either adventurous or strange about it, or that I should find either in the "*Pension*," or its guests, wherewithal to interest or amuse me. With this thought I opened the wicket, and crossing the garden, pulled the bell-rope that hung beside the door.

The deep clanging echoed again and again to my summons, and ere it ceased, the door was opened, and M. Rubichon himself stood before me. No longer, however, the M. Rubichon of the morning, in garments of worn and tattered poverty, but attired in a suit which, if threadbare, was at least clean and respectable looking: a white vest, and ruffles also, added to the air of neatness of his costume; and whether from his own deserts, or my surprise at the transformation, he seemed to me to possess the look and bearing of a true gentleman.

Having welcomed me with the well-bred and easy politeness of one who knew the habits of society, he gave orders to a servant girl to conduct me to a room, adding, "May I beg of Monsieur to make a rapid toilet, for the dinner will be served in less than ten minutes."

The M. Rubichon of the morning no more prepared me for that gentleman at evening, than did the ruinous exterior of the dwelling for the neat and comely chamber into which I was now installed. The articles of furniture were few, but scrupulously clean; and the white curtains of the little bed, the cherry wood chairs, the table, with its grey marble top—all were the perfection of that propriety which gives even to humble things a look of elegance.

I had but time to make a slight change in my dress when the bell sounded for dinner, and at the same instant a gentle knock came to my door. It was M. Rubichon, come to conduct me to the *salle*, and anxious to know if I were satisfied with my chamber.

"In summer, Monsieur, if we shall have the happiness of possessing you here at that season, the view of the garden is delightful from this window; and—you have not noticed it, of course—but there is a little stair, which descends from the window into the garden, which you will find a great convenience, when you wish to walk. This way, now.—We are a small party to-day, and indeed shall be for a few weeks.—What name shall I have the honour to announce?"

"Mr. Burke."

"Ah! an Irish name," said he, smiling as he threw open the door of a spacious, but simply furnished apartment, in which about a dozen

persons were standing or sitting around the stove. I could not help remarking, that, as Monsieur Rubichon presented me to his other guests, my name seemed to meet a kind of recognition from each in turn. My host perceived this, and explained it at once, by saying, "We have a namesake of yours amongst us—not exactly at this moment, for he is in Normandy—but he will be back in a week or so. Madame de Langeac, let me present Mr. Burke."

Monsieur Rubichon's guests were all persons somewhat advanced in life—and though, in their dress, evincing a most unvarying simplicity and economy, had yet a look of habitual good tone and breeding which could not be mistaken. Among these, the lady to whom I was now introduced, was conspicuous—and in her easy and graceful reception of me, showed the polished manners of one accustomed to the best society.

After some few half-jesting observations, expressive of surprise that a young man—and consequently, as she deemed, a gay one—should have selected as his residence an unvisited quarter, and a very retired house—she took my arm, and proceeded to the dinner room.

The dinner itself, and the table equipage, were in keeping with the simplicity of the whole establishment; but if the fare was humble, and the wine of the very cheapest, all the habitudes of the very highest society presided at the meal, and the polished ease and elegance, so eminently the gift of ancient French manners, were conspicuous.

There prevailed among the guests all the intimacy of a large family, at the same time, a most courteous deference was remarkable, which never approached familiarity—and thus they talked lightly and pleasantly together, of mutual friends, and places they had visited—no allusion ever being made to the popular topics of the day—to me a most inexplicable circumstance, and one which I could not avoid slightly expressing my astonishment upon to the lady beside me.

She smiled significantly at my remark, and merely said, "It is so agreeable to discuss matters where there can be no great difference of opinion—at least, no more than sharpens the wit of the speakers—that you will rarely hear other subjects talked of here."

"But have the great events which are yet passing no interest?"

"Perhaps they interest too deeply to admit of much discussion," said she, with some earnestness of manner—"but I am myself transgressing—and what is still worse, losing you the observations of Monsieur de Saint George on Madame de Sevigné."

The remark was evidently made to change the current of our conversation—and so I accepted it—listening to the chit-chat around me, which, from its novelty alone, possessed a most uncommon charm to my ears. It was so strange, to hear the allusions to the courtiers, and the beauties of by-gone days, made with all the freshness of yesterday acquaintance—and the stores of anecdotes about the court of Louis XV., and the regency, told with a piquancy that made the event seem like an occurrence of the morning.

Before we retired to the drawing-room for coffee, I saw that the *Pension* was a royalist establishment—and wondered how it happened

that I should have been selected by the host to make one of his guests. Yet, unquestionably, there seemed no reserve towards me—on the contrary, each evinced a tone of frankness and cordiality which made me perfectly at ease, and well satisfied at the fortune which led me to the Rue Mi-Carême.

The little parties of dominos and picquet scattered through the salon—some formed groups to converse—the ladies resumed their embroidery—and all the occupations of in-door life were assumed with a readiness that betokened habit, and gave to the *Pension* the comfortable air of a home.

Thus passed the first evening. The next morning, the party assembled at an early hour to breakfast—after which, the gentlemen went out, and did not appear until dinner time—day succeeding day, in unvarying, but, to me, not unpleasing monotony. I rarely wandered from the large wilderness of a garden near the house, and saw weeks pass over, without a thought ever occurring to me that life must not thus be suffered to ebb.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

MY NAMESAKE.

About a month after I came to live in the *Pension*, I was sitting one evening at the window—watching, with the interest an idle man will ever attach to slight things, the budding leaves of an early spring—when I heard a step approach my chair, and on turning my head, perceived Madame de Langeac—she carried her tabouret in her hand, and came slowly towards me.

"I am come to steal some of your sunshine, Monsieur Burke," said the old lady, smiling good-naturedly, as I rose to present a chair, "but not to drive you away, if you will be generous enough to keep me company."

I stammered out some common-place civility in reply, and was silent—for my thoughts were bent upon my future, and I was ill disposed to interruption.

"You are fond of flowers, I have remarked," continued she—as if perceiving my pre-occupation, and willing to relieve it, by taking the burthen of the conversation. "And it is a taste I love to witness—it seems to me like the evidence of a homely habit. It is only in childhood we learn this love—we may cultivate it in after life, as we will."

"My mother was passionately fond of them," said I, calling up a long-buried memory of home and kindred.

"I thought so. These simple tastes are the inheritance a mother gives her child—and, happily, they survive every change of fortune."

I sighed heavily as she spoke—for thus, accidentally, was touched the weakest cord of my heart.

"And better still," resumed she—"they are the links that unite us to the past—that bind the heart of manhood to infancy—that can bring down pride and haughtiness—and call forth guileless affection, and childlike faith."

"They are happy," said I, musing, "who can mingle such early memories with the present."

"And who cannot?" interrupted she, rapidly—"who has not felt the love of parents—the halo of a home? Old as I am, even I can recall the little walks I trod in infancy, and the hand that used to guide me—I can bring up the very tones of that voice, which vibrated on my heart as they spoke my name. But, how much happier they, to whom these memories are linked with tokens of present affection—and who, in their manhood's joys, can feel a father's or a mother's love."

"I was left an orphan, when a mere child," said I, as though the observation had been specially addressed to me.

"But you have brothers—sisters, perhaps."

I shook my head. "A brother, indeed—but we have never met since we were children."

"And yet your country has not suffered the dreadful convulsion of ours; no social wreck has scattered those who once lived in close affection together. It is sad, when such ties are broken. You came early to France, I think you told me."

"Yes, Madame. When a mere child, my heart conceived a kind of devotion to the Emperor—his fame, his great exploits, seeming something more than human, filled every thought of my brain—and to be a soldier, *his* soldier, was the limit of my ambition. I fancied, too, that the cause he asserted was that of freedom—that liberty, universal liberty, was the watchword that led to victory."

"And you have discovered your error," interrupted she. "Alas! it were better to have followed the illusion—a faith, once shaken, leaves an unsettled spirit—and with such, there is little energy."

"And less of hope," said I, despondingly.

"Not so, if there be youth. Come, you must tell me your story. It is from no mere curiosity I ask you—but that I have seen much of the world, and am better able than you to offer counsel and advice. I have remarked, for some time past, that you appear to have no acquaintance in Paris—no friend. Let me be such. If the confidence have no other result, it will relieve your heart of some portion of its burthen—besides, the others here will learn to regard you with less distrust."

"And is such their feeling towards me?"

"Forgive me; I did not exactly use the word I sought for—but now that I have ventured so far, I may as well confess that you are an object of the greatest interest in their eyes—nor can they divest themselves of the impression, that some deep-laid plot had led you hither."

"Had I known this before——"

"You had left us—I guessed as much. I have remarked it in your character already, that a morbid dread of being suspected is ever uppermost in your thoughts—and accounted for it by supposing that you might have been thrown at too early an age into life—but you must not feel angry with us here. As for me, I have no merit in my right appreciation of you—Monsieur Rubichon told me how you met—a mere accident, at the Bureau of the Prefet."

"It was such—nor have I been able to divine why he addressed himself to me, nor what circumstance could have led him to believe my sentiments in accordance with those of his guests."

"Simple enough the reason—he heard from your own lips you were a stranger, without any acquaintance in Paris. The police, for a time, have been somewhat frequent in their visits here—when the exclusively royalist feature of the *Pension* excited some dissatisfaction. To overcome the impression, M. Rubichon determined to wait each day at the Bureau of the Prefet, and solicit, at hazard, among the persons there, to patronize his house. We all here consented to the plan, feeling its necessity. Our good fortune sent us you. Still, you must not be surprised, if long sorrows and much suffering have engendered suspicion—nor, that the old followers of a king look distrustfully on the soldier of"——she hesitated, and blushed slightly—then added, in a low voice, "of the Emperor." The word seemed to have cost a pang in its utterance, for she did not speak for several minutes after.

"And these gentlemen—am I to conclude that they cherish disaffection to the present government, or harbour a hope of its downfall?" Whether some accidental expression of disdain escaped me as I said this, I cannot say—but Madame de Langeac quickly replied—

"They are good Frenchmen, sir, and loyal gentlemen—what they *hope*, must be a matter for their own hearts."

"I entreat your pardon, Madame, if I have said one syllable which could reflect upon their motives."

"I forgive you readily," said she, smiling courteously: "he who has worn a sabre so long, may well deem its influence all-powerful; but believe me, young man, there is that within the heart of a nation, against which mere force is nothing: opposed to it armed squadrons and dense ranks are powerless. Devotion to a sovereign, whose claim comes hallowed by a long line of kings, is a faith to which religion lends its sanction, and tradition its hope. Look on these very persons here; see has adversity chilled their affection, or poverty damped their ardour. You know them not, but I will tell you who they are. There at the fire, that venerable old man with the high bold forehead, he is Monsieur De Plessis—Count Plessis de Riancourt. His grandfather entertained Louis XIV. and his suite within his chateau; he himself was grand falconer to the king; and what is he now? I shame to speak it—a fencing-master at an humble school of the Faubourg. And the other opposite to him—he is stooping to pick something from the floor—I myself saw him kneel at the levee of his majesty, and beheld the king assist him to rise, as he said—'Monsieur De Maurepas, I

would make you a duke, but that no title could be so dear to a Maurepas as that his ancestors have borne for six hundred years.' And he, whose signature was but inferior to the royal command, copies pleadings of a lawyer to earn his support. And that tall man yonder, who has just risen from the table, neither years nor poverty have erased the stamp of nobility from his graceful figure—Count Felix D'Ancelot, Captain of the *Guard du Corps*—the same who was left for dead on the stairs at Versailles, pierced by eleven wounds; he gives lessons in drawing, two leagues from this, at the other extremity of Paris. You ask me if they hope—what else than hope—what other comforter could make such men as these live on in want and indigence declining every proffer of advancement—refusing every temptation that should warp their allegiance? I have read of great deeds of your Emperor—I have heard traits of heroism of his generals, compared to which the famed actions of the Crusaders paled away; but tell me if you think that all the glory ever won by gallant soldier, tried the courage, or tested the stout heart like the long struggle of such men as these. And here, if I mistake not, comes another not inferior to any."

As she spoke, the steps of a calèche at the door were suddenly lowered, and a tall and powerfully-built man stepped lightly out. In an instant we heard his footstep in the hall, and in another moment, the door of the *salon* opened, and M. Rubichon announced "Le General Count Burke."

The general had just time to divest himself of his travelling pelisse as he entered, and was immediately surrounded by the others, who welcomed him with the greatest enthusiasm.

"Madame La Marquise de Langeac," said he, approaching the old lady, as she sat in the recess of the window, and lifted her hand to his lips, "I am overjoyed to see you in such health. I passed three days with your amiable cousin, Arnold de Rambuteau; who, like yourself, enjoys the happiest temperament, and the most gifted mind."

"If you flatter thus, general," said Madame De Langeac, "my young friend here will scarcely recognize in you a countryman—a kinsman, perhaps. Let me present Mr. Burke."

The general's face flushed, and his eyes sparkled, as taking my hand in both of his own, he said—

"Are you indeed from Ireland? Is your name Burke? Alas! that I cannot speak one word of English to you. I left my country thirty-eight years since, and have never revisited it."

The general overwhelmed me with questions, first, about my family, of which I could tell him little; and then of my own adventures, at which, to my astonishment, he never evinced those symptoms of displeasure I so confidently expected from an old follower of the Bourbons.

This he continued to do, as he eat a hurried meal which was laid out for him in the *salon*; all the rest standing in a circle around, and pressing him with questions for this friend or that at every pause he made.

"You see, gentlemen," cried he, as I replied to some inquiry about

my campaign, "this is an instance of what I have often spoken to you. Here is a youth who leaves his country solely for fighting sake—he does not care much for the epaulette, he cares less for the cause—— Come, come, don't interrupt me; I know you better than you know yourself. You longed for the conflict, and the struggle, and the victory, and, *parbleu*, we may say as we will, but you could have scarcely made a better selection than with his majesty, Emperor and King, as they style him."

This speech met with a sorry reception from the by-standers; and in the dissatisfied expression of their faces, a less confident speaker might have read his condemnation; but the general felt not this, or if he did, he effectually concealed it.

"You have not inquired for Gustave de Meisin," said he, looking round at the circle.

"You have not seen him surely?" cried several together; "we heard he was at Vienna."

"No, *parbleu:* he lives about a league from his old home—the very house we spent our Christmas at eighteen years ago. They have made a barrack of his chateau, and thrown his park into a royal *chasse;* but he has built a hut on the river side, and walks every day through his own ground, which, he says, he never saw so well stocked for many a year. He is as happy as ever, and loves to look out on the Seine before his door, when the bright stream is rippling through many a broad leaf—ay, Messieurs, of good augury too, the lilies of France." He lifted a bumper to his lips as he spoke, and drank the toast with enthusiasm.

This sudden return to loyalty, so boldly announced, served to reinstate him in their estimation; and once again all their former pleasure at his appearance came back, and again the questions poured in from every quarter.

"And the abbé," said one, "what of him? has he made up his mind yet?"

"To be sure he has, and changed it too, at least twice every twenty-four hours. He is ever full of confidence, and brimming with hope, when the wind is from the eastward—but let it only come a point west, his spirits fall at once, and he dreams of frigates and gunboats, and the hulks in the Thames; and though they offered him a cardinal's hat, he'd not venture out to sea."

The warning looks of the bystanders, and even some signals to be cautious, here interrupted the speaker, who paused for a few seconds, and then fixed his eyes on me.

"I have no fears, gentlemen, on that score. I know my countrymen well, though I have lived little among them. My namesake here may like the service of the Emperor better than that of a King—he may prefer the glitter of the eagle to the war-cry of St. Louis—but he'll never betray the private conversations nor expose the opinions expressed before him, in all the confidence of social intercourse.—We are speaking, Mr. Burke, of an abbé who is about to visit Ireland, and whose fears of the English cruisers seem little reasonable to some

of my friends here, though you can explain, perhaps, that they are not groundless. I forgot—you were but a boy when you crossed that sea."

"But he will go at last," said Madame de Langeac; "I suppose we may rely on that."

"We hope," said the General, shrugging his shoulders with an air of doubt, "because, when we can do nothing else, we can always hope," and so saying he arose from the table, and taking a courteous leave of each person in turn, pleading the fatigue of his journey, he retired for the night. I left the saloon soon after, and went to my room full of all I had heard, and pondering many thoughts about the abbé and his intended voyage.

I spent a sleepless night—thoughts of home, long lost in the excitement of my career, came flocking to my brain, and a desire to revisit my country, stronger perhaps, because undefined in its object, made me restless and feverish. It was with delight I perceived the day dawning, and dressing myself hastily, I descended to the garden. To my surprise, I found General Burke already there. He was sauntering along slowly by himself, and seemed wrapped in meditation. The noise of my approach startled him, and he looked up.

"Ah! my countryman—so early astir," said he, saluting me courteously. "Is this a habit of yours?"

"No, sir. I cannot claim the merit of such wakefulness; but last night I never closed my eyes. A few words you dropped in conversation in the drawing-room kept possession of my heart, and even yet I cannot expel them."

"I saw it at the time I spoke," replied the General, with a keen quick glance. "You changed colour twice as I mentioned the Abbé Gernon—do you know him?"

"No, sir. It was his intended journey, not himself, for which I felt interested."

"You would wish to accompany him, perhaps. Well, the matter is not impossible; but as time presses, and we have little leisure for mysteries, tell me frankly why are you here?"

In few words, and without a comment on any portion of my conduct, I told him the principal circumstances of my life, down to the decisive moment of my leaving the army. "After that step," said I, "feeling that no career can open to me here, I wish to regain my own country."

"You are right," said the General, slowly. "It is your only course now. The venture is not without risk, less from the English cruisers than the French, for the abbé is well known in England, and Ireland too; but his royalist character would find slight favour with Fouché. You are willing to run the risk, I suppose?"

"I am."

"And to travel as the abbé's servant, at least to Falaise?—there the disguise will end."

"Perfectly so."

"And for this service, are you also ready to render us one in return?" said he, peering at me beneath his eye-lashes.

"If it involve the good faith I once swore to preserve toward the Emperor Napoleon, I refuse it at once. On such a condition I cannot accept your aid."

"And does your heart still linger where your pride has been so insulted?"

"It does, it does—to be his soldier once more, I would submit to every thing but dishonour."

"In that case," said he, smiling good-naturedly, "my conscience is a clear one; and I may forward your escape with the satisfying reflection that I have diminished the enemies of his Majesty Louis the Eighteenth by one most inveterate follower of Napoleon. I shall ask no conditions of you. When are you ready?"

"To-day—now."

"Let me see—to-morrow will be the 8th—to-morrow will do.

"I will write about it at once. Meanwhile, it is as well you should not drop any hint of your intended departure, except to Madame de Langeac, whose secresy may be relied on."

"May I ask," said I, "if you run any risk in thus befriending me? It is an office, believe me, of little promise."

"None whatever. Rarely a month passes over without some one or other leaving this for England. The intercourse between Rome and Ireland is uninterrupted, and has been so during the hottest period of the war."

"This seems most unaccountable to me—I cannot understand it."

"There is a key to the mystery, however," said he smiling. "The English govornment have confidence in the peaceful efforts of the priesthood as regards Ireland, and permit them to hold unlimited intercourse with the Holy See, which fears France and the spirit of her Emperor. The Bourbons look to the church as the last hope of the restoration. It is in the Catholic religion of this country, and its traditions, that monarchy has its root. Sap one, and you undermine the other. Legitimacy is a holy relic—like any other, the priests are the guardians over it; and as for the present ruler of France, he trusts in the spirit of the church to increase its converts, and believes that Ireland is ripening to revolt through the agency of the priests. Fouché alone is not deceived. Between him and the church the war is to the knife, and but for him, the high seas would be more open than the road to Strasbourg—at least to all with a shaven crown and a silk frock. Here, then, is the simple explanation of what seemed so difficult; and I believe you will find it the true one."

"But two out of the three parties must be deceived," said I.

"Perhaps all three are," replied he, smiling sarcastically. "There are some, at least, who deem the return of the rightful sovereign is more to be hoped from the sabre than the crozier, and think, that Rome never was true except to Rome. As to your journey, however, its only difficulty or danger is the transit through France—once at the coast, and all is safe. Your passport shall be made out as a retired 'sous-officier'

returning to his home. You will take Marbœuf in the route, and I will give you the necessary directions for discovering the abbé."

"Is it not possible," said I, "that *he* may feel no inclination to encumber himself with a fellow-traveller, and particularly one a stranger to him?"

"Have no fear on that head. Your presence, on the contrary, will give him courage, and we must let him suppose you accompany him at our suggestion."

"Not with any implied knowledge, or any connexion with your views, however," said I—"this is well understood between us."

"Perfectly so. And now meet me here this evening after coffee, and I will give you your final instructions. Adieu for the present."

He waved his hand and left me. Then after walking a few paces turned quickly round and said—

"You will remember, a blouse and knapsack are indispensable for your equipment. Adieu."

CHAPTER LXXV.

AN OLD SAILOR OF "THE EMPIRE."

No circumstance of any interest occurred on my journey to Marbœuf; my passport, made out in my own name as a *sous-officier* on leave, secured me against any interruption or delay; and on the third evening I reached the little way-side cabaret, about a league beyond the town, where I was informed by the Count that the Abbé would await me.

To my surprise, however, I discovered that the house was occupied by a detachment of the "Marines of the Guard," proceeding from Marbœuf to the coast; with these, assuming the "Camaraderie" of the service, I soon made acquaintance, and being possessed of some information about the army, my company was at once coveted by the sailors, who had no opportunity of learning the events of the campaign.

The flurried manner and the over-solicitous desire of the landlord to please, did not escape me; and taking the first opportunity that offered, I followed him into his room, and closed the door behind me.

"Has *he* arrived?" said I, assuming at once the tone of one with whom there need be no secrecy.

"Ha, you are the Captain, then; and I was right," said he, not replying to my question, but showing that he was aware who I was. But in an instant he resumed—"Alas! no, sir; the orders to have quarters ready for ten men reached me yesterday; and though I told his messenger that he might come in safety, the marines never noticing any traveller, he has evidently been afraid to venture. This is the 10th, on the 12th the vessel is to be off the coast—after that it will be too late."

"But he may come yet."

The man shook his head and sighed, then muttered half aloud—"It was a foolish choice to take a coward for a hazardous enterprize. The Count de Chambord has been here twice to-day to see him, but in vain."

"Where is he, then—at what distance from here?"

"No one knows; it must be some leagues away, however, for his messenger seems tired and weary when he comes, and never returns the same day."

"Is it not possible he may have pushed on to the coast, finding this place occupied?"

"Ah, sir, it is plain you know him not; he has no daring like this, and would never seek a new path if the old were closed against him; but, after all, it would be useless here."

"How so?"

"The letters have not come yet, and without them he could not leave the coast. Meanwhile, be cautious; take care lest your absence should be remarked by the men; return to them now, and if any thing occur, I will make a signal for you."

The landlord's advice was well-timed, for I found that the party were already becoming impatient at my delay, and wondering what had caused it.

"They say, comrade," said a short-set, dark-featured Breton, whose black beard and moustache left little vestige of a human face visible—"they say that the cavalry of the Guard give themselves airs with us marines, and that our company is not good enough for them; is this the case?"

"It is the first time I have heard the remark," replied I; "and I hope it may be the last; with us of the eighth, I know, such a feeling never existed, and yet we thought ourselves not inferior to our neighbours."

"Then why did you leave us just now?" grumbled out two or three in a breath.

"You shall know that presently," said I, smiling; at the same time I arose and opened the door—"You may bring in the Burgundy now, Master Joseph; we are all ready for it."

A hearty cheer welcomed this speech, and many a rude hand was stretched forth to grasp mine; at the same instant the host, accurately divining the necessity of the moment, entered, with a basket containing six bottles, whose cobwebbed necks and crusted surface bespoke the choicest bin of his cellar.

"*Macon!* gentlemen," said he, drawing the cork of a flask with all the steadiness of hand of one accustomed to treat Burgundy properly.

"Ah, *parbleu!* a generous grape, too," said the short sailor, who spoke first, as he drained his glass and re-filled it. "*Allons*, comrades, 'The Emperor.'"

"The Emperor," repeated each voice in turn, even to the poor landlord, whose caution was stronger than his loyalty.

"The Emperor, and may heaven preserve him!" said the dark-whiskered fellow.

"The Emperor, and may heaven forgive him!" said the host, who this time uttered the true sentiments of his heart, without knowing it.

"Forgive him!" roared three or four together; "Forgive him what?"

"For not making thee an admiral of the fleet," said the landlord, slapping the stout sailor familiarly on the shoulder.

A burst of rude laughter acknowledged the success of this speech, and by common consent the host was elected one of the company. As the wine began to work upon the party, the dark fellow, whose grade of sergeant was merely marked by a gold cord on his cuff, and which had hitherto escaped my notice, assumed the leadership, and recounted some stories of his life, which, treating of a service so novel to me in all its details, were sufficiently interesting, though the materials themselves were slight and unimportant.

One feature struck me in particular through all he said, and gave a

character most distinctive to the service he belonged to, and totally unlike what I had observed among the soldiers of the army. With *them* the armies of all Europe were accounted the enemy—the Austrian, the Russian, the Italian, and the Prussian, were the foes he had met and conquered in so many fields of glory. The pride he felt in his triumphs, was a great but natural sentiment, involving, however, no hatred of his enemy, nor any desire to disparage his courage or his skill. With the sailor of the empire, however, there was but one antagonist, and that one he detested with his whole heart—England was a word which stirred his passion from its very inmost recesses, and made his blood boil with intense excitement. The gay insolence of the soldier—treating his conquest as a thing of ease and certainty—had no resemblance to the collected and impassioned hate of the sailor, who felt that *his* victories were not such as proclaimed his superiority by evidence incontestible. The victories on land contrasted, too, so strongly with even what were claimed as such at sea, that the sailors could not control their detestation of those who had robbed them of a share of their country's praise, and made the hazardous career they followed one of mere secondary interest in the eyes of France.

A more perfect representative of this mingled jealousy and hate could not be found than Paul Dupont, the *sous-officier* in command of this little party. He was a Breton, and carried the ruling trait of his province into the most minute feature of his conduct. Bold, blunt, courageous, open-hearted, and fearless; but passionate to the verge of madness when thwarted, and unforgiving in his vengeance when insulted; he only believed in Bretagny, and for the rest of France he cared as little as for Switzerland. His whole life had been spent at sea, until about two years previous, when from boatswain he was promoted to be a sergeant of the "Marines of the Guard"—a step he regretted every day, and was now actually petitioning to be restored to his old grade, even at the sacrifice of pay and rank—such was the impression a short life ashore had made on him, and so complete his contempt for any service save that in blue water.

"Come, old 'sea-wolf,' "—such was the soubriquet Paul went by among his comrades—"thou art dull to-night," said an old sailor with a head as white as snow; "I haven't seen thee so low of heart this many a day."

"What wonder, comrade, if I am so," retorted Paul, gruffly. "This shore service is bad enough, not to make it worse by listening to such yarns as these we have been hearing, about platoons and squadrons—of charges here and counter-marches there. *Ventre d' enfer!* that may amuse those who never saw a broadside or a boarding, but as for me——Look ye, comrade!" here he addressed himself to me, laying his great hand on my shoulder as he spoke, "until ye can bring your mounted lines to charge up to the mouth of a battery, vomiting grape and round-shot, ye must not tell your stories before old sailors—ay, though they be only Marines of the Guard, some of them."

"Don't be angry with old Paul, comrade," said the man who spoke before, "he does not mean to offend you."

"Who told you that?" said Paul, sternly; "why can't you sheer off, and leave me to lay alongside of my enemy my own way?"

"You must not call me by such a name," said I; "we all serve the Emperor, and have no enemies save his. Come, Paul, let us have a cup of wine together."

"Agreed—an ye promise to tell no more tales of dragoons and hussars, and such like cattle, I'll drink with you. Bah! it's not Christian-like to fight a-horseback—it's only fit for Turks and Arabs; but for men that are made to stand fast on their own stout timbers, they have no need of four-footed beasts to carry them against an enemy. Here's my hand, comrade—is it a bargain?"

"Willingly," said I, laughing; "if you consent, instead, to tell us some of your own adventures, I promise faithfully not to trouble you with one of mine."

"That's like a man," said Paul, evidently flattered by the successful assertion of his own superiority; "and now if the host will let us have some more wine, I'm ready."

"Ay, ay," cried several together, "replenish the basket once more."

"This time, gentlemen, you must permit me to treat you. It is not every day such guests assemble under my poor roof," said the landlord, bowing courteously, "nor am I likely soon to pass so pleasant an evening."

"That's as you please it," said Paul, carelessly; "if you are too good a fellow to care for money, there's three Naps for the poor of the village; mayhap there may be an old sailor amongst them."

A murmur of satisfaction at their comrade's conduct ran around the circle, as the host disappeared for the fresh supply of wine. In an instant he was back again, carrying a second basket under his arm, which he placed carefully on the table, saying, "*Pomard* of '87, gentlemen—I wish it were *Chambertin* for your sakes."

"*Tête bleu!* that's what I call wine," said one, smacking his lips, as he tasted the generous liquor.

"Yes," said Paul, "that's better drinking than the pink water they serve us out on service. *Morbleu!* how we'd fight, if they'd tap an aume of that when they beat to quarters."

The bottle now passed freely from hand to hand; and Paul, leaning back in his chair, crossed his arms before him, as, with his eyes half closed, he seemed to be occupied in remembering some long-passed occurrence.

"Ay, comrades," said he, after a long pause, "the landlord was not so far out as you may think him. I might have been, if not an admiral of the fleet, at least a captain or a commodore by this time, if I only wished it; but I wouldn't."

"You wouldn't, Paul?" cried three or four in a breath. "How do you mean, you wouldn't? Is it that you didn't like it?"

"That's it: I didn't like it," replied he, glaring around him as he spoke, with a look which had repressed any tendency to mirth, if such an inclination existed in the party. "Mayhap there are some here don't

believe this," he continued, as if anxious to extort a contradiction from any one bold enough to adventure it; but none seemed disposed to meet his wishes. He resumed—"The way of it was this:—

"We sailed from Brest, seven sail and two frigates, on a cruise in the Messidor of the year 13—it was the time of the Republic then—and our orders were to keep together, and afford protection to all vessels of our flag, and wherever an opportunity offered to engage the enemy, to do so, if we had a fair chance of success. There was one heavy sailer of the fleet, the 'Old Torch,' and by good luck I was in her; and so, before we were eight days out, it came on to blow a hurricane from the north-east, with a great sea that threatened to poop us at every stroke. How the others weathered it I can't say. We rolled so badly that we carried away our main-mast and half our bulwarks, and when day broke we could see nothing of the rest: we were lying floundering there in the trough of the sea, with nothing left but a storm-jib to keep her head straight, and all hands at the pumps; for in working she had opened her old seams, and leaked like a basket. Well, we cut away the wreck of the mast, and we threw twelve of our guns over—short eighteens they were, and all heavy metal—and that lightened her a bit, and we began to have hopes of weathering out the gale, when the word was passed of a strange sail to windward. We looked, and there we saw a great vessel looming, as large as a three-decker, coming down towards us with close-reefed topsails, but going through the water like a sword-fish. At first we hoped it was one of our own, but that hope did not last long, for as she neared us we saw floating from the peak that confounded flag that never boded us good fortune. She was an English eighty-gun ship; the 'Blanche' they called her. *Ventre bleu!* I didn't know how they ever got so handsome a model, but I learned after, she was a French ship, and built at Toulon; for you see, comrades, they never had such craft as ours. Well, down they came, as if they were about to come right over us, and never once made a signal, nor took any notice of us whatever, till quite close, when a fellow from the poop-deck shouted out in French—bad enough it was, too—desiring us to keep close till the sea went down a bit, and then to send a boat to them. *Sacristi!* there was no more about it than that, and they made a prize of us at once. But our captain was not one of that mould, and he answered by beating to quarters, and just as the 'Blanche' swept past, up flew our ports, and eight carronades threw in a fire of grape along her deck that made them dance to the music. *Diable!* the fun was short, though: round she came in stays like a pinnace, down helm, and passed us again, when, as if her sides slit open, forty guns flashed forth their flame, and sent us a broadside that made the craft tremble again, and left our deck one mass of dead and wounded. There was no help for it now. The clear water came gushing up the hatchways from many a shot-hole, the craft was settling fast, and so we hauled down the ensign and made the signal of distress. The answer was—'Keep her afloat if you can.' But, faith, our fellows didn't care much to save a prize for the English, and they wouldn't lend a hand to the pumps, but crossed their arms and stood still, waiting for her to go down, when

what did we see but two boats lowered from the 'Blanche' and dropped into the sea, which was then running mountains high. *Feu d'enfer!* they don't know where there is danger and where not, these English, and that's the reason they seem so brave! For a minute or two we thought they were swamped, for they were hidden entirely; then we saw them on the top of a wave, balancing, as it might be, and again they disappeared, and the huge dark swell seemed to have swallowed them, and so we strained eyes after them just as if our own danger was not as great as theirs, when suddenly a fearful cry for'ed was heard, and a voice called out—'She is sinking by the head!' And so it was: a crash like falling timber was heard above the storm and the sea, and the 'Torch' rolled heavily from side to side, and then plunged bowsprit down, and the boiling surf met over her. There was a wild yell, some said it was a cheer, I thought it like a drowning cry, and I remember no more—that is, I have a kind of horrid dreamy remembrance of buffeting in the waves, and shaking off a hand that grasped me by the shoulder, and then feeling the water gathering over me, as I grew more and more exhausted. But the end of it was, I came to my senses some hours after, and found myself in a hammock on board the 'Blanche,' with twenty-eight of my comrades. All the rest, above two hundred and fifty, had perished, the captain and the officers among them.

"The 'Blanche' was under orders for St. Domingo, and was no way anxious to have our company; and before a week was over, we were drafted into a small sloop of war, carrying eight guns, and called the 'Fawn.' She was bound for England with despatches from Nelson, one of their English admirals they're always talking about. This little craft could sail like the wind, but she was crowded with sick and invalided men from some foreign station, and there was not a place the size of a dog-kennel on board of her that was not occupied. As for us, we were only prisoners; and you may think they weren't very particular about our comforts, and so they ranged us along under the bulwarks to leeward, for they wouldn't spoil her sailing trim by suffering us to sit to windward; and there we were, drenched to the skin, and shivering from day to dark.

"Four days went over in this way, when, on the fifth, about eight o'clock in the morning, the look-out announced several strange sail in sight, and the same instant we perceived the officers setting the glasses to observe them. We could remark that the sight did not seem to please them much, but more we knew not, for we were not allowed to stand up, nor look over the bulwarks. The lieutenant of the watch called up the commander, and when he came on deck he ordered the men to cram on more sail, and hold her head a point or so off the wind; and, as soon as it was done, the rushing noise at the cut-water told the speed she was making through the sea. It was a fine day, with a fresh breeze, and a nice curl from the water; and it was a handsome thing to see how the sloop bent to the gale and rose again, her canvas white as snow and steady as a board; and we soon knew from the manner of the officers, and the anxious looks they'd give to leeward from time to time, that another vessel was in chase of the Fawn. Not

a man stirred on the deck, save the lieutenant of the watch, who walked the quarter-deck, with his glass in his hand, now lifting it to his eye, and now throwing a glance aloft to see how the sails were drawing.

"'She's gaining on us, sir,' cried the boatswain, as he went aloft to the lieutenant. 'Shall we ease her off a little more?'

"'No, no,' said he, impatiently. 'She's coming hand-over-hand now. Clear the deck, and prepare for action.'

"My heart jumped to my throat as I heard the words; and waiting until the lieutenant's back was turned, I stole my eyes above the bulwark, and beheld the tall masts and taper spars of a frigate, all covered with canvas, about two miles astern of us. She was a good-sized craft, apparently of thirty-eight guns; but what I liked best about her was the broad tricolor that fluttered from her mast-head. Every curl that floated on the breeze whispered liberty to my heart.

"'You know her,' said the lieutenant, laying his hand on my shoulder, before I was aware he was behind me. 'What is she?'

"'Lend me your glass, lieutenant, and perhaps I can tell you,' said I, and with that he gave the telescope into my hands, and leaned on the bulwark beside me. 'Ha!' said I, as soon as I caught the side of her hull, 'I ought to know her well. I sailed in her for two years and a half. She's the "Creole," of thirty-eight guns, the fastest frigate in our navy. She has six carronades on her quarter-deck, and never goes to sea without three hundred and twenty men.'

"'If she had three tiers of them we'd not flinch from her,' said a voice behind. It was the commander himself, who was now in full uniform, and wore a belt with four pistols stuck around it.

"There is no use in denying it, the English prepared for action like brave fellows, and soon cleared the deck of every thing in the way of the guns, but what use was it. In less than an hour the "Creole" worked to windward, and opened a fire from her long guns, to which the other could make no reply. There they came plumping in, some into the hull, some splintering through the bulwarks, and some crashing away through the rigging, and all the crew could do, was to repair the mischief the distant cannonade was making.

"'It's a cowardly way your countrymen come into action after all,' said the lieutenant, as he watched the shot hopping and skipping along the water, to leeward. 'With four times our strength, they don't bear down and engage us.'

"As he spoke, a shot cut the peak halyards in two, and down came the spar with a crash, carrying with it in its fall that ensign they're so proud of. It was all we could do, prisoners as we were, not to cheer at this; but the faces around us did not encourage us to such a course, and we sat silently watching them.

The moment the accident happened, twenty stout fellows were clambering up the rigging, and as many more engaged to repair the mischief; but suddenly the commander whispered something to the lieutenant—the men were called down again, and the craft was let fall off the wind, trailing the sails and the tangled rigging over her sides.

" 'And the prisoners, sir,' said the lieutenant, at the close of something I could not hear.

" 'Send them below,' was the short reply.

" 'We cannot, the space between decks is crowded to suffocation, but here she comes.' And, as he spoke, the frigate came bearing down, in gallant style, her whole deck swarming with men.

" 'Down—men, down'—whispered the lieutenant, and he dropped on his knee, behind the bulwark, and motioned to the rest to kneel—and I now perceived that every sailor had a drawn cutlass in his hand, and pistols in his belt, as he lay crouching on the deck. The frigate was now so close, I could hear the commands of the officers on the quarter-deck, and the word, '*Bas les branles*,' the signal to board, passed from mouth to mouth. The next instant, she closed on us, and showed her tall sides, towering above us.

" 'Now, men,' cried the commander of the 'Fawn,' 'now, forward. All who care to live, there's your ground,' said he, pointing to the frigate. 'Such as like to die on a British deck, remain with me.' The boarders sprang up the side of the 'Creole' before the crew could fasten the grapples. *Tonnerre de Dieu*, what a moment it was. The fellows cheered like madmen, as they poured in to certain death—the lieutenant himself was one of the first on board, and fell back the same instant, dead upon his own deck. The struggle was a bloody, but brief one—for a few minutes the English pressed our men back, and gained a footing on the quarter-deck, but a murderous fire from the tops cut them down in numbers, and they now fought, not for victory, but vengeance.'

" 'Now, captain, now,' screamed a youth, in a lieutenant's uniform, but all covered with blood—and his face gashed with a cutlass wound, as he leaned over the bulwark of the 'Creole,' and waved his cap in the air.

" 'I'm ready,' replied the English commander, and sprang down the main hatchway, as he spoke, with a pistol in his hand. At the same instant, a fearful cry burst forth from the prisoners, for, with the instinct of despair, they guessed his desperate resolve was to blow up the vessel. We were tied, wrist to wrist, and the rope run through the blocks at our back in such a way, as to prevent our moving more than a few inches—but, what will not the fear of a dreadful death do? With one unanimous effort we tore the lashings in pieces, and got free. I was myself the first at liberty, and sprang towards the 'Creole'. Alas! they had divined the awful doom awaiting us, and were endeavouring to shove off at once. Already there were some ten or twelve feet between the vessels. I rushed forward to gain the bowsprit, a vague hope of escape suggesting the effort. As, I did so, my eyes caught sight of a book, which, with his hat, the captain threw from him as he hastened below. I stooped down, and put it in my bosom—why, I know not. Life, and life only, was my thought at that moment. Then, with lightning's speed, I ran along the deck, and out on the bowsprit. At this instant, the frigate shot a-head of us—I made a

leap, the last effort of despair, and caught the flue of the anchor— a friendly hand threw me a rope, and dragged me on the deck—as I gained it, a thunder-clap, louder than ten broadsides, broke forth—and the frigate fell over on one side, as if sinking—while, over her rigging and her masts flew spars and timbers, blazing and burning, amid a black smoke, that filled the air on every side. Every man about, dropped wounded, or terrified, on the deck—where they lay, amid the falling fire of the wreck, and the terrible carnage. I wiped the blood from my eyes, for I was bleeding profusely from a splinter cut, and looked about me. The deck was a mass of dead and dying, their piercing cries and groans were maddening to hear. The frigate, however, was flying fast through the water—the 'Fawn' was gone!"

"*Tete bleu!* he blew her up," said three or four in a breath.

Paul nodded, and resumed—"Ay, comrades, and the half-dozen of her crew who stood alive on our quarter-deck, cheered the explosion as if it was a victory; and one fellow, as he lay bleeding on the planks, cried out, 'See, there; look, if our gay flag is not high above yours, as it always will be,' and that time he was right, for the spar that bore it was nigh the clouds. Well, to finish my story, in eight days we made Brest, and all of us who were wounded were sent on shore to the naval hospital. A sorry set we were—most of us disabled by splinter-wounds, and many obliged to suffer amputation. I was about again sooner than the rest, and was sent for one morning on board the admiral's ship, to give some account of the "Fawn," of which they never could hear enough; and when I came to that part where I made my escape, they all began a-laughing at my stopping to take up a book at such a moment. And one of the lieutenants said jokingly—

"'Well, Paul, I suppose it was the Englishman's breviary saved your life, wasn't it?'

"'No, lieutenant,' said I; 'but you'd be mighty proud this day to have that same breviary in your possession.'

"'How so, good fellow?' said the admiral himself, old Villaret Joyeuse, who always talked like one of ourselves. 'What is this book, then, that it is so precious?'

"'I'll show it you, sir, because I've no fear of foul play at your hands; but there's not another man of the fleet I'd let see it;' and with that I took it out of my breast, where I always carried it, and gave it to him. Ah, if you'd seen his face how it flushed up, as he turned over the leaves, and how his eyes sparkled with fire.

"'Paul Dupont,' said he, 'are you aware what this is?'

"'Yes, admiral,' said I, 'as well as you are.'

"'Your fortune's made, then, my brave fellow,' said he, slapping me on the shoulder. 'The finest frigate in the English navy is a less prize than this.'

"*Mille tonnerre!* how the others stared at me then; but I stood without minding how they looked, for I was the same Paul Dupont they laughed at a few minutes before.

"Meanwhile the admiral laid down the book on the table, and

covered it with his cocked hat, and then taking a pen, he wrote some lines on a piece of paper before him.

" 'Will that do, Paul?' said he, handing it towards me. It was just this—'Bureau of the Marine, Brest. Pay Paul Dupont the sum of ten thousand francs, for service rendered his imperial majesty, and attested in a note by me, Villaret Joyeuse, Admiral of France.'

"I could scarce read the lines, comrades, for pure passion. 'Ten thousand francs!' said I at last, as soon as I found breath—'Ten thousand francs!'

" 'What!' cried the admiral, 'not content? Well, then, thou shalt have more; but I have rarely met one of your cloth with so mercenary a spirit.'

" 'Stay, admiral,' said I, as I saw him about to write a new order; 'we both are in error here—you mistake me, and I you. An old admiral of the fleet ought to know his sailors better than to think that money is their highest reward; it never was so at least with Paul Dupont. Let me have my book again.'

" 'Come, come, Paul—I believe I understand you now,' said he, 'your warrant shall be made out this day.'

" 'No, admiral, it's too late,' said I, 'if that had come first, and from yourself, all well—but it looks like a bargain now, and I'll not have promotion that way.'

" '*Mort de diable!*' said he, stamping with passion, 'but they're all the same. These Bretons are as brutal in their obstinacy as their own cattle.'

" 'You say true, admiral,' said I; 'but, if they're obstinate in wrong, they're resolute in right. You are a Breton gentleman, give me back my book.'

" 'Take it,' said he, flinging it at me, 'and let me never see your face again'—and with that he left the cabin, and banged the door after him in a rage. And so, I went my way, comrades, back to my ship, and served for many a long year after, carrying that book always in my breast, and thinking to myself—'Well, what if thou art only a boatswain, Paul, thou hast wherewithal in thy keeping to make thee a commodore any day.' "

"And what can it be, then, this book?" said the party, in a breath.

"You shall see," said Paul, solemnly—"for, though I have never showed it since—nor, have I ever told the story before, here it is." With these words, he drew from his bosom a small square volume, bound in vellum, and fastened by a clasp, lettered on the cover, "Signals of the Channel Fleet."

This was the secret of honest Paul's life, and as he turned over the leaves, he expatiated with eloquent delight on the various British emblems which were represented there, in all their brilliant colouring.

"That double streak of yellow on the black is to make all sail, comrades," said he. "Whenever they see us standing out to sea, you may remark that signal flying."

"And what is this large blue flag here, with all the coloured bars across it?" said one.

"Ay," cried another, "they're very fond of that ensign. What can it be?"

"Close action," growled out Paul, sullenly, who didn't fancy even the reflective praise this question implied to the hated rival.

"*Sacre bleu!*" said a third, "they've no other to announce a victory. Look here, it is the same flag for both."

Paul shut up the book at this, with a muttered curse, which might have been intended either for his comrades, or the English, or both together, and the whole party became suddenly silent.

It was now that the landlord's tact became conspicuous; for instead of any condoling expressions on what might have been deemed the unsuccessful result of Paul's career, he affected to think that the brave seaman was more to be envied for the possession of that volume, than if he walked the deck an admiral of France.

This flattery, aided by a fresh supply of Burgundy, had full success; and from story-telling the party fell to singing—the songs being only a more boastful detail of their prowess at sea than their prose narratives, and even here Paul maintained his supremacy.

Sleep, however, stronger than self-glorification and pride, fell on the party one by one, and they lay down at last on the tables and benches, and slumbered heavily.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

A MOONLIGHT RECOGNITION.

I SAT on my bed in the little chamber allotted me; and as the bright moonlight streamed along the floor, and lit up the wide landscape without, I hesitated within myself whether I should await the morning, or at once set forth on my way to the coast. It was true, the Abbé had not arrived, and without him I knew nothing of the vessel, nor where she lay, much less by what means I should induce the crew to receive me as a passenger; but my heart was fixed on gaining the coast; once there, I felt that the sea alone rolled between me and my country, and I had little doubt some means of escape would present itself.

The desire to return to Ireland, long stilled, was now become a passion. I thought some new career must there open for me, and in its active vicissitudes I should make amends for the wearisome languor of my late life. What this novel path was to be, and where to lead, I cannot say; nor am I able now, in looking back, to guess by what

sophistry I persuaded myself into this belief. It was the last ray of hope within me, however, and I cherished it only the more fondly for its very uncertainty.

As I sat thus deliberating with myself what course to take, the door was cautiously opened, and the landlord entered—

"He is come," whispered he; "and, thank heaven, not too late."

"The Abbé?" inquired I.

"No, not the Abbé, but the Count de Chambord. The Abbé will not venture; but, it matters not, if you will. The letters are all ready—the sloop is off the coast—the wind is fair——"

"And not a moment to be lost," added a deep low voice, as the figure of a tall man, wrapped in a travelling cloak, darkened the doorway. "Leave us, Pierre—this is the gentleman, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," said the landlord. "Should you need a light, I'll bring one."

"Thank you, friend, we can dispense with any, save what the moon affords us."

As the door closed on the retiring figure of the host, the stranger took his place beside me on the bed, and in a low voice thus began—

"I only know, sir, that you have the full confidence of one of my staunchest and best friends, who tells me that you are willing to incur great risk, provided you gain the chance of reaching your native land. That chance—nay, I will call it, that certainty—lies in my power; and, in return for the assistance, are you willing to do me a service?"

"I served the Emperor, sir; ask me not any thing unworthy of one who wore his epaulette. Aught else, if it be but honourable and fair, I'll do."

"I have no leisure for casuistry, nor is it my humour, sir," replied he, angrily. "Neither do I seek any wondrous devotion at your hands. The service is an easy one—costs nothing at the present—involves nothing for the future."

"The slight value you place upon it may detract but little from my objection," said I.

"*Sacre ciel!*" exclaimed he, in a louder voice, as he sprang from the bed and clasped his hands before him. "Is it to be ever thus? Is every step we take to be marred by some unlooked-for casualty? Is the stamp of fear and vacillation to be on every act of our lives? This Abbé, the creature we have made, the man whose fortune is our handiwork, could render but one service to our cause, and he fails us in our need; and now, you ——"

"Beware, sir, how you speak of one who has never been accustomed to hear his name slightingly used, nor his honour impugned—with your cause, whatever it be, I have no sympathy—remember that, and remember also, we are strangers to each other."

"No, *par St. Denis*, that are we not," said he, seizing me by the arm, as he turned his head round, and stared me steadfastly in the face. "It was but this instant I deemed my fortune at the worst, and now I find myself mistaken. Do you know me now?" said he, throw-

ing off his travelling cap, and letting his cloak fall from his shoulders to the ground.

"De Beauvais!" exclaimed I, thunderstruck at the sight.

"Yes, sir, the same De Beauvais, whose fortunes you have blighted—whose honour you have tarnished—interrupt me not. The mill at Hölbrun, witnessed the latter—if even the former were an error—and now we meet once more."

"Not as enemies, however—at least, on my side. You may persist, if you will, in attributing to me wrongs I never inflicted. I can better bear the imputation, unjust though it be, than involve myself in any quarrel with one I feel no anger towards. I was in hopes, a few hours hence might have seen me on my way from France, for ever—but here, or elsewhere, I will not reply to your enmity."

De Beauvais made no reply, as I concluded, but with his arms crossed, and head bent down, seemed lost in thought. "And so," said he, at length, in a slow, sad voice, "you have not found the service of the Usurper as full of promise as you hoped—you have followed his banner long enough, to learn how mean a thing even ambition may be, and how miserably selfish is the highest aspiration of an adventurer."

"The Emperor was my good master," said I, sternly. "It would ill become me to vent my disappointment on aught, save my own demerits."

"I have seen as slight deservings bring a high reward, notwithstanding," replied he—"ay, and win their meed of praise from lips, whose eulogy was honour. There was a service, Burke——"

"Stay, no more of this," said I. "You are unjust to your own cause, and to me, if you deem that the hour of baffled hopes, is that in which I could see its justice. *You* are true and faithful to one whose fortunes look darkly. I respect the fidelity, while I will not follow its dictates. I leave the path where fame and riches abound—I only ask you to believe that I do so with honour. Let us part then."

"Where do you mean to go, hence?"

"I know not—a prospect of escape had led me hither—I must now bethink me of some other course."

"Burke, I am your debtor for one kindness, at least," said De Beauvais, after a brief pause. "You saved my life, at the risk of your own. The night at the Chateau D'Ancre should never be forgotten by me—nor had it been, if I did not revenge my own disappointed hopes, in not seducing you to our cause, upon yourself. It may be, that I wrong you in every thing, as in this."

"Believe me, that you do, Beauvais."

"Be it as it may, I am your debtor. I came here to-night to meet one who had pledged himself to perform a service—he has failed in his promise—will you take his place? The same means of escape shall be yours. All the precautions for his safety and sure conduct shall be taken in your behalf. I ask no pledge for the honourable discharge of what I seek at your hands, save your mere assent."

"What is it you require of me?"

"That you deliver these letters to their several addresses—that you do so with your own hands—that when questioned, as you may be, on the state of France, you will not answer as the partisan of the Usurper."

"I understand you—enough—I refuse your offer. Your zeal for the cause you serve must indeed be great, when it blinds you to all consideration for one placed as I am."

"It has made me forget more, sir—far more than that, as I might prove to you, were I to tell of what my life has been for two years past; but for such forgetfulness there is an ample recompense—a glorious one—the memory of our king." He paused at these words, and in his tremulous voice and excited gesture, I could read the passion that worked within him.

"Come, then, there shall be no more question of a compact between us. I ask no conditions—I seek for no benefits—you shall escape. Take my horse—my servant, who is also mounted, will accompany you to Beudron, where you will find fresh horses in readiness. This passport will prevent all interruption or delay; it is countersigned by Fouché himself. At Lisieux, which you will reach by sunset, you can leave the cattle, and the boy of the cabaret will be your guide to the Falaise de Biville. The tide will ebb at eleven o'clock, and a rocket from the sloop will be your signal to embark."

"And for this I can render nothing in return," said I, sadly.

"Yes. It may be that in your own country you will hear the followers of our King scoffed at and derided—called fools or fanatics, perhaps worse. I would only ask of you to bear witness that they are at least ardent in the cause they have sworn to uphold, and firm to the faith to which they have pledged themselves. This is the only service you can render us, but it is no mean one—and now farewell."

"Farewell, Beauvais; but ere we separate for ever, let me hear from your lips that you bear me no enmity—that we are friends, as we used to be."

"Here is my hand—I care not if you injured me once—we can be friends now, for we are little likely to meet again as enemies. Adieu!"

While De Beauvais left the room to order the horses to be in readiness, the landlord entered it, and seemed to busy himself most eagerly in preparing my knapsack for the road.

"I trust you will be many a mile hence, ere the day breaks," said he, with an anxiety I could ill comprehend, but which at the time I attributed to his desire for the safety of one entrusted with an important mission; "and now here come the horses."

A moment more, and I was seated in the saddle—a brief word at parting was all De Beauvais spoke, and turned away, and the minute after I was hurrying onward towards Beudron.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE "FALAISE DE BIVILLE."

EVERY THING occurred as De Beauvais had predicted. The authorities in the little villages we passed glanced at my passport, and as instantaneously handed it back, and we journied like couriers of the Emperor, without halt or impediment.

We reached Lisieux early in the evening, where, having dismissed the servant and horses, I took my way on foot towards a small fishing village, called La Hupe, where, at a certain cabaret, I was to find my guide to Biville.

The address of the sailor written on a card, and marked with a peculiar cipher by Beauvais, was at once recognized by the old Norman, who welcomed me with a rude but kindly hospitality.

" Thou art more like a man to make this venture, than the last three who came down here," said he, as he slowly measured me with his eye from head to foot. " These priests they sent us never dared even to look at the coast, much less to descend the cliffs ; but thou hast a look about thee of another fashion. And now the first thing is to have something to eat, and I promise thee a *goutte* of brandy will not be amiss to prepare thee for what is before thee."

" Is there then so much of danger in the descent ?"

"Not if a man's head be steady and his hand firm ; but he must have both, and a stout heart to guide them, or the journey is not over pleasant. Art thou cool enough in a time of peril to remember what has been told thee for thy guidance ?"

" Yes ; I hope I can promise so much."

" Then thou art all safe ; so eat away, and leave the rest to me."

Although the sailor's words had stimulated my curiosity in the highest degree, I repressed every semblance of the feeling, and ate my supper with a well-feigned appearance of easy indifference, while he questioned me about the hopes of the Bourbon party in their secret machinations, with a searching inquisitiveness, that often nearly baffled all my ingenuity in reply.

" Ah, *par St. Denis !*" said he, with a deep sigh, " I see well thou hast small hope now ; and in truth I feel as thou dost ; when George Cadoudal and his brave fellows failed, where are we to look for success ? I mind well the night he supped here."

" Here, said you ?"

" Ay, where you sit now, on the same seat ; there was an English officer with him ; he wore a blue uniform, and sat yonder, beneath that fishing-net—the others were hid along the shore."

" Was it here they landed, then ?"

"Yes, to be sure, at the Falaise; there is not another spot to land on for miles along the coast." The old sailor then began a circumstantial account of the arrival of George and his accomplices from England, and told how they had one by one scaled the cliffs by means of a cord, well-known in these parts, called the "smuggler's rope." "Thou shalt see the spot now," added he, "for there's the signal yonder." He pointed as he spoke to an old ruined tower, which crowned a cliff about half a mile distant, and from a loop-hole in which I could see a branch of ivy, waving as though moved by the wind.

"And what may that mean?"

"The cutter is in sight—as the wind is off shore, she'll be able to come in close to-night. Indeed, if it blew from the westward, she dared not venture nearer, nor thou either go down to meet her—so, now let's be moving."

About twenty minutes' walking brought us to the old signal-tower, on looking from the window of which I beheld the sea plashing full three hundred feet beneath. The dark rocks, fissured by time and weather, were abrupt as a wall, and in some places even overhung the waves that rolled heavily below. Masses of tangled sea-weed and shells, which lay in the crevices of the cliffs, showed where in times of storm the wild waters were thrown, while lower down amid fragments of rocks, the heavy beams and planks of shipwrecked vessels surged with every motion of the tide.

"You cannot see the cutter now," said the old sailor. "The setting sun leaves a haze over the sea; but in a few minutes more we shall see her."

"I am rather looking for the path-way down this bold cliff," replied I, as I strained my eyes to catch something like a way to descend by.

"Then throw thine eyes in this direction," said the sailor, as he pointed straight down beneath the window of the tower. "Seest thou that chain there?—well follow it a little farther, and thou may'st mark a piece of timber jutting from the rock."

"Yes, I see it plainly."

"Well, the path thou askest for is beneath that spar. It is a good rope of stout hemp, and has carried the weight of many a brave fellow before now."

"The smuggler's rope?"

"The same—art afraid to venture, now thou seest the place?"

"You'll not find me so, friend; I have seen danger as close before now, and did not blink it."

"Mark me well, then," said he, laying his hand on my arm. "When thou reachest that rope, thou wilt let thyself cautiously down to a small projecting point of rock; we cannot see it here, but thou wilt soon discern it in the descent. The rope from this goes no further, for that spot is nigh sixty fathom below us. From thence the cliff slopes sharply down about thirty or forty feet—here thou must creep cautiously, for the moss is dry and slippery at this season, 'till thou nearest the edge. Mark me well, now—near the edge thou'lt find a

large stone fast-rooted in the ground, and around that another rope is fastened, by which thou mayest reach the bottom of the precipice. There is but one place of peril in the whole."

"The sloping bank, you mean."

"Yes; that bit will try thy nerve—remember, if thy foot slip, there's nothing to stop thy fall—the cliff is rounded over the edge, and the blue sea beats two hundred feet down below it—and see, look yonder, far away there—seest thou the twinkling, as of a small star, on the water?"

"The cutter will throw up a rocket—will she not?"

"A rocket!" repeated he, contemptuously—"that's some landsman's story thou hast been listening to. A rocket would bring the whole fleet of boats from Treport on her. No, no; they know better than that—the faintest glimmer of a fishing craft is all they'll dare to show; but see how steadily it burns now—we must make the signal seawards."

"Holloa, Joseph, a light there."

A boy's voice answered from the upper part of the tower—the same figure who made the signal towards the shore, and whose presence there I had altogether forgotten; and, in a few minutes, a red glare on the rocks below, showed that the old man's command was obeyed, and the beacon lighted.

"Ah! they see it already," cried he, triumphantly, pointing seawards, "they've extinguished the light now, but will show it again, from time to time."

"But tell me, friend, how happens it that the marines of the guard who line this coast do not perceive these signals?"

"And who tells thee that they do not. They may be looking, as we are now, at that same craft, and watching her as she beats in shore, but they know better than to betray us. Ay, *ma foi*, the 'contreband' is better than the government. Enough for them, if they catch some poor English prisoner now and then, and have him shot—that contents the Emperor, as they call him—and he thinks the service all that is brave and vigilant. But as to us—it is our own fault if we fall in with them—it would need the rocket you spoke of a while ago, to shame them into it. There, look again, thou seest how far in shore they've made already—the cutter is stealing fast along the water. Answer the signal, Joseph."

The boy replenished the fire with some dry wood, and it blazed up brilliantly, illuminating the gray cliffs, and dark rocks, on which the night was fast falling—but leaving all beyond its immediate sphere in deepest blackness.

"I see not, friend, by what means I am to discover this sloping cliff, much less, guide my way along it," said I, as I gazed over the precipice, and tried to penetrate the gloomy abyss below me.

"Thou'lt have the moon at full, in less than two hours, and if thou'lt take a friend's counsel, thou'lt have a sleep ere that time—lay thee down yonder on those rushes, I'll awake thee, when the time comes for it."

The rather, that I resolved to obey my old guide in his every direction, than from any desire for slumber at such a time, I followed his advice, and threw myself full length in a corner of the tower. In the perfect stillness of the hour, the sea alone was heard, surging in slow minute peals through many a deep cavern below, and then, gathering for fresh efforts, it swelled and beat against the stern rocks in passionate fury. Such sounds, heard in the silence of the night, are of the saddest—nor was their influence lightened by the low, monotonous chant of the old sailor, who, seated in a corner, began to repair a fishing-net, as he sung to himself some ditty of the sea.

How strangely came the thought to my mind, that all the peril I once incurred to reach France, the hoped-for, wished-for land, I should again brave, to escape from its shores. Every dream of boyish ambition dissipated—every high hope flown—I was returning to my country as poor and humble as I left it, but with a heart shorn of all the enthusiasm that gave life its colouring. In what way I could shape my future career, I was not able even to guess—a vague leaning to some of England's distant colonies, some new world beyond the seas, being all my imagination could frame of my destiny. A sudden flash of light illuminating the whole interior of the tower, startled me from my musings, while the sailor called out—"Come, wake up, friend, the cutter is standing in close, and a signal to make haste flying from her mast."

I sprang to my legs, and looked out, the sea was all freckled with the moonlight, and the little craft shone like silver, as the bright beams glanced on her white sails. The tall cliffs alone preserved their gloom, and threw a dark and frowning shadow over the waves beneath them.

"I can see nothing close to shore," said I, pointing to the dark rocks beneath the window.

"Thou'lt have the moon, presently, she's rising above the crest of the hill, and then the cliffs are clear as at noonday. So, make haste; strap on that knapsack on your shoulder, high up, mind—and give thine arms full play. That's it, now fasten thy shoes over all. Thou wert not about to wear them, surely," said he, in a tone almost derisive. "Take care, in keeping from the face of the rock, not to sway the rope, it wears the cordage—and above all, mind well, when thou reach the cliff below. Let not thy hold go, before thou hast well felt thy footing. See, the moon is up already."

As he spoke, a vast sheet of yellow light seemed to creep over the whole face of the precipice, displaying every crag and projection, and making every spot of verdure or rock brilliant in colour; while, many a fathom down below, the heavy waves were seen, now rising in all their majestic swell, now pouring back in their thousand cataracts from every fissure in the precipice. So terribly distinct did each object show, so dreadfully was each distance marked, I felt that all its former gloom and darkness were not one-half so thrilling as that moonlight splendour.

"*La bonne Marie* guard thee now!" said the old seaman, as he

wrung my hand in his strong fingers. "Be steady, and cool of head, and there is no danger; and look not downwards, till thou hast got accustomed to the cliff."

As he said this, he opened a small door at the foot of the tower stair, and, passing through himself, desired me to follow. I did so, and now found myself on a narrow ledge of rock, directly over the crag; below, at about ten feet, lay the chain, to which the rope was attached, and to reach it was not the least perilous part of the undertaking; but in this I was assisted by the old man, who, passing a rope through a massive iron staple, gradually lowered me, till my hand came opposite the chain.

"Thou hast it now," cried he, as he saw me disengage one hand and grasp the iron links firmly.

"Yes—all safe! Good by, friend—good by."

"Wait yet," cried he again. "Let not go the cord before thou thinkest a minute or so. I have known more than one change his mind when he felt himself where thou art."

"Mine is made up. Farewell!"

"Stay, stay!" shouted he rapidly. "See, thou hast forgotten this purse on the rock here. Wait, and I will lower it with a cord."

By this time I had grasped the chain firmly with both hands, and with the resolve of one who felt life depend on his own firmness, I began the descent. The old man's voice, as he muttered a prayer for my safety, grew fainter and fainter, till at length it ceased to reach my ears altogether. Then for the first time did my heart sink within me. The words of one human being, faint and broken by distance, suggested a sense of sympathy, which nerved my courage and braced my arm; but the dreary silence that followed, only broken by the booming of the sea below, was awful beyond measure.

Hand below hand I went, the space seeming never to lessen, as I strained my eyes to catch the cliff where the first rope ended. Time, as in some fearful dream, seemed protracted to years long; and I already anticipated the moment when, my strength failing, my hands would relinquish their hold, and I should be dashed upon the dark rocks below. The very sea-birds which I startled in my descent, wheeled round my head, piercing the air with their shrill cries, and as if impatient for a prey. Above my head, the frowning cliff beetled darkly; below, a depth unfathomable seemed to stretch, from whose black abyss arose the wild sounds of beating waves. More than once, too, I thought that the rope had given way above, and that I was actually falling through the air, and held my breath in horror; then, again, the idea flashed upon me that death inevitable awaited me, and I fancied in the singing billows I could hear the wild shouts of demons rejoicing over my doom. Through all these maddening visions, the instinct to preserve my life held its strong sway, and I clutched the knotted rope with the eager grasp of a drowning man, when suddenly I felt my foot strike a rock beneath, and then discovered I was on the cliff of which the sailor had told me.

In a few seconds the sense of security imparted a thrill of pleasure to my heart, and I uttered a prayer of thankfulness for my safety; but the fearful conviction of greater danger as suddenly succeeded. The rope I had so long trusted terminated here: the end hung listlessly on the rock; and from thence to the brow of the cliff nothing remained to afford a grip, save the short moss and the dried ferns, withered with the sun. The surface of this frightful ledge sloped rapidly towards the edge, where was the rock around which the rope was tied.

Fatigued by my previous exertion, I sat down on that moss-grown cliff, and gazed out upon the sea, along which the cutter came, proudly dashing the spray from her bows, and bending gracefully with every wave. She was standing fearlessly in, for the wind was off the land; and, as she swept along, I could have fancied her directly beneath my ery feet.

Arousing myself from the momentary stupor of my faculties, I began to creep down the cliff; but so slippery had the verdure become by heat, that I could barely sustain myself by grasping the very earth with my fingers. A loud "Holloa!" was shouted from the craft, and arose in many an echo around me. I tried to reply, but could not. A second cheer saluted me, but I did not endeavour to answer it. The moment was full of peril: I had come to the last spot which offered a hold, and below me, at some feet, lay the rock, hanging, as it were, over the precipice. It seemed to me as though a sea-bird's weight might have sent it thundering into the depth beneath. The moon was on it, and I could see the rope coiled twice around it, and knotted carefully. What would I have given in that terrible minute for one tuft of grass, one slender bough, even enough to have sustained my weight for a second or two, until I should grasp the cord! But none was there. A louder cry from the cutter now rang in my ears, and the dreadful thought of destruction now flashed on me. I fixed my eyes on the rock to measure the place, and then, turning with my face towards the cliff, I suffered myself to slip downwards. At first I went slowly, then faster and faster. At last my legs passed over the brow of the precipice. I was falling! My head reeled I uttered a cry, and, in an agony of despair, threw out my hands. They caught the rope. Knot after knot slipped past my fingers in the descent ere my senses became sufficiently clear to know what was occurring; but even then, the instinct of self-preservation was stronger than reason, for I afterwards learned from the boat's crew with what skill I guided myself along the face of the cliff, avoiding every difficulty of the jagged rocks, and tracking my way like the most experienced climber.

I stood upon a broad flat rock, over which white sheets of foam were dashing. O, how I loved to see them curling on my feet! I could have kissed the bright water, on which the moon-beams sported, for the moment of danger was passed. The shadow of a dreadful death had moved from my soul. What cared I now for the boiling surf that toiled and fretted about me! The dangers of the deep were as nothing to that I escaped from, and when the cutter's boat came bounding towards me,

I minded not the oft-repeated warnings of the sailors, but, plunging in, I dashed towards her on a retreating wave, and was dragged on board almost lifeless from my struggles.

The red glare of the signal-fire was blazing from the old tower, as we got under way. I felt my eyes rivetted on it as I lay on the deck of the little vessel, which now stood out to sea in gallant style. It was my last look of France, and so I felt it.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

THE LANDING.

With the crew of the cutter I had little intercourse. They were Jersey men, that hybrid race, neither French nor English, who followed the trade of spies and smugglers, and were true to nothing save their own interests. The skipper, a coarse, ill-featured fellow, in no respect superior to the others, leisurely perused the letter De Beauvais gave me on my departure; then, tearing it slowly, threw the pieces into the fire.

"What, then, is this?" said he, taking up a sealed packet, which I now for the first time perceived was fastened to my knapsack. "It seems meant for me. Look at the address—'Jacques Cloquette,' on board the 'Rouge Galant;'" and, so saying, he broke the seal, and bent over the contents.

"Oh!" cried he, in a voice of triumphant delight, "this is a prize worth having—the English signal-book;" and he held up the little volume which Paul Dupont had rescued from the 'Fawn.'

"How came it here?" said I, horror-struck at the loss the poor sailor had sustained.

"Old Martin of the 'Star' tells me he stole it from a marine of the Guard, and that it cost him twenty-four flasks of his best Pomard before the fellow and his companions were drunk enough to make the theft practicable."

I remembered at once the eagerness of the landlord for my departure, and the hurried anxiety of his wish that morning might find me miles off on my journey, as well as the care he bestowed on strapping my knapsack, and saw how all had occurred.

"I knew most of them already," continued the skipper, "but here is one will serve our turn well now. The very thing we wanted, for it saves all delay and stoppage. That flag is the signal for admiralty despatches, which are often brought by small craft like ours, when they can't spare cruisers. We'll soon rig it out, you'll see, and run down channel with all our canvas set."

He went aft as he spoke, and in a few seconds the cutter's head was directed straight towards the English coast, while, crowding on more sail, she seemed to fly through the water.

The cheering freshness of the sea-breeze, the sense of danger past, the hope of escape, all combining, raised my spirits and elevated my courage; but through all, I felt grieved beyond measure at the loss of poor Paul Dupont. The prize the honest fellow valued next to life itself, if not above it, taken from him in the very moment of his exultation. Besides, I could not help feeling that suspicion must light on me from my sudden disappearance; and my indignation was deep, to think how such an imputation would tarnish the honour of that service I gloried in so much. How far may such a calumny spread? thought I. How many lips may repeat the tale, and none be able to deny it! Deep as was my regret at the brave Breton's loss, my anger for its consequences was still deeper; and I would willingly have perilled all my hope of reaching England to have been able to restore the book into Paul's own hand.

These feelings did not tend to draw me closer in intimacy with the skipper, whose pleasure at the acquisition was only heightened by the subtlety of its accomplishment, and seemed never so happy as when repeating some fragment of the landlord's letter, and rejoicing at the discomfiture the brave sailor must have experienced on discovering his loss. To witness the gratification a coarse nature feels in some unworthy but successful action, is the heaviest penalty an honourable mind can experience, when, unhappily, its possessor has been in any way accessory to the result. With these reflections I fell off to sleep, and never woke till the bright sun was shining over the white-crested water, and the craft breasting the waves, with a strong breeze upon her canvas.

As we held on down channel, we passed several ships of war beating up for Spithead; but our blue bunting, curiously streaked with white, was a signal which all acknowledged, and none ventured to retard. Thus passed the first day. As night was falling, we beheld the Needles on our lee, and, with a freshening breeze, held on our course.

A second morning broke, and now the sea was covered with the white sails of a magnificent fleet, bound for the West Indies. At least so the skipper pronounced it. It was indeed a glorious sight to see the mighty vessels obeying the signals of the flag-ship, and shaping their course through the blue water, as if instinct with life and reason. They were far seaward of us, however; for now we hugged the land, as the skipper was only desirous of an opportunity to land me unobserved, before he proceeded on his own more immediate enterprize—the smuggling of some hogsheads of brandy on the coasts of Ireland.

Left to my own thoughts, the memories of my past life, I dreamed away the hours unconsciously, and, as the time sped on, I knew not of its flight. Some strange sail, seen from afar off, would for an instant arouse my attention; but it was a mere momentary effect, and I fell back into my musings, as though they had never been interrupted. As I look back upon that voyage now, and think of the dreamy listlessness

in which its hours were passed, I can half fancy that certain periods of our lives are destined to sustain the part which night performs in our daily existence, and by their monotony contribute to that renewal of energy and vigour so essential after times of labour and exertion. It seemed to me as though, the period of exertion past, I was regaining in rest and repose the power for future exertion, and I canvassed every act of the past, to teach me more of my own heart, and to instruct me for my guidance in life after.

"You can land now, whenever you please," said the skipper to me, as by a faint moonlight we moved along the waveless sea, "we can put you ashore at any moment here."

I started with as much surprise as though the thought had never occurred to me, and without replying, I leaned over the bulwark, and gazed at the faint shadows of tall headlands, about three miles distant.

"How do you call that bluff yonder?" said I, carelessly.

"Wicklow Head."

"Wicklow Head! Ireland!" cried I, with a thrill of ecstacy my heart had never felt for many a day before. "Yes, yes; land me there, now, at once," said I, as a thousand thoughts came rushing to my mind—and hopes too vague for utterance, but palpable enough to cherish.

With the speed their calling teaches, the crew lowered the boat, and as I took my place in the stern, pulled vigorously towards the shore. As the swift bark glided along on the shallow sea, I could scarce restrain my impatience, from springing out, and rushing on land. Without family, or friend—without one to welcome, or meet me. Still it was home—the only home I ever had.

The sharp keel grated on the beach, its sound vibrated within my heart—I jumped on shore—a few words of parting, and the men backed their oars—the boat slipped fast through the water. The cutter, too, got speedily under weigh again, and I was alone. Then the full torrent of my feelings found their channel, and I burst into tears. Oh! they were not tears of sorrow—neither were they the outpourings of excessive joy—they were the utterance of a heart loaded with its own unrelieved griefs, which now found sympathy on touching the very soil of home. I felt I was no longer friendless. Ireland, my own dear native country, would be to me a place of kindred and family—and I fell upon my knees, and blessed it.

Following a little path, which led slantingly up the cliff, I reached the top as day was beginning to break, and gained a view of the country. The range of swelling hills, dotted with cottages, and waving with wood—the fields of that emerald green, one sees not in other lands—the hedge-rows, bounding the little farms—all so unlike the spreading plains of France, struck me with delight—and it was with a rapture of happiness I called the land my country.

Directing my steps towards Dublin, I set out at a good pace, but following a path which led near the cliffs, in preference to the high road—for I was well aware, that my appearance and dress would expose me to curiosity, and perhaps subject me to more serious annoy-

ance. My first object was to learn some news of my brother—for, although the ties of affection had been long since severed between us, those of blood still remained—and I wished to hear of—and it might be—to see him once more. For some miles, I had kept my eyes directed towards a little cabin, which crowned a cliff that hung over the sea, and this I reached, at last, somewhat wearied and hungry.

As I followed a little foot-path which conducted to the door, a fierce terrier rushed out, as if to attack me, but was immediately restrained by the voice of a man within, calling, "Down, Vicksey—down, you baste"—and the same moment, a stout middle-aged man appeared at the door.

"Don't be afeard, sir, she's not wicked—but we're unused to strangers down here."

"I should think so, friend, from my path," said I, throwing a glance at the narrow footway I had followed for some miles, over hill and precipice—"but I am unacquainted with the country, and was looking out for some house where I might obtain a breakfast."

[illegible] a [illegible] about three miles down yonder, and a fine inn, [illegible], sir," replied he, as he scrutinized my appearance with a shrewd eye—"but if I might make so bould, maybe, you'd as lief not go there—and, perhaps you'd take share of what we have here?"

"Willingly," said I, accepting the hospitable offer, as freely as it was made, and entering the cabin at once.

A good-featured countrywoman, and some young children, were seated at a table, where a large dish of potatoes, and some fresh fish were smoking—a huge jug of milk occupying the middle of the board. The woman blushed, as she heard that her husband had invited a gentleman to partake of his humble meal—but the honest fellow cared little for the simple fare he offered with so good a grace, and placed my chair beside his own, with the air of one who was more anxious for his guest's comfort, than caring what impression he himself might make upon him.

After some passing words about the season, and the state of the tides—for my host was a fisherman—I turned the conversation on the political condition of the country, avowing frankly that I had been for some years absent, and was ignorant of what had occurred meantime.

"'Twas that same I was thinking, sir," said he, replying to the first, and not the latter part of my remark. "When I saw your honour's face, and the beard you wore, I said to myself, you wor a Frenchman."

"You mistook there, then—I am your countryman—but have passed a good many years in France."

"Fighting for Boney," said he, as his eyes opened wide with surprise to behold one actually before him, who might have served under Napoleon.

"Yes, my good friend—even so—I was in the army of the Emperor."

"Tare an ages! then, are they coming over here now?" cried he, almost gasping in his eagerness.

"No, no," replied I, gravely; "and be thankful, too, for it, for your own and your children's sakes, that you see not a war raging in the fields and cities of your native land. Be assured, whatever wrongs you suffer—I will not dispute their existence—for, as I have told you, I am ignorant of the condition of the country—but whatever they may be, you can pay too dearly for their remedy."

"But sure they'd be on our side—wouldn't they?"

"Of course they would; but think you that they'd fight your battles without their price? Do you believe that Frenchmen so love you here, that they would come to shed their blood in your cause, without their own prospect of advantage?"

"They hate the English, I'm tould, as bad as we do ourselves."

"They do so, and with more of justice for their hate; but that dislike might suffice to cause a war—it never would reward it. No, no. I know something of the spirit of French conquest—I glory in the bravery and the heroism that accomplish it; but I never wish to see my own country at the mercy of France. Whose soldier would you become, if the Emperor Napoleon landed here to-morrow? His. Whose uniform would you wear—whose musket carry—whose pay receive—whose orders obey? His, and his only. And how long, think you, would your services be limited to home? What should prevent your being sent away to Egypt, to Poland, or to Russia? How much favour would an Irish deserter receive from a French court-martial, think you? No, good friend, while you have this warm roof to shelter you, and that broad sea is open for your industry and toil, never wish for foreign aid to assist you."

I saw that the poor fellow was discouraged by my words, and gradually led him to speak of those evils for whose alleviation he looked to France. To my surprise, however, he descanted less on political grievances than those which affect the well-being of the country socially. It was not the restriction on liberty of which he complained, but of poverty. It was not the severity of a government, but the absence of encouragement to industry—the neglect of the poor—which afflicted him. England was no longer the tyrant. The landlord had taken her place: still, with the pertinacity of ignorance, he visited all the wrongs on that land, from which originally his first misfortunes came, and with perverse ingenuity would endeavour to trace out every hardship he suffered as arising from the ill-will and hatred the Saxon bore him. It was easy to perceive that the arguments he used were not of his own devising; they had been supplied by others, in whose opinion he had confidence; and though valueless and weak in reality, to him they were all-convincing and unanswerable—not the less, perhaps, that they offered that value to self-love which comes from attributing any evils we endure to causes outside and independent of ourselves. These, confronted with extravagant hopes of what would ensue, should national independence be established, formed his code; and however refuted on each point, a certain conviction, too deeply laid to be disturbed by any opposing force, remained; and in his "Well, well, God knows best, and maybe we'll have better luck yet,"

you could perceive that he was inaccessible to any appeal, except from the quarter which ministered to his discontent and disaffection.

One thing was clear to me, from all he said, that if the spirit of open resistance no longer existed towards England, it was replaced by as determined and as rancorous hatred—a brooding, ill-omened dislike had succeeded, to the full as hostile, and far less easily subdued. How it would end—whether in the long-lingering fear, which wastes the energies and saps the strength of a people, or in the conflict of a civil war—the prospect was equally ruinous.

Sadly pondering on these things, I parted with my humble host, and set out towards the capital. If my conversation with the Irishman had taught me somewhat of the state of feeling then current in Ireland, it also conveyed another and very different lesson: it enabled me to take some account of the change years had effected in my own sentiments. As a boy, high-flown, vague, and unsettled ideas of national liberty and independence had made me look to France as the emancipator of Europe. As a man, I knew that the lust of conquest had extinguished the love of freedom in Frenchmen; that they who trusted to her did but exchange the dominion of their old masters for the tyranny of a new one; while such as boldly stepped forward in defence of their liberties, found that there was neither mercy nor compassion for the conquered.

I had seen the Austrian prisoners and the Russian led captive through the streets of Paris—I had witnessed the great capital of Prussia in its day of mourning after Jena—and all my idolatry for the General scarce balanced my horror of the Emperor, whose vengeance had smitten two nations thus heavily; and I said within my heart—may my countrymen, whatever be their day of need, never seek an alliance with despotic France.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

A CHARACTER OF "OLD DUBLIN."

It was about nine o'clock of a calm summer evening as I entered Dublin: nearly the same hour at which, some ten years before, I had approached that city—poor, houseless, friendless; and still was I the same. In that great capital of my country I had not one to welcome me—not one who would rejoice at my coming, or feel any interest in my fortunes. This indeed was loneliness—utter solitude. Still if there be something which weighs heavily on the heart in the isolation of one like me, there is a proportionate sense of independence of his fellow-man, that sustains the courage, and gives energy to the will. I felt this as I mixed with the crowds that thronged the streets, and shrunk not from the inquisitive glances which my questionable appearance excited as I passed.

Though considerable changes had taken place in the outskirts of the capital since I had seen it last, the leading thoroughfares were just as I remembered them; and as I walked along Dame-street, and one by one each familiar object caught my eye, I could almost have fancied the long interval since I had been there before like a mere dream. National physiognomy, too, has a strange effect on him who has been long absent from his country. Each face you meet seems well-known. The traits of features, to which the eye was once so well accustomed, awake a memory of individuals, and it is sometimes a most difficult task to distinguish between the acquaintance and the passing stranger. This I experienced at every moment; and at length, as I stood gazing on the space before the Bank, and calling to mind the last scene I witnessed there, a tall, strongly-built man brushed close past me, and then turning round, fixed a steady and searching look on me. As I returned his stare, a sudden thought flashed upon me that I had seen the face before, but where, how, and when, I could not call to mind; and thus we stood silently confronting each other for some minutes.

"I see you are a stranger here, sir," said he, touching his hat courteously—"can I be of service to you with any information as to the city?"

"I was curious to know, sir," said I, still more puzzled by the voice than I had even been by the features of the stranger, "if Miley's hotel, which was somewhere in the neighbourhood, exists still."

"It does, sir, but it has changed proprietors several times since you knew it," replied he significantly. "The house is yonder, where you see that large lamp. I perceive, sir, I was mistaken in supposing you a foreigner. I wish you good evening;" and again saluting me, he resumed his way.

As I crossed the street towards the hotel, I remarked that he turned as if to watch me, and became more than ever embarrassed as to who he might be.

The doorway of the hotel was crowded with loungers and idlers of every class, from the loitering man about town, to the ragged news-vender—between whom, whatever disparity of condition existed, a tone of the most free-and-easy conversation prevailed. The newsmen interpolating amid the loud announcements of the latest intelligence, the reply to the observation beside him.

One figure was conspicuous in the group. He was a short, dwarfish creature, with an enormous head, covered with a fell of black hair, falling in masses down his back and on his shoulders. A pair of fierce, fiery black eyes glared beneath his heavy brows; and a large, thick-lipped mouth moved with all the glib eloquence of his class and calling. Fearfully distorded legs and club feet gave to his gait a rolling motion, which added to the singularity of his whole appearance.

Terry Regan was then at the head of his walk in Dublin, and to his capacious lungs and voluble tongue were committed the announcement of those great events which from time to time were given to the Irish public through the columns of the "Correspondent," and the "Dublin Journal."

I soon found myself in the crowd around this celebrated character, who was, as usual, extolling the great value of that night's paper, by certain brief suggestions regarding its contents—

"Here's the whole, full, and true account—bad luck to the less—of the great and sanguinary battle between Boney and the Roosians, with all the particklars about the killed, wounded, and missing, with what Boney said when it was over."

"What was that, Terry?"

"Hould yer peace, ye spalpeen. Is it to the likes of yez I'd be telling cabinet sacrets? Here, yer honour—'Falkner,' is it, or 'The Saunders?' With the report of Mr. O'Gorman's grand speech in Ennis, on the Catholic claims. There's, yer sowl, there's fippence-worth any day av the week. More be token, the letter from Jemmy O'Brien to his wife, wid an elegant epic poem called 'The Guager.' Bloody news, gentlemen, bloody news. Won't yez sport a tester for a sight of a real battle, and ten thousand kilt—with 'The Whole Duty of an Informer, in two easy lessons.' The price of stocks and shares—ay, Mr. O'Hara, and what boroughs is bringing in the market."

This last sally was directed towards a large red-faced man, who good-humouredly joined in the laugh against himself.

"And who's this, boys?" cried the fellow, turning suddenly his piercing eyes on me, as I endeavoured, step by step, to reach the door of the hotel. "Hurroo! Look at his beard, acushla. On my conscience I wouldn't wonder if it was General Hoche himself. 'Tis late yer come, sir," said he, addressing me directly, "there's no fun here now at all, barrin' what Beresford has in the riding-house."

"Get away, you ruffian," said a well-dressed and respectable-looking

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man, somewhat past the middle of life. "How dare you permit your tongue to take liberties with a stranger? Allow me to make room for you, sir," continued he, as he politely made an opening in the crowd, and suffered me to enter the house.

"Ah, counsellor dear, don't be cross," whined out the newsvender. "Sure isn't it wid the bad tongue we both make our bread. And here," vociferated he once more—"and here ye have the grand dinner at the Lord Mayor's, wid all the speeches and toasts—wid the glorious, pious, and immortial memory of King William, who delivered us from popery—(by pitched caps)—from slavery—(by whipping)—from brass money—(by bad ha'pence)—and from wooden shoes—(by bare feet). Haven't we reason to bless his ——? Ay, the heavens be his bed! 'Tis like Molly Crownahon's husband he was."

"How was that, Terry?" asked a gentleman near.

"Take a 'Saunders,' yer honour, and I'll tell you."

"Here, then, here's fippence; and now for the explanation."

"Molly Crownahon, yer honour, was, like us poor craytures, always grateful and contented wid the Lord's goodness to us, even in taking away our chief comfort and blessing—the darling up there on the horse! —Ah, 'tis an elegant sate ye have, without stirrups!—And she went one day to say a handful of prayers over his grave—the husband's, ye mind—and sure if she did, when she knelt down on the grass, she sprung up again as quick as she went down, for the nettles was all over the place entirely. 'Bad scran to ye, Peter,' says she, as she rubbed her legs—'Bad scran to ye—living or dead, there was always a sting in ye.'"

As the latter part of this speech was addressed in a tone of apostrophe to the statue of King William, it was received by the assembled crowd with a roar of laughter.

By this time I had entered the house, and only bethought me how little suited was the great hotel of the city to pretensions as humble as mine. It was now, however, too late to retreat, and I entered the coffee-room, carrying my knapsack in my hand. As I passed up the room in search of a vacant table, the looks of astonishment my appearance excited on each side were most palpable evidences that the company considered me an interloper; while some contented themselves with a stare of steady surprise, others, less guarded in their impertinence, whispered with and even winked at their neighbours to attract attention towards me.

Offensive as this unquestionably was, it amazed even more than it annoyed me. In France such a display of feeling would have been impossible—and the humblest soldier of the army would not have been so received, had he deemed fit to enter Beauvillier's or Very's.

Whether hurt at this conduct, and consequently more alive to affront from any quarter, or that the waiters participated in the sentiments of their betters, I cannot exactly say; but I certainly thought their manner even less unequivocally betrayed the same desire of impertinence. This was not long a mere suspicion on my part, for on inquiring whether I could have a room for the night, the waiter,

touching my knapsack, which lay on the ground beside me, with his foot, replied—

"Is this your luggage, sir?"

Amazement so completely mastered my indignation at this insolence, that I could make no answer, but by a look. This had its effect, however; and the fellow, without further delay, bustled off to make the inquiry.

He returned in a few minutes with a civil message, that I could be accommodated, and having placed before me the simple meal I ordered, retired. As I sat over my supper, I could not help feeling that, unless memory played me false, the company were little like the former frequenters of this house. I remembered it of old, when Bubbleton and his brother-officers came there, and when the rooms were thronged with members of both houses of parliament—when peers and gentlemen of the first families were grouped about the windows and the fire-places, and the highest names of the land were heard in the din of recognition—handsome equipages and led horses stood before the doors; but now, the ragged mob without was scarce a less worthy successor to the brilliant display than were the company within to the former visitants. A tone of pretentious impertinence, an air of swagger and mock defiance, the most opposite to the polished urbanity which once prevailed, was now conspicuous; and in their loud speech and violent gesticulation, it was easy to mark how they had degenerated from that high standard which made the Irish gentleman of his day the most polished man of Europe.

If, in appearance and manner, they fell far short of those my memory recalled, their conversation more markedly still displayed the long interval between them.

Here of old were retailed the latest news of the debate—the last brilliant thing of Grattan, or the last biting retort of Flood—here came hot from debate the great champions of either party, to relax and recruit for fresh efforts, and in the groups that gathered around them, you might learn, how great genius can diffuse its influence and scatter intelligence around it, as the Nile waters spread plenty and abundance wherever they flow. High and noble sentiments, holy aspirations and eloquent thoughts, made an atmosphere, to breathe which, was to feel an altered nature. But now, a vapid mixture of conceit and slang had usurped the place of these, and a tone of vulgar self-sufficiency, unhappily too much in keeping with the externals of those who displayed it: the miserable contentions of different factions had replaced the bolder strife of opposite parties, and provincialism had put its stamp on every thing. The nation, too, if I might trust my ears with what fell around me, had lost all memory of its once great names, and new candidates for popular favour figured in their places.

Such were some of the changes I could mark, even as I sat. But my attention was speedily drawn from them by a circumstance more nearly concerning myself. This was the appearance in the coffee-room of the gentleman who first addressed me in the street.

As he passed round the room, followed by a person whose inferiority

was evident, he was recognized by most of those present, many of whom shook him warmly by the hand, and pressed him to join their parties; but this he declined, as he continued to walk slowly on, scrutinizing each face as he went. At last I saw his eyes turn towards me. It was scarcely a glance, so rapid was it, and so quickly were his looks directed to a different quarter; but I could mark that he whispered something to the person who followed, and then, after carelessly turning over a newspaper on the table, sauntered from the room. As he did so, the shough head of the dwarf newsvender peeped in, and the great black eyes took a survey of the coffee-room, till finally they settled on me.

"Ah!" cried the fellow, with a strange blending of irony and compassion in his voice, "be gorra, I knew how it would be—the Major has ye." At this a general laugh broke out from all present, and every eye was fixed on me. Meanwhile, the follower had taken his place nearly opposite me at the table, and was busily engaged examining a paper which he had taken from his pocket.

"May I ask, sir, if your name be Burke?" said he, in a low voice, across the table.

I started with amazement to hear my name pronounced where I believed myself so completely a stranger—and, in my astonishment, forgot to answer.

"I was asking, sir——" repeated he.

"Yes, you are quite correct," interrupted I, "that is my name. May I beg to know, in return, for what purpose you make the inquiry?"

"Thomas Burke, sir?" continued he, inattentive to my observation, and apparently about to write the name on the paper before him.

I nodded, and he wrote down the words.

"That saves a deal of trouble to all of us, sir," said he, as he finished writing. "This is a warrant for your arrest, but the Major is quite satisfied, if you can give bail for your appearance."

"Arrest!" repeated I, "on what charge am I arrested?"

"You'll hear in the morning, I suppose," said he, quietly. "What shall we say about the bail—have you any acquaintance, or friend, in town?"

"Neither—I am a perfect stranger here—but if you are authorised to arrest me, I here surrender myself at once." By this time, several persons of the coffee-room had approached the table—and, among the rest, the gentleman who so politely made way for me in the crowd, to reach the door.

"What is it, Roche?" said he, addressing the man at the table—"a warrant?"

"Yes, sir; for this gentleman here—but we can take bail, if he has it."

"I have told you, already, that I am a stranger—and know no one here."

The gentleman threw his eyes over the warrant—and then looking

me steadily in the face—muttered, in a whisper, to the officer—"Why he must have been a boy—a mere child, at the time."

"Very true, sir. But the Major says it must be done. Maybe you'd bail him yourself." These words were added in a tone of half irony—as the fellow gave a sly look beneath his eyelashes.

"I tell you, again," said I, impatient at the whole scene, "I am quite ready to accompany you."

"Is this your name, sir?" said the strange gentleman, addressing me, as he pointed to the warrant.

"Yes," interposed the officer, "there's no doubt about that—he gave it himself."

"Come, come, then, Roche," said he, cajolingly, "these are not times for undue strictness. Let the gentleman remain where he is to-night, and to-morrow he will attend you. You can remain here, if you like with him."

"If you say so, I suppose we may do it," replied the officer, as he folded up the paper, and arose from the table.

"Yes, yes—that's the proper course; and now," said he, addressing me, "will you permit me to join you, while I finish this bottle of claret?"

I could have no objection to so pleasant a proposal—and thus, for the time at least, ended this disagreeable affair.

CHAPTER LXXX.

AN UNFORESEEN EVIL.

"I PERCEIVE, sir," said the stranger, seating himself at my table, "they are desirous to restore an antiquated custom in regard to you. I thought the day of indemnities was past and gone for ever."

"I am ignorant to what you allude."

"The authorities would make you out an emissary of France, sir, as if France had not enough on her hands already, without embroiling herself in a quarrel from which no benefit could accrue—not to speak of the little likelihood that any one on such an errand would take up his abode, as you have, in the most public hotel of Dublin."

"I have no apprehensions as to any charges they may bring against me. I am conscious of no crime, saving having left my country a boy, and returned to it a man."

"You were in the service of France, then?"

"Yes, since 1801 I have been a soldier."

"So long? You must have been but a mere boy when you quitted Ireland. How have they connected you with the troubles of that period?"

I hesitated for a second or two, uncertain what answer, if any, I should return to this abrupt question. A glance at the manly and frank expression of the stranger's face soon satisfied me that no unworthy curiosity had prompted the inquiry, and I told him in few words, how, as a child, the opinions of the patriotic party had won me over to embark in a cause I could neither fathom nor understand. I traced out rapidly the few leading events of my early career down to the last evening I spent in Ireland. When I came to this part of my story, the stranger became unusually attentive, and more than once questioned me respecting the origin of my quarrel with Crofts, and the timely appearance of Darby, of whose name and character, however, I gave him no information, merely speaking of him as an old and attached follower of my family.

"Since that period, then, you have not been in Ireland," said he, as I concluded.

"Never: nor had I any intention of returning until lately, when circumstances induced me to leave the Emperor's service; and from very uncertainty I came back here, without well knowing why."

"Of course, then, you have never heard the catastrophe of your adventure with Crofts. It was a lucky hit for him."

"How so? I don't understand you."

"Simply this:—Crofts was discovered in the morning, severely wounded, where you left him, his account being, that he had been way-

laid by a party of rebels, who had obtained the countersign of the night, and passed the sentry in various disguises. You yourself—for so, at least, I surmise it must have been—were designated the prime mover of the scheme, and a government reward was offered for your apprehension. Crofts was knighted, and appointed to the staff—the reward of his loyalty and courage—of the exact details of which my memory is, unfortunately, little tenacious."

"And the truth of the occurrence was never known?"

"What I have told you is the only version current. I have reason to remember so much of it, for I was then, and am still, one of the legal advisers of the crown, and was consulted on the case, of which, I confess, I always had my misgivings. There was a rage, however, for rewarding loyalty, as it was termed, at the period, and the story went the round of the papers. Now, I fancy Crofts would just as soon not see you back again. He has made all he can of the adventure, and would as lieve have it quietly forgotten."

"But can I suffer it to rest here? Is such an imputation to lie on my character as he would cast on me?"

"Take no steps in the matter on that score: vindication is time enough when the attack is made directly: besides, where should you find your witness—where is the third party, who could prove your innocence, and that all you did was in self-defence?—without his testimony, your story would go for nothing. No, no. Be well satisfied if the charge is suffered to sleep, which is not unlikely. Crofts would scarcely like to confess that his antagonist was little more than a child; his prowess would gain nothing by the avowal; besides, the world goes well with him latterly: it is but a month ago, I think, he succeeded, unexpectedly, to a large landed property."

The stranger, whose name was M'Dougall, continued to talk for some time longer, most kindly volunteered to advise me in the difficult position I found myself, and having given me his address in town, wished me a good night and departed.

It was to no purpose I laid my head on my pillow; tired and fatigued as I was, I could not sleep; the prospect of fresh troubles awaiting me made me restless and feverish, and I longed for day to break, that I might manfully confront whatever danger was before me, and oppose a stout heart to the arrows of adverse fortune. My accidental meeting with the stranger also re-assured my courage, and I felt gratified to think that such rencontres in life are the sunny spots which illumine our career in the world—the harbingers of bright days to come.

This feeling was still more strongly impressed on me, as I entered the small room on the ground-floor at the Castle, where was the secretary's office, and beheld M'Dougall seated in an arm-chair, reading the newspaper of the day. I could not help connecting his presence there with some kindly intention towards me, and already regarded him as my friend. Major Barton stood at the secretary's side, and whispered from time to time in his ear.

"I have before me certain information, sir," said the secretary, ad-

dressing me, "that you were connected with parties who took an active part in the late rebellion in this country, and by them sent over to France, to negociate co-operation and assistance from that quarter"—Barton here whispered something, and the secretary resumed—"and in continuance of this scheme are at present here."

"I have only to observe, sir, that I left Ireland a mere boy, when, whatever my opinions might have been, they were, I suspect, of small moment to his Majesty's government; that I have served some years in the French army, during which period I neither corresponded with any one here, nor had intercourse with any from Ireland; and lastly, that I have come back unaccredited by any party, nor having, as I believe, a single acquaintance in the island."

"Do you still hold a commission in the French service?"

"No, sir. I resigned my grade as captain some time since."

"What were your reasons for that step?"

"They were of a purely personal nature, having no concern with politics of any sort. I should, therefore, ask of you not to demand them. I can only say, they reflect neither on my honour nor my loyalty."

"His loyalty! Would you ask him, sir, how he applies the term, and to what sovereign and what government the obedience is rendered?" said Barton, with a half smile of malicious meaning.

"Very true, Barton—the question is most pertinent."

"When I said loyalty, sir," said I, in answer, "I confess I did not express myself as clearly as I intended. I meant, however, that, an Irishman and a subject of his majesty, George III., as I now am, no act of mine in the French service ever compromised me."

"Why, surely you fought against the allies of your own country."

"True, sir. I speak only with reference to the direct interests of England. I was a soldier of the Emperor, but never a spy under his government."

"Your name is amongst those who never claimed the indemnity. How is this?"

"I never heard of it. I never knew such an act was necessary. I am not guilty of any crime, nor do I see any reason to seek a favour."

"Well, well; the gracious intentions of the crown lead us to look leniently on the past. A moderate bail for your appearance when called on, and your own recognizances for the same object, will suffice."

"I am quite willing to do the latter; but as to bail, I repeat it, I have not one I could ask for such a service."

"No relative?—no friend?"

"Come, come, young gentleman," said M'Dougall, speaking for the first time, "recollect yourself. Try if you can't remember some one who would assist you at this conjuncture."

Basset was the only name I could think of, and however absurd the idea of a service from such a quarter, I deemed that, as my brother's agent, he would scarce refuse me. I thought that Barton gave a very

peculiar grin as I mentioned the name; but my own securities being entered into, and a few formal questions answered, I was told I was at liberty to seek out the bail required.

Once more in the streets, I turned my steps towards Basset's house, where I hoped at all events to learn some tidings of my brother. I was not long in arriving at the street, and speedily recognised the old house, whose cobwebbed windows and unwashed look reminded me of former times. The very sound of the heavy iron knocker awoke its train of recollections; and when the door was opened, and I saw the narrow hall, with its cracked lamp and damp discoloured walls, the old heart-sinking with which they once inspired me came back again, and I thought of Tony Basset, when his very name was a thing of terror to me.

Mr. Basset, I was told, was at court, and I was shown into the office to await his return. The gloomy little den, I knew it well, with its dirty shelves of dirtier papers, its old tin boxes, and its ricketty desk, at which two meanly-dressed starveling youths were busy writing. They turned a rapid glance towards me as I entered; and as they resumed their occupation, I could hear a muttered remark upon my dress and appearance, the purport of which I did not catch.

I sat for some time patiently, expecting Basset's arrival; but as the time stole by, I grew wearied with waiting, and determined on ascertaining, if I might, from the clerks, some intelligence concerning my brother.

"Have you any business with Mr. Burke?" said the youth I addressed, while his features assumed an expression of vulgar jocularity.

"Yes," was my brief reply.

"Wouldn't a letter do as well as a personal interview?" said the other, with an air of affected courtesy.

"Perhaps so," I replied, too deeply engaged in my own thoughts to mind their flippant impertinence.

"Then mind you direct your letter 'Church-yard, Loughrea;' or, if you want to be particular, say, 'Family vault.'"

"Is he dead?—is George dead?"

"That's hard to say," interposed the other, "but they've buried him that's certain."

Like a stunning blow, the shock of this news left me unable to speak or hear. A maze of confused thoughts crossed and jostled each other in my brain, and I could neither collect myself, nor listen to what was said around me. My first clear memory was of a thousand little childish traits of love which had once passed between us. Tokens of affection long forgotten now rushed freshly to my mind; and he whom, a moment before, I had condemned as wanting in all brotherly feeling, I now sorrowed for with true grief. The low and vulgar insolence of the speakers made no impression on me; and when, in answer to my questions, they narrated the manner of his death—a fever contracted after some debauch at Oxford—I only heard the tidings, but did not notice the unfeeling tone it was conveyed in. My brother dead!—the only one of kith or kindred belonging to me. How slight the tie seemed

but a few moments back! What would I not give for it now! Then, for the first time, did I know how the heart can heap up its stores of consolation in secrecy; and how unconsciously the mind can dwell on hopes it has never confessed even to itself! How I fancied to myself our meeting, and thought over the long pent-up affection years of absence had accumulated, now flowing in a gushing stream from heart to heart! The grave is indeed hallowed when the grass of the church-yard can cover all memory, save that of love. We dwell on every good gift of the lost one, as though no unworthy thought could cross that little mound of earth—the barrier between two worlds! Sad and sorrow-struck, I covered my face with my hands, and did not notice that Mr. Basset had entered, and taken his place at the desk.

His voice, every harsh tone of which I well remembered, first made me aware of his presence. I lifted my eyes, and there he stood, little changed, indeed, since I had seen him last. The hard lines about the mouth had grown deeper, the brow more furrowed, and the hair more mixed with gray, but in other respects he was the same. As I gazed at him, I could not help fancying that time makes less impression on men of coarse, unfeeling mould, than on natures of a finer temper. The world's changes leave no trace on the stern surface of the one, while they are wearing deep tracts of sorrow in the other.

"Insert the advertisement again, Simms," said he, addressing one of the clerks, "and let it appear in some paper of the seaport towns. Among the Flemish or French smugglers who frequent them, there might be some one to give the information. They must be able to show that though Thomas Burke——"

I started at the sound of my name. The motion surprised him—he looked round and perceived me. Quick and piercing as his glance was, I could not trace any sign of recognition, although, as he scanned my features, and suffered his eyes to wander over my dress, I perceived that his was no mere chance or cursory observation.

"Well, sir," said he, at length, "is your business here with me?"

"Yes; but I would speak with you in private."

"Come in here, then. Meanwhile, Sam, make out that deed—for we may go on without the proof of demise."

Few and vague as the words were, their real meaning flashed on me, and I perceived that Mr. Basset was engaged in the search of some evidence of my death, doubtless, to enable the heir-at-law to succeed to the estates of my brother. The moment the idea struck me, I felt assured of its certainty, and at once determined on the plan I should adopt.

"You have inserted an advertisement regarding a Mr. Burke," said I, as soon as the door was closed, and we were alone together, "what are the particular circumstances of which you desire proof?"

"The place, date, and manner of his death," replied he, slowly—"for, though informed that such occurred abroad, an authentic evidence of the fact will save some trouble. Circumstances to identify the individual with the person we mean, of course, must be offered—showing whence he came, his probable age, and so on. For this intel-

ligence I am prepared to pay liberally—at least, a hundred pounds may be thought so."

"It is a question of succession to some property, I have heard."

"Yes; but the information is not of such moment as you may suppose," replied he quickly—and, with the wariness of his calling, anticipating the value I might be disposed to place on my intelligence—"we are satisfied with the fact of the death; and even, were it otherwise, the individual most concerned is little likely to disprove the belief—his own reasons will, probably, keep him from visiting Ireland."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, the word escaping my lips ere I could check its utterance.

"Even so," resumed he; "but this, of course, has no interest for you. Your accent bespeaks you a foreigner—have you any information to offer on this matter?"

"Yes; if we speak of the same individual who may have left this country about 1800, as a boy of some fourteen years of age, and entered the *Ecole Polytechnique* of Paris."

"Like enough. Continue, if you please—what became of him afterwards?"

"He joined the French service, attained the rank of captain, and then left the army—came back to Ireland—and now, sir, stands before you."

Mr. Basset never changed a muscle of his face as I made this declaration. So unmoved, so stolid was his look, that, for a moment or two, I believed him incredulous of my story; but this impression soon gave way, as with his eyes bent on me, he said,

"I knew you, sir, I knew you, the moment I passed you in the office without—but it might have fared ill with you to have let my recognition appear."

"As how—I do not understand you."

"My clerks there might have given information for sake of the reward—and once in Newgate, there was an end of all negociation."

"You must speak more intelligibly, sir, if you wish me to comprehend you. I am unaware of any circumstance which should threaten me with such a fate."

"Have you forgotten Captain Crofts, Montague Crofts?" said Basset, in a low whisper, while a smile of insulting malice crossed his features.

"No; I remember him well—what of him?"

"What of him! He charges you with a capital felony—a crime for which the laws have little pity here—whatever your French habits may have taught you to regard it. Yes—the attempt to assassinate an officer in his Majesty's service, when foiled by him in an effort to seduce the soldiery, is an offence which might have a place in your memory."

"Can the man be base enough to make such a charge as this against me—a boy, as I then was?"

"You were not alone—remember that fact."

"True; and most thankful am I for it. There is one, at least, can prove my innocence, if I can but discover him."

"You will find that a matter of some difficulty. Your worthy friend, and early preceptor, was transported five years since."

"Poor fellow—I could better bear to hear that he was dead."

"There were many of your opinion on that head," said Basset, with a savage grin; "but the fellow was too cunning for all the lawyers—and his conviction, at last, was only effected by a stratagem."

"A stratagem!" exclaimed I, in amazement.

"It was neither more nor less. Darby was arraigned four several times, but always acquitted. Now, it was defective evidence—now, a lenient jury—now, an informal indictment—but so was it, he escaped the meshes of the law, though every one knew him guilty of a hundred offences. At last, Major Barton resolved on another expedient. Darby was arrested in Ennis—thrown into jail—kept four weeks in a dark cell, on prison fare—and at the end, one morning, the hangman appeared to say his hour was come, and that the warrant for his execution had arrived. It was to take place, without judge or jury, within the four walls of the jail. The scheme succeeded—his courage fell—and he offered, if his life were spared, to plead guilty to any transportable felony, for which the grand jury would send up true bills. He did so, and was then undergoing the sentence."

"Great heavens! and can such iniquity be tolerated in a land where men call themselves Christians?" exclaimed I, as I heard this to the end.

"Iniquity," repeated he, in mockery, "to rid the country of a ruffian, stained with every crime—a fellow mixed up in every outrage of the land. Is this your notion of iniquity? Not so do I reckon it; and if I have told you of it now, it is that you may learn, that when loyal and well-affected men are trusted with the execution of the laws, the principle of justice is of more moment, than the nice distinction of legal subtleties. You may learn a lesson from it worth acquiring."

"I! how can it affect me or my fortunes?"

"More nearly than you think. I have told you of the accusation which hangs over your head—weigh it well, and deliberate what are your chances of escape. We must not waste time in discussing your innocence. The jury who will try the cause will be more difficult of belief, than you suspect. Neither the opinions you are charged with—your subsequent escape—nor your career in France, will contribute to your exculpation, even had you evidence to adduce in your favour: but you have not. Your only witness is equally removed, as by death itself. On what do you depend, then? Conscious innocence! Nine out of every ten who mount the scaffold proclaim the same—but I never heard that the voice that cried it, stifled the word 'guilty.' No, sir. I tell you, solemnly, you will be condemned!"

The tone of his voice, as he spoke the last few words, made my very blood run cold. The death of a soldier, on the field of battle, had no terrors for me—but the execrated fate of a felon I could not confront. The pallor of my cheek, the trembling of my limbs, must have betrayed my emotion—for even Basset seemed to pity me, and pressed me down into a chair.

"There is one way, however, to avoid all the danger," said he, after a pause, "an easy, and a certain way, both. You have heard of the advertisements for information respecting your death, which it was surmised had occurred abroad. Now, you are unknown here—without a single acquaintance to recognize or remember you—why should not you, under another name, come forward with these proofs—by so doing, you secure your own escape, and can claim the reward."

"What, perjure myself! that I may forfeit my inheritance."

"As to the inheritance," said he sneeringly, "your tenure does not promise a very long enjoyment of it."

"Were it but a day—an hour!" exclaimed I passionately, "I will make no compromise with my honour. On their own heads be it, who sentence an innocent man to death—better such even on a scaffold, than a life of ignominy and vain regret."

"The dark hours of a gaol, change men's sentiments wonderfully," said he slowly; "I have known some who faced death in its wildest and most appalling shape, shrink from it like cowards, when it came in the guise of a common executioner. Come, sir, be advised by me, reflect at least on what I have said, and if there be any path in life, where a moderate sum may assist you——"

"Peace, sir—I beg of you to be silent; it may be that your counsel is prompted by kindly feeling towards me; but if you would have me think so, say no more of this—my mind is made up."

"Wait until to-morrow in any case, perhaps some other plan may suggest itself. What say you to America?—have you any objection to go there?"

"Had you asked me the question an hour since, I had replied, none whatever. Now it is different, my departure would be like the flight of a guilty man, I cannot do it."

"Better the flight, than the fate of one," muttered Basset between his teeth, while at the same instant the sound of voices talking loudly together was heard in the hall without.

"Think again before it is too late, remember what I have told you: your opinions, your career, your associates, are not such as to recommend you to the favourable consideration of a jury. Is your case strong enough to oppose all these? Sir Montague will make liberal terms—he has no desire to expose the calamities of a family."

"Sir Montague!—of whom do you speak?"

"Sir Montague Crofts," said Basset reddening, for he had unwittingly suffered the name to escape his lips. "Are you ignorant that he is your relative, a distant one it is true, but your nearest of kin notwithstanding."

"And the heir to the estate?" said I suddenly, as a new light flashed on my mind. "The heir, in the event of my life lapsing?" Basset nodded an assent.

"You played a deep game, sir," said I, drawing a long breath, "but you never were near winning it."

"Nor you either," said he, throwing wide the door between the two rooms. "I hear a voice without there, that settles the question for ever."

At the same instant, Major Barton entered, followed by two men.

"I suspected I should find you here, sir," said he addressing me. "You need scarcely trouble my worthy friend for his bail, I arrest you now under a warrant of felony."

"A felony!" exclaimed Basset with a counterfeited astonishment in his look. "Mr. Burke accused of such a crime!"

I could not utter a word—indignation and shame overpowered me, and merely motioning with my hand that I was ready to accompany him, I followed to the door, at which a carriage was standing, getting into which we drove towards Newgate.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

THE PERIL AVERTED.

If I have dwelt with unnecessary prolixity on this dark portion of my story, it is because the only lesson my life teaches has lain in similar passages. The train of evils which flows from one misdirection in early life, the misfortunes which ensue from a single false and inconsiderate step, frequently darken the whole subsequent career. This I now thought over in the solitude of my cell. However I could acquit myself of the crime laid to my charge, I could not so easily absolve my heart of the early folly, which made me suppose that the regeneration of a land should be accomplished by the efforts of a sanguinary and bigotted rabble. To this error could I trace every false step I made in life—to this cause, attribute the long struggle I endured between my love of liberty and my detestation of mob rule; and yet how many years did it cost me to learn, that to alleviate the burdens of the oppressed, may demand a greater exercise of tyranny, than ever their rulers practised towards them. Like many others, I looked to France as the land of freedom—but where was despotism so unbounded! where the sway of one great mind so unlimited! They had bartered liberty for equality, and because the pressure was equal on all, they deemed themselves free; while the privileges of class with us suggested the sense of bondage to the poor man, whose actual freedom was yet unencumbered.

Of all the day-dreams of my boyhood, the ambition of military glory alone survived, and that lived on amid the dreary solitude of my prison, comforting many a lonely hour by memories of the past. The glittering ranks of the mounted squadrons, the deep-toned thunder of the artillery, the solid masses of the infantry, immoveable beneath the rush of cavalry, were pictures I could dwell on for hours and days; and my dearest wish could point to no higher destiny, than to be once more a soldier in the ranks of France.

During all this time, my mind seldom reverted to the circumstances of my imprisonment, nor did I feel the anxiety for the result my position might well have suggested. The conscious sense of my innocence kept the flame of hope alive, without suffering it either to flicker or vary. It burned like a steady flame within me, and made even the dark cells of a gaol a place of repose and tranquillity: and thus time rolled on, the hours of pleasure and happiness to thousands, too short and flitting for the enjoyments they brought: they went by, also, to the prisoner, as to one who waits on the bank of the stream, nor knows what fortune may await him on his voyage. A stubborn feeling of conscious right had prevented my taking even the ordinary steps for my defence, and the day of trial was now drawing nigh, without any preparation on my part. I was ignorant how essential the habits and skill of an advocate are in the conduct of every case, however simple, and implicitly relied on my guiltlessness, as though men can read the heart of a prisoner, and know its workings.

M'Dougall, the only member of the bar I knew even by name, had accepted a judicial appointment in India, and was already on his way thither, so that I had neither friend nor adviser in my difficulty. Were it otherwise, I felt I could scarcely have bent my pride to that detail of petty circumstances which an advocate might deem essential to my vindication, and was actually glad to think that I should owe the assertion of my innocence to nothing less than the pure fact.

When November at length arrived, I learned that the trial had been deferred to the following February; and so listless and indifferent had imprisonment made me, that I heard the intelligence without impatience or regret. The publicity of a court of justice, its exposure to the gaze and observatiom of the crowd who throng there, were subjects of more shrinking dread to my heart than the weight of an accusation, which, though false, might peril my life, and for the first time I rejoiced that I was friendless. Yes, it brought balm and comfort to me to think that none would need to blush at my relationship, nor weep over my fate. Sorrow has, surely, eaten deeply into our natures, when we derive pleasure and peace from what, in happier circumstances, are the sources of regret.

Let me now hasten on. My reader will readily forgive me, if I pass with rapid steps over a portion of my story, the memory of which has not yet lost its bitterness. The day at last came, and amid all the ceremonies of a prison I was marched from my cell to the dock. How strange the sudden revolution of feeling, from the solitude and silence of a gaol, to the crowded court, teeming with looks of eager curiosity, dread, or perhaps compassion, all turned towards him, who himself, half forgetful of his condition, gazes on the great mass in equal astonishment and surprise.

My thoughts at once recurred to a former moment of my life, when I stood accused among the Chouan prisoners before the tribunal of Paris; but though the proceedings were less marked by excitement and passion, the stern gravity of the English procedure was far more appalling; and in the absence of all which could stir the spirit to any

effort of its own, it pressed with a more solemn dread on the mind of a prisoner.

I have said I would not linger over this part of my life. I could not do so if I would. Real events, and the impressions they made upon me—facts, and the passing emotions of my mind, are strangely confused and commingled in my memory; and although certain minute and trivial things are graven in my recollection, others of moment have escaped me unrecorded.

The usual ceremonial went forward: the jury were empanneled, and the clerk of the crown read aloud the indictment, to which my plea of "not guilty" was at once recorded. Then the judge asked if I were provided with counsel, and hearing that I was not, appointed a junior barrister to act for me, and the trial began.

I was not the first person who, accused of a crime of which he felt innocent, yet was so overwhelmed by the statements of imputed guilt—so confused by the inextricable web of truth and falsehood, artfully entangled, that he actually doubted his own convictions, when opposed to views so strongly at variance with them.

The first emotion of the prisoner is a feeling of surprise to discover that one utterly a stranger—the lawyer he has, perhaps, never seen—whose name he never so much as heard of—is perfectly conversant with his own history, and, as it were by intuition, seems acquainted with his very thoughts and motives. Tracing out not only a line of acting, but of devising, he conceives a story of which the accused is the hero, and invests his narrative with all the appliances to belief which result from time, and place, and circumstance.

No wonder that the very accusation should strike terror into the soul. No wonder that the statement of guilt should cause heart-sinking to him who, conscious that all is not untrue, may feel that his actions can be viewed in another, and a very different light, than that which conscience sheds over them.

Such, so far as I remember, was the channel of my thoughts. At first mere astonishment at the accuracy of detail regarding my name, age, and condition in life, was uppermost—then succeeded a sense of indignant anger at the charges laid against me, which yielded gradually to a feeling of confusion as the advocate continued, which again merged into a sort of dubious fear, as I heard many trivial facts repeated, some of which my refreshed memory acknowledged as true, but of which my puzzled brain could not detect the inapplicability to sustain the accusation—all ending in a chaos of bewilderment, where conscience itself was lost, and nothing left to guide or direct the reason.

The counsel informed the jury that although they were not placed in the box to try me on any charge of a political offence, they must bear in mind that the murderous assault of which I was accused was merely part of a system organised to overthrow the government—that young as I then was, I was in intimate connection with the disaffected party, which the mistaken leniency of the crown had not thoroughly eradicated, on the termination of the late rebellion—my constant companion being one whose crimes were already undergoing their but too merciful punish-

ment in transportation for life—that to tamper with the military, I had succeeded in introducing myself into the barrack, where I obtained the confidence of a weak-minded but good-natured officer of the regiment.

"These schemes," continued he, "were but partially successful. My distinguished client was then an officer of the corps, and with that ever-watchful loyalty which has distinguished him, he determined to keep a vigilant eye on this intruder, who, from circumstances of youth and apparent innocence, already had won upon the confidence of the majority of the regiment; nor was this impression a false one. An event apparently little likely to unveil a treasonable intention, soon unmasked the true character of the prisoner and the nature of his mission."

He then proceeded to narrate with circumstantial accuracy the night in the George's-street barracks, when Hilliard, Crofts, and some others came with Bubbleton to his quarters to decide a wager between two of the parties. Calling the attention of the jury to this part of the case, he detailed the scene which occurred, and if I could trust my memory, not a phrase, not a word escaped him, which had been said.

"It was then, gentlemen," said he, "at that instant, that the prisoner's habitual caution failed him, and an unguarded moment developed the full story of his guilt. Captain Bubbleton lost the wager, of which my client was the winner. The habits of the service are peremptory in these matters; it was necessary that payment should be made at once. Bubbleton had not the means of discharging his debt, and while he looked around among his comrades for assistance, the prisoner steps forward and supplies the sum. Mark what followed. A sudden call of service now summoned the officers beneath, all save Crofts, who, not being on duty, had no necessity for accompanying them.

"The bank-note so opportunely furnished by the prisoner lay on the table, and this Crofts proceeded leisurely to open and examine before he left the room. Slowly unfolding the paper, he spread it out before him, and what think you, gentlemen, did the paper display? A bank of England bill for twenty pounds, you'll say of course. Far from it indeed! The paper was a French assignat, bearing the words—'*Payez au porteur la somme de deux mille livres.*' Yes, the sum so carelessly thrown on the table by this youth was an order for eighty pounds, issued by the French government.

"Remember the period, gentlemen, when this occurred; we had just passed the threshold of a most fearful and sanguinary rebellion—the tranquillity of the land scarce restored after a convulsion that shook the very constitution and the throne to their centres—the interference of France in the affairs of the country had not been a mere threat—her ships had sailed, her armies had landed, and though the bravery and the loyalty of our troops had made the expedition result in utter defeat and overthrow, the emissaries of the land of anarchy yet lingered on our shores, and disseminated that treason in secret, which openly they dared not proclaim. If they were sparing of their blood, they were lavish of their gold—what they failed in courage they

supplied in assignats. Large promises of gain, rich offers of booty, were rife throughout the land, and wherever disaffection lurked, or rebellion lingered, the enemy of England found congenial allies. Nothing too base, nothing too low for this confederacy of crime; neither was any thing too lowly in condition or too humble in efficiency. Treason cannot choose its agents; it must take the tools which chance and circumstances offer; they may be the refuse of mankind, but if inefficient for good, they are not the less active for evil. Such a one was the youth who now stands a prisoner before you, and here was the price of his disloyalty."

At these words he held up triumphantly the French assignat and waved it before the eyes of the court. However little the circumstances weighed within me, such was the impression manifestly produced upon the jury by this piece of corroborative evidence, that a thrill of anxiety for the result ran suddenly through me.

Until that moment I believed Darby had repossessed himself of the assignat when Crofts lay insensible on the ground—at least I remembered well that he stooped over him and appeared to take something from him. While I was puzzling my mind on this point, I did not remark that the lawyer was proceeding to impress on the jury the full force of conviction such a circumstance implied.

The offer I had made to Crofts to barter the assignat for an English note—my urgent entreaty to have it restored to me—the arguments I had employed to persuade him that no suspicion could attach to my possession of it—were all narrated with so little of exaggeration, that I was actually unable to say what assertion I could object to, while I was conscious that the inferences sought to be drawn from them were false and unjust.

Having displayed with consummate skill the critical position this paper had involved me in, he took the opportunity of contrasting the anxiety I evinced for my escape from my difficulty, with the temperate conduct of my antagonist, whose loyalty left him no other course than to retain possession of the note, and inquire into the circumstances by which it reached my hands.

Irritated by the steady determination of Crofts, it was said that I endeavoured by opprobrious epithets and insulting language to provoke a quarrel, which a sense of my inferiority as an antagonist rendered a thing impossible to be thought of. Baffled in every way, I was said to have rushed from the room, double locking it on the outside, and hurried down the stairs and out of the barrack, not to escape, however, but with a purpose very different—to return in a few moments accompanied by three fellows, whom I passed with the guard as men wishing to recruit.

To ascend the stairs, unlock the door, and fall on the imprisoned officer, was the work of an instant. His defence, although courageous and resolute, was but brief: his sword being broken, he was felled by a blow of a bludgeon, and thus believed dead. The ruffians ransacked his pockets and departed.

The same countersign which admitted, passed them out, as they

went—and when morning broke, the wounded man was found weltering in his blood, but with life still remaining, and strength enough to recount what had occurred. By a mere accident, it was stated, the French bank-note had not been consigned to his pocket, but fell during the struggle, and was discovered the next day on the floor.

These were the leading features of an accusation—which, however improbable, while thus briefly and boldly narrated, hung together with a wonderful coherence in the speech of the lawyer—supported as they were, by the number of small circumstances corroboratory of certain immaterial portions of the story. Thus, the political opinions I professed—the doubtful, nay, equivocal position I occupied—the intercourse with France, or Frenchmen, as proved by the *billet de banque*—my sudden disappearance after the event—and my escape thither, where I continued to live, until, as it was alleged, I believed that years had eradicated all trace of, if not my crime, myself—such were the statements displayed with all the specious inferences of habitual plausibility—and to confirm which, by evidence, Sir Montague Crofts was called to give his testimony.

There was a murmur of expectancy through the court, as this well-known individual's name was pronounced; and in a few moments, the throng around the inner-bar opened, and a tall figure appeared upon the witness-table. The same instant that I caught sight of his features, he had turned his glance on me, and we stood for some seconds confronting each other. Mutual defiance seemed the gage between us—and I saw, with a thrill of savage pleasure, that, after a minute or so, his cheek flushed, and he averted his face, and appeared ill at ease and uncomfortable.

To the first questions of the lawyer he answered with evident constraint, and in a low subdued voice, but soon recovering self-possession, gave his testimony freely and boldly—corroborating, by his words, all the statements of his advocate. By both the court and the jury he was heard with attention and deference—and when he took a passing occasion to allude to his loyalty and attachment to the constitution, the senior judge interrupted him, by saying—

"On that point, Sir Montague, no second opinion can exist—your character for unimpeachable honour is well known to the court."

The examination was brief, lasting scarcely half-an-hour—and when the young lawyer came forward to put some questions as cross-examination, his want of instruction and ignorance were at once seen, and the witness was dismissed almost immediately.

Sir Montague's advocate declined calling any other witness. The regiment to which his client then belonged, was on foreign service; but he felt satisfied that the case required nothing in addition to the evidence the jury had heard.

A few moments of deliberation ensued among the members of the bench, and then the senior judge called on my lawyer to proceed with the defence.

The young barrister rose with diffidence, and expressed in few words his inability to rebut the statements that had been made, by any

evidence in his power to produce. "The prisoner, my lord," said he, "has confided nothing to me of his case. I am ignorant of every thing, save what has taken place in open court."

"It is true, my lord," said I, interrupting. "The facts of this unhappy circumstance are known but to three individuals. You have already heard the version which one of them has given. You shall now hear mine. The third, whose testimony might incline the balance in my favour, is, I am told, no longer in this country—and I have only to discharge the debt I feel due to myself, and to my own honour, by narrating the real occurrence, and leave the issue in your hands, to deal with as your consciences may dictate."

With the steadiness of purpose truth inspires, and in few words, I narrated the whole of my adventure with Crofts, down to the moment of Darby's sudden appearance. I told of what passed between us—and how the altercation, that began in angry words, terminated in a personal struggle—where, as the weaker, I was overcome, and lay beneath the weapon of my antagonist, by which already I had received a severe and dangerous wound.

"I should hesitate here, my lords," said I, "before I spoke of one who then came to my aid, if I did not know that he is already removed by a heavy sentence both from the penalty his gallant conduct might call down on him, and the enmity which the prosecutor would as certainly pursue him with; but he is beyond the reach of either, and I may speak of him freely."

I then told of Darby's appearance that night in the barrack, disguised as a ballad-singer—how in this capacity he passed the sentry, and was present in the room when the officers entered to decide the wager—that he had quitted it soon after their departure, and only returned on hearing the noise of the scuffle between Crofts and myself. The struggle itself I remembered but imperfectly, but so far as my memory bore me out, recapitulated to the court.

"I will relate, my lords," said I, "the few events which followed—not that they can in any wise corroborate the plain statement I have made, nor indeed that they bear, save remotely, on the events mentioned—but I will do so in the hope—a faint hope it is—that in this court there might be found some one person who could add his testimony to mine, and say—'This is true—to that I can myself bear witness.'"

With this brief preface I told how Darby had brought me to a house in an obscure street, in which a man, apparently dying, was stretched upon a miserable bed—that while my wound was being dressed, a car came to the door with the intention of conveying the sick man away somewhere. This, however, was deemed impossible, so near did his last hour appear, and in his place I was taken off, and placed on board the vessel bound for France.

"Of my career in that country, it is needless that I should speak: it can neither throw light upon the events which preceded it, nor have any interest for the court. My commission as a captain of the Imperial Hussars may, however, testify the position that I occupied; while the

certificate of the minister of war on the back, will show that I quitted the service voluntarily, and with honour."

"The court would advise you, sir," said the judge, "not to advert to circumstances which, while they contribute nothing to your exculpation, may have a very serious effect on the minds of the jury against you. Have you any witnesses to call?"

"None, my lord."

A pause of some minutes ensued, when the only sounds in the court were the whispering tones of Crofts' voice, as he said something into his counsel's ear. The lawyer rose—

"My task, my lords," said he, "is a short one. Indeed, in all probability, I need not trouble either your lordships or the jury with an additional word on a case where the evidence so conclusively establishes the guilt of the accused, and where the attempt to contradict it has been so abortive. Never, perhaps, was a story narrated within the walls of a court so full of improbable—might I not almost say impossible—events, as that of the prisoner." He then recapitulated, with rapid, but accurate detail, the principal circumstances of my story, bestowing some brief comment on each as he went. He sneered at the account of the struggle, and turned the whole description of the contest with Crofts into ridicule, calling on the jury to bestow a glance on the manly strength and vigorous proportions of his client, and then remember the age of his antagonist—a boy of fourteen. "I forgot, gentlemen—I ask your pardon—he confesses to one ally—this famous Piper. I really did hope that was a name we had done with for ever. I indulged the dream, that among the memories of an awful period, this was never to recur; but, unhappily, the expectation was delusive. The fellow is brought once more before us; and, perhaps, for the first time in his long life of iniquity, charged with a crime he did not commit." In a few sentences, he explained that a large reward was at that very moment offered for the apprehension of Darby, who never would have ventured, under any disguise, to approach the capital—much less trust himself within the walls of a barrack. "The tissue of wild and inconsistent events which the prisoner has detailed as following the assault deserves no attention at my hands. Where was this house? What was the street? Who was this doctor of which he speaks, and the sick man—how was he called?"

"I remember his name well. It is the only one I remember among all I heard," said I from the dock.

"Let us hear it, then," said the lawyer, half contemptuously.

"Daniel Fortescue was the name he was called by."

Scarcely was the name uttered by me, when Crofts leaned back in his seat, and became pale as death, while, stretching out his hand, he took hold of the lawyer's gown and drew him towards him. For a second or two he continued to speak with rapid utterance in the advocate's ear, and then covering his face with his handkerchief, leaned his head on the rail before him.

"It is necessary, my lords," said the lawyer, "that I should explain the reason of my client's emotion, and, at the same time, unveil the

baseness which has dictated this last effort of the prisoner—if not to injure the reputation—to wound the feelings of my client. The individual whose name has been mentioned was the half-brother of my client, and whose unhappy connexion with the disastrous events of the year '98 involved him in a series of calamities, which ended in his death, which took place in the year 1800—but some months earlier than the circumstance which we now are investigating. The introduction of this unhappy man's name was, then, a malignant effort of the prisoner to insult the feelings of my client, on which your lordships and the jury will place its true value."

A murmur of disapprobation ran through the crowded court as these words were spoken; but whether directed against me or against the comment of the lawyer, I could not determine; nor, such was the confusion I then felt, could I follow the remainder of the advocate's address with any thing like clearness. At last he concluded, and the chief-justice, after a whispered conversation with his brethren of the bench, thus began:

"Gentlemen of the jury, the case which you have this day to try, to my mind, presents but one feature of doubt and difficulty. The great fact for your consideration is, to determine to which of two opposite and conflicting testimonies you will accord your credence. On the one side you have the story of the prosecutor—a man of position and character, high in the confidence of honourable men, and invested with all the attributes of rank and station; on the other, you have a narrative strongly coherent in some parts, equally difficult to account for in others, given by the prisoner—whose life, even by his own showing, has none of those recommendations to your good opinions, which are based on loyalty and attachment to the constitution of these realms. Both testimonies are unsupported by any collateral evidence. The prosecutor's regiment is in India, and the only witnesses he could adduce are many thousand miles off. The prisoner appeals also to the absent, but with less of reason; for if we could call this man, M'Keown, before us—if, I say, we had this same Darby M'Keown in court——"

A tremendous uproar in the hall without drowned the remainder of the sentence, and although the crier loudly proclaimed silence, and the bench twice interposed its authority to enforce it, the tumult continued, and eventually extended within the court itself, where all semblance of respect seemed suddenly annihilated.

"If this continues one moment longer," exclaimed the chief-justice, "I will commit to Newgate the very first disorderly person I can discover."

The threat, however, did but partially calm the disturbance, which in a confused murmur prevailed, from the benches of the counsel to the very galleries of the court.

"What means this?" said the judge, in a voice of anger. "Who is it that dares to interfere with the administration of justice here?"

"A witness—a witness, my lord," called out several voices from the passage of the court, while a crowd pushed violently forward, and

came struggling onwards, till the leading figures were pressed over the inner bar.

Again the judge repeated his question, while he made a signal for the officer of the court to approach him.

"'Tis me, my lord," shouted a deep-toned voice from the middle of the crowd. "Your lordship was asking for Darby M'Keown, and it isn't himself's ashamed of the name!"

A perfect yell of approval broke from the ragged mob, which now filled every avenue and passage of the court, and even jammed up the stairs and the entrance halls.

And now, raised upon the shoulders of the crowd, Darby appeared, borne aloft in triumph; his broad and daring face, bronzed with sun and weather, glowed with a look of reckless effrontery, which no awe of the court, nor any fear for himself was able to repress.

Of my own sensations while this scene was enacting I need not speak; and as I gazed at the weather-beaten features of the hardy piper, it demanded every effort of my reason to believe in the testimony of my eyesight. Had he come back from death itself, the surprise would scarcely have been greater. Meanwhile the tumult was allayed, and the lawyers on either side—for now that a glimmer of hope appeared, my advocate had entered with spirit on his duties—were discussing the admissibility of evidence at the present stage of the proceedings. This point being speedily established in my favour, another and a graver question raised—how far the testimony of a convicted felon—for such the lawyer at once called Darby—could be received as evidence.

Cases were quoted, and authorities shown, to prove that such cannot be heard as witnesses—that they are among those whom the law pronounces infamous and unworthy of credit; and while the lawyer continued to pour forth on this topic a perfect ocean of arguments, he was intercepted by the court, who affirmed the opinion, and concurred in his view of the case.

"It only remains, then, my lord," said my counsel, "for the crown to establish the identity of the individual——"

"Nothing easier," interposed the other.

"I beg pardon. I was about to add—and produce the record of his conviction."

This last seemed a felling blow; for although the old lawyer never evinced here, or at any other time, the slightest appearance of discomfiture at any opposition, I could see by the puckering of the deep lines around his mouth, that he felt vexed and annoyed by this new suggestion.

An eager and animated discussion ensued, in which my advocate was assisted by the advice of some senior counsel, and again the point was ruled in my favour, and Darby M'Keown was desired to mount the table.

It required all the efforts of the various officers of the court to repress another outbreak of mob enthusiasm at the decision; for already the trial had assumed a feature perfectly distinct from any common infraction of the law. Its political bearing had long since

imparted a character of party warfare to the whole proceeding; and while Sir Montague Crofts found his well-wishers among the better dressed and more respectable persons present, a much more numerous body of supporters claimed me as their own, and in defiance of all the usages and solemnity of the place, did not scruple to bestow on me looks, and even words, of encouragement, at every stage of the trial. Darby's appearance was the climax of this popular enthusiasm. There were few who had not seen, or at least heard of the celebrated piper in times past. His daring infraction of the law—his reputed skill in evading detection— his acquaintance with every clue and circumstance of the late rebellion—the confidence he enjoyed among all the leaders—had made him a hero in a land where such qualities are certain of obtaining their due estimation. And now, the reckless effrontery of his presence as a witness in a court of justice, while the sentence of transportation still hung over him, was a claim to admiration none refused to acknowledge.

His air and demeanour, as he took his seat on the table, seemed an acknowledgment of the homage rendered him; for though as he placed his worn and ragged hat beside his feet, and stroked down his short black hair on his forehead, a careless observer might have suspected him of feeling awed and abashed by the presence in which he sat, one more conversant with his countrymen would have detected in the quiet leer of his roguish black eye, and a certain protrusion of his thick under lip, that Darby was as perfectly at his ease there as the eminent judge was, who now fixed his eyes upon him. A short, but not disrespectful nod was the only notice he bestowed on me, and then concealing his joined hands within his sleeves, and drawing his legs back beneath the chair, he assumed that attitude of mock humility your least bashful Irishman is so commonly fond of.

The veteran barrister was, meanwhile, surveying the witness with the peculiar scrutiny of his caste: he looked at him through his spectacles, and then he stared at him above them: he measured him from head to foot, his eye dwelling on every little circumstance of his dress or demeanour, as though to catch some clue to his habits of thinking or acting. Never did a matador survey the brawny animal with which he was about to contend in skill or strength, with more critical acumen, than did the lawyer regard Darby the Blast; nor was the object of this examination unaware of it. Very far from this, indeed; he seemed pleased by the degree of attention bestowed on him, and felt all the flattery such notice conveyed; but while doing so, you could only detect his satisfaction in an occasional side-long look of drollery, which, brief and flitting as it was, had still a numerous body of admirers through the court, whose muttered expressions of "Divil fear ye, Darby, but ye're up to them any day;" or "Faix, 'tis himself cares little about them," showed they had no lack of confidence in the piper.

"Your name is M'Keown, sir?" said the lawyer, with that abruptness which so often succeeds in oversetting the balance of a witness's self-possession.

"Yes, sir—Darby M'Keown."

"Did you ever go by any other than this?"

"They do call me 'Darby the Blast' betimes, av that's a name."

"Is that the only other name you have been called by?"

"I misremember rightly, it's so long since I was among friends and acquaintances; but if yer honour would remind me a little, maybe I could tell."

"Well, were you ever called 'Larry the Flail?'"

"Faix, I was," replied he, laughing, "divil a doubt of it."

"How did you come by the name of 'Larry the Flail?'"

"They gave me that name up at Mulhuldad, there, for bating one M'Clancy wid a flail."

"A very good reason. So you got the name because you beat a certain M'Clancy with a flail?'"

"I didn't say that. I only said they gave me the name because they said I bate him."

"Were you ever called 'Fire-the-Haggard?'"

"I was, often."

"For no reason, of course?"

"Divil a rayson. The boys said it in sport, just as they talk of yer honour out there in the hall."

"How do you mean, talk of me?"

"Sure I heard them say myself, as I was coming in, that you wor a clever man and a cute lawyer. They do be always humbugging that way."

A titter ran round the benches of the barristers at this speech, which was delivered with a *näive* simplicity that would deceive many.

"You were a United Irishman, Mr. M'Keown, I believe?" rejoined the counsel, with a frown of stern intimidation.

"Yes, sir, and a White Boy, and a Defender, and a Thrasher, besides. I was in all the fun them times."

"The Thrashers are the fellows, I believe, who must beat any man they are appointed to attack—isn't that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"So that, if I was mentioned to you as a person to be assaulted, although I had never done you any injury, you'd not hesitate to waylay me?"

"No, sir, I wouldn't do that—I'd not touch yer honour."

"Come, come—what do you mean? Why wouldn't you touch me?"

"I'd rather not tell, av it was plazing to ye."

"You must tell, sir. Speak out! Why wouldn't you attack me?"

"They say, sir," said Darby, and as he spoke his voice assumed a peculiar lisp, meant to express great modesty, "they say, sir, that when a man has a big wart on his nose there, like yer honour, it's not lucky to bate him, for that's the way the divil marks his own."

This time the decorum of the court gave way entirely, and the unwashed faces which filled the avenues and passages were all expanded in open laughter; nor was it easy to restore order again amid the many marks of approval and encouragement bestowed on Darby by his numerous admirers.

"Remember where you are, sir," said the judge, severely.

"Yes, my lord," said Darby, with an air of submission. "'Tis the first time I was ever in sich a situation as this. I'm much more at my ease when I'm down in the dock there—it's what I'm most used to, God help me."

The whining tone in which he delivered this mock lament on his misfortunes occasioned another outbreak of the mob, who were threatened with expulsion from the court if any future interruption took place.

"You were, then, a member of every illegal society of the time, Mr. Darby?" said the lawyer, returning to the examination. "Is it not so?"

"Most of them, anyhow," was the cool reply.

"You took an active part in the doings of the year '98 also."

"Throth I did—mighty active. I walked from beyant Castlecomer one day to Dublin, to see a trial here. Be the same token it was Mr. Curran made a hare of yer honour that day. Begorra!—I wonder ye ever held up yer head after."

Here a burst of laughter at the recollection seemed to escape Darby so naturally, that its contagious effects were felt throughout the assembly.

"You are a wit, Mr. M'Keown, I fancy—eh?"

"Bedad I'm not, sir. Very little of that same would have kept me out of this to-day."

"But you came here to serve a friend—a very old friend, he calls you."

"Does he?" said Darby, with an energy of tone and manner very different from what he had hitherto used. "Does Master Tom say that?"

As the poor fellow's cheek flushed, and his eye sparkled with proud emotion, I could perceive that the lawyer's face underwent a change equally rapid. A look of triumph at having at length discovered the assailable point of the witness's temperament now passed over his pale features, and gave them an expression of astonishing intelligence.

"A very natural thing it is, Darby, that he should call you so. You were companions at an early period—at least of his life;—fellow-travellers, too, if I don't mistake."

Although these words were spoken in a tone of careless freedom, and intended to encourage Darby to some expansion on the same theme, the cunning fellow had recovered all his habitual self-possession, and merely answered, if answer it could be called—

"I was a poor man, sir, and lived by the pipes."

The advocate and the witness exchanged looks at this moment, in which their relative positions were palpably conveyed. Each seemed to say, it was a drawn battle; but the lawyer returned with vigour to the charge, desiring Darby to mention the manner in which our first acquaintance began, and how the intimacy was originally formed.

He narrated with clearness and accuracy every step of our early

wanderings, and while never misstating a single fact, contrived to exhibit my career as totally devoid of any participation in the treasonable doings of the period. Indeed, he laid great stress on the fact that my acquaintance with Charles de Meudon had withdrawn me from all relations with the insurgent party, between whom and the French allies feelings of open dislike and distrust existed.

Of the scene at the barrack, his account varied in nothing from that I had already given; nor was all the ingenuity of a long and intricate cross-examination able to shake his testimony in the most minute particular.

"Of course, then, you know Sir Montague Crofts. It is quite clear that you cannot mistake a person with whom you had a struggle such as you speak of."

"Faix, I'd know his skin upon a bush," said Darby, "av he was like what I remember him; but sure he may be changed since that. They tell me I'm looking ould myself, and no wonder. Hunting kangeroos wears the constitution terribly."

"Look around the court, now, and say if he be here."

Darby rose from his seat, and shading his eyes with his hand, took a deliberate survey of the court. Though well knowing, from past experience, in what part of the assembly the person he sought would probably be, he seized the occasion to scrutinize the features of the various persons, whom, under no other pretence, could he have examined.

"It's not on the bench, sir, you need look for him," said the lawyer, as M'Keown remained for a considerable time with his eyes bent in that direction.

"Bedad there's no knowing," rejoined Darby, doubtfully; "av he was dressed up that way, I wouldn't know him from an ould ram." He turned round as he said this, and gazed steadfastly towards the bar. It was an anxious moment for me! Should Darby make any mistake in the identity of Crofts, his whole testimony would be so weakened in the opinion of the jury, as to be nearly valueless. I watched his eyes, therefore, as they ranged over the crowded mass, with a palpitating heart; and when, at last, his glance settled on a far part of the court, very distant from that occupied by Crofts, I grew almost sick with apprehension, lest he should mistake another for him.

"Well, sir," said the lawyer, "do you see him now?"

"Arrah its humbugging me yez are," said Darby, roughly, while he threw himself down into his chair in apparent ill temper.

A loud burst of laughter broke from the bar at this sudden ebullition of passion, so admirably feigned that none suspected its reality; and while the sounds of mirth were subsiding, Darby dropped his head, and placed his hand above his ear. "There it is, by gorra; there's no mistaking that laugh, anyhow," cried he; "there's a screech in it might plaze an owl," and with that he turned abruptly round and faced the bench where Crofts was seated. "I heard it a while ago, but I couldn't say where. That's the man," said he, pointing with his finger to Crofts, who seemed actually to cower beneath his piercing glance.

"Remember, sir, you are on your solemn oath. Will you swear that the gentleman there is Sir Montague Crofts?"

"I know nothing about Sir Montague," said Darby, composedly, while rising he walked over towards the edge of the table where Crofts was sitting; "but I'll swear that's the same Captain Crofts that I knocked down while he was shortening his sword to run it through Master Burke; and by the same token, he has a cut in the skull, where he fell on the fender," and before the other could prevent it, he stretched out his hand, and placed it on the back of the crown of Croft's head. "There it is, just as I tould you."

The sensation these words created in the court was most striking, and even the old lawyer appeared overwhelmed at the united craft and consistency of the piper. The examination was resumed, but Darby's evidence tallied so accurately with my statement, that its continuance only weakened the case for the prosecution.

As the sudden flash of the lightning will sometimes disclose what in the long blaze of noonday has escaped the beholder, so will conviction break unexpectedly upon the human mind, from some slight but striking circumstance, which comes with the irresistible force of unpremeditated truthfulness. From that moment it was clear the jury to a man were with Darby. They paid implicit attention to all he said, and made notes of every trivial fact he mentioned; while he, as if divining the impression he had made, became rigorously cautious that not a particle of his evidence could be shaken, nor the effect of his testimony weakened by even a passing phrase of exaggeration. It was, indeed, a phenomenon worth studying, to see this fellow, whose natural disposition was the irrepressible love of drollery and recklessness—whose whole heart seemed bent on the indulgence of his wayward, careless humour—suddenly throw off every eccentricity of his character, and become a steady and accurate witness, delivering his evidence carefully and cautiously, and never suffering his own leanings to repartee, nor the badgering allusions of his questioner, to draw him for a moment away from the great object he had set before him; resisting every line, every bait the cunning lawyer threw out to seduce him into that land of fancy so congenial to an Irishman's temperament, he was firm against all temptation, and even endured that severest of all tests to the forbearance of his country—he suffered the laugh more than once to be raised at his expense, without an effort to retort on his adversary.

The examination lasted three hours, and at its conclusion, every fact I stated had received confirmation from Darby's testimony, down to the moment when we left the barrack together.

"Now, M'Keown," said the lawyer, "I am about to call your recollection, which is so wonderfully accurate, that it can give you no trouble in remembering, to a circumstance which immediately followed this affair." As he got thus far, Crofts leaned over and drew the counsel towards him, while he whispered some words rapidly in his ear. A brief dialogue ensued between them, at the conclusion of which the lawyer turned round, and addressing Darby, said—

"You may go down, sir, I've done with you."

"Wait a moment," said the young barrister on my side, who quickly perceived that the interruption had its secret object. "My learned friend was about to ask you concerning something which happened after you left the barrack, and although he has changed his mind on the subject, we, on this side, would be glad to hear what you have to say."

Darby's eyes flashed with unwonted brilliancy, and I thought I caught a glance of triumphant meaning towards Crofts, as he began his recital, which was in substance nothing more than what the reader already knows—when he came to the mention of Fortescue's name, however, Crofts, whose excitement was increasing at each moment, lost all command over himself, and cried out, "It's false—every word untrue—the man was dead at the time."

The court rebuked the interruption, and Darby went on.

"No, my lord, he was alive—but Mr. Crofts is not to blame, for he believed he was dead—and more than that, he thought he took the sure way to make him so." These words produced the greatest excitement throughout the court, and an animated discussion ensued—how far the testimony could go to inculpate a party not accused. It was ruled, at last, the evidence should be heard, as touching the case on trial, and not immediately as regarded Crofts; and then Darby began a recital, of which I had never heard a syllable before, nor had I conceived the slightest suspicion.

The story, partly told in narrative form—partly elicited by questioning—was briefly this:—

Daniel Fortescue was the son of a Roscommon gentleman of large fortune, of whom, also, Crofts was the illegitimate child. The father, a man of high Tory politics, had taken a most determined part against the patriotic party in Ireland, to which his son Daniel had shown himself, on more than one occasion, favourable. The consequence was, a breach of affection between them, widened into an actual rupture, by the old man, who was a widower, taking home to his house the illegitimate son, and announcing to his household, that he would leave him every thing he could in the world.

To Daniel, the blow was all that he needed to precipitate his ruin—he abandoned the university, where, already, he had distinguished himself—and threw himself, heart and soul, into the movement of the "United Irish" party. At first, high hopes of an independent nation—a separate kingdom—with its own train of interests, and its own sphere of power and influence—was the dream of those with whom he associated; but, as events rolled on, it was found that, to mature their plans, it was necessary to connect themselves with the masses, by whose agency the insurrectionary movement was to be effected—and in doing so, they discovered that, although theories of liberty and independence, high notions of pure government, may have charms for men of intellect and intelligence—to the mob, the price of a rebellion must be paid down in the sterling coin of pillage

and plunder—or even worse, the triumphant dominion of the depraved and the base over the educated and the worthy.

Many who favoured the patriotic cause, as it was called, became so disgusted at the low associates, and base intercourse, the game of party required, that they abandoned the field at once—leaving to others, less scrupulous, or more ardent, the path they could not stoop to follow. It was probable that young Fortescue might have been among these, had he been left to the guidance of his own judgment and inclination—for, as a man of honour and intelligence, he could not help feeling shocked at the demands made by those who were the spokesmen of the people; but this course he was not permitted to take, owing to the influence of a man who had succeeded in obtaining the most absolute power of him. This was a certain Maurice Mulcahy, a well-known member of the various illegal clubs of the day, and originally a country schoolmaster. Mulcahy it was who first infected Fortescue's mind with the poison of this party—now lending him volumes of the incendiary trash with which the press teemed; now, newspapers, whose articles were headed, "Orange outrage on a harmless and unresisting peasantry;" or, "Another sacrifice of the people to the bloody vengeance of the Saxon:" by these, his youthful mind became interested in the fate of those he believed to be treated with reckless cruelty and oppression—while, as he advanced in years, his reason was appealed to by those great and spirit-stirring addresses which Grattan and Curran were continually delivering, either in the senate or at the bar—and wherein the most noble aspirations after liberty were united with sentiments breathing love of country and devoted patriotism. To connect the garbled and lying statements of a debased newspaper press, with the honourable hopes and noble conceptions of men of mind and genius, was the fatal process of his political education—and never was there a time when such a delusion was more easy.

Mulcahy, now, stimulating the boyish ardour of a high-spirited youth—now, flattering his vanity, by promises of the position one of his ancient name and honoured lineage must assume in the great national movement, gradually became his directing genius, swaying every resolution, and ruling every determination of his mind. He never left his victim for a moment—and while thus insuring the unbounded influence he exercised, he gave proof of a seeming attachment—which Fortescue confidently believed in. Mulcahy, too, never wanted for money—alleging that the leaders of the plot knew the value of Fortescue's alliance, and were willing to advance him any sums he needed, he supplied the means of every extravagance, a wild and careless youth indulged in, and thus rivetted the chain of his bondage to him.

When the rebellion broke out, Fortescue, like many more, was horror-struck at the conduct of his party. He witnessed, hourly, scenes of cruelty and bloodshed at which his heart revolted, but to avow his compassion for which would have cost him his life on the spot. He

was in the stream, however, and must go with the torrent—and what will not stern necessity compel! Daily intimacy with the base-hearted and the low, hourly association with crime, and, perhaps, more than either, despair of success, broke him down completely, and with the blind fatuity of one predestined to evil, he became careless what happened to him, and indifferent to whatever fate was before him.

Still, between him and his associates there lay a wide gulf. The tree, withered and blighted as it was, still preserved some semblance of its once beauty, and, among that mass of bigotry and bloodshed, his nature shone forth conspicuously as something of a different order of being.

To none was this superiority more insulting than to the parties themselves. So long as the period of devising and planning the movement of an insurrection lasts, the presence of a gentleman, or a man of birth or rank, will be hailed with acclamation and delight. Let the hour of acting arrive, however, and the scruples of an honourable mind or the repugnance of a high-spirited nature, will be treated as cowardice by those, who only recognise bravery in deeds of blood, and know no heroism save when allied to cruelty.

Fortescue became suspected by his party. Hints were circulated, and rumours reached him, that he was watched—that it was no time for hanging back. He who sacrificed every thing for the cause to be thus accused! He consulted Mulcahy, and to his utter discomfiture discovered that even his old ally and adviser was not devoid of doubt regarding him. Something must be done, and that speedily; he cared not what. Life had long ceased to interest him either by hope or fear. The only tie that bound him to existence was the strange desire to be respected by those his heart sickened at the thought of.

An attack was at that time planned against the house and family of a Wexford gentleman, whose determined opposition to the rebel movement had excited all their hatred. Fortescue demanded to be the leader of that expedition, and was immediately named such by those who were glad to have the opportunity of testing his conduct by such an emergency.

The attack took place at night—a scene of the most fearful and appalling cruelty, such as the historian yet records among the most dreadful of that dreadful period. The house was burned to the ground, and its inmates butchered regardless of age or sex. In the effort to save a female from the flames, Fortescue was struck down by one of his party, while another nearly cleft his chest across with a cut of a large knife. He fell, covered with blood, and lay seemingly dead. When his party retreated, however, he summoned strength to creep under shelter of a ditch, and lay there till near day-break, when he was found by another gang of the rebel faction, who knew nothing of the circumstances of his wound, and carried him away to a place of safety.

For some months he lay dangerously ill. Hectic fever, brought on by suffering, brought him to the very brink of the grave; and at last he managed by stealth to reach Dublin, where a doctor well known to the party resided, and under whose care he ultimately recovered, and

succeeded at last in taking a passage to America. Meanwhile his death was currently believed, and Crofts was every where recognised as the heir to the fortune.

Mulcahy, of whom it is necessary to speak a few words, was soon after apprehended on a charge of rebellion, and sentenced to transportation. He appealed to many who had known him, as he said, in better times, to speak to his character. Among others, Captain Crofts—so he then was—was summoned. His evidence, however, was rather injurious than favourable to the prisoner, and, although not in any way influencing the sentence, was believed by the populace to have mainly contributed to its severity.

Such was, in substance, the singular story which was now told before the court—told without any effort at concealment or reserve—and to the proof of which M'Keown was willing to proceed at once.

"This, my lord," said Darby as he concluded, "is a good time and place to give back to Mr. Crofts a trifling article I took from him the night at the barracks. I thought it was the bank-notes I was getting, but it turned out better after all."

With that he produced a strong black leather pocket-book, fastened by a steel clasp. No sooner did Crofts behold it than, with the spring of a tiger, he leaped forward and endeavoured to clutch it. But Darby was on his guard, and immediately drew back his hand, calling out—

"No, no, sir! I didn't keep it by me eight long years to give it up that way. There, my lords," said he, as he handed it to the bench, "there's his pocket-book, with plenty of notes in it from many a one well known—Maurice Mulcahy among the rest—and you'll soon see who it was first tempted Fortescue to ruin, and who paid the money for doing it."

A burst of horror and astonishment broke from the assembled crowd as Darby spoke. Then, in a loud determined tone—

"He is a perjurer!" screamed Crofts. "I repeat it, my lord, Fortescue is dead."

"Faix, and for a dead man he has a remarkable appetite," said Darby, "and an elegant colour in his face besides, for there he stands," and as he spoke he pointed with his finger to a man who was leaning with folded arms against one of the pillars that supported the gallery. Every eye was now turned in the direction towards him, while the young barrister called out—"Is your name Daniel Fortescue?"—but before any answer could follow, several among the lawyers who had known him in his college days, and felt attachment to him, had surrounded and recognized him.

"I am Daniel Fortescue, my lord," said the stranger. "Whatever may be the consequences of the avowal, I say it here, before this court, that every statement the witness has made regarding me is true to the letter."

A low faint sound, heard throughout the stillness that followed these words, now echoed throughout the court, and Crofts had fallen fainting over the bench behind him.

A scene of tumultuous excitement now ensued, for while Crofts' friends, many of whom were present, assisted to carry him into the air, others pressed eagerly forward to catch a sight of Fortescue, who had already rivalled Darby himself in the estimation of the spectators. He was a tall, powerfully built man, of about thirty-five or six, dressed in the blue jacket and trousers of a sailor; but neither the habitude of his profession, nor the humble dress he wore, could conceal the striking evidence his air and bearing indicated of condition and birth. As he mounted the witness-table—for it was finally agreed that his testimony, in disproof or corroboration of M'Keown, should be heard—a murmur of approbation went round, partly at the daring step he had thus ventured on taking, and partly excited by those personal gifts which are ever certain to have their effect upon any crowded assembly.

I need not enter into the details of his evidence, which was given in a frank, straightforward manner, well suited to his appearance; never concealing for a moment the cause he had himself embarked in, nor assuming any favourable colouring for actions, which ingenuity and the zeal of party would have found subjects for encomium rather than censure.

His narrative not only confirmed all that Darby asserted, but also disclosed the atrocious scheme by which he had been first induced to join the ranks of the disaffected party. This was the work of Crofts, who knew and felt that Fortescue was the great barrier between himself and a large fortune. For this purpose Mulcahy was hired; to this end the whole long train of perfidy laid, which eventuated in his ruin; for so artfully had the plot been devised, each day's occurrence rendered retreat more difficult, until at last it became impossible.

The reader is already aware of the catastrophe which concluded his career in the rebel army. It only remains now to be told that he escaped to America, where he entered, as a sailor, on board a merchantman; and although his superior acquirements and conduct might have easily bettered his fortune in his new walk in life, the dread of detection never left his mind, and he preferred the hardships before the mast, to the vacillation of hope and fear a more conspicuous position would have exposed him to.

The vessel in which he served was wrecked off the coast of New Holland, and he and a few others of the crew were taken up by an English ship on her voyage outward. In a party sent on shore for water, Fortescue came up with Darby, who had made his escape from the convict settlement, and was wandering about the woods, almost dead of starvation, and scarcely covered with clothing. His pitiful condition, but perhaps more still, his native drollery, which even then was unextinguished, induced the sailors to yield to Fortescue's proposal, and they smuggled him on board in a water-cask, and, thus concealed, he made the entire voyage to England, where he landed about a fortnight before the trial. Fearful of being apprehended before the day, and determined at all hazards to give his evidence, he lay hid till the time we have already seen, when he suddenly came forward to my rescue.

Mulcahy, who worked in the same gang with Darby, or, to use the piper's grandiloquent expression, for he burst out in this occasionally, was "in concatenated proximity to him," told the whole story of his own baseness, and loudly inveighed against Crofts for deserting him in his misfortunes. The pocket-book taken from Crofts by Darby, amply corroborated this statement. It contained, besides various memoranda in the owner's hand-writing, several letters from Mulcahy, detailing the progress of the conspiracy—some, were in acknowledgment of considerable sums of money, others, asking for supplies, but, all, confirmatory of the black scheme by which Fortescue's destruction was compassed.

Whatever might have been the sentiments of the crowded court regarding the former life and opinions of Fortescue and the piper, it was clear that now only one impression prevailed, a general feeling of horror at the complicated villany of Crofts, whose whole existence had been one tissue of the basest treachery.

The testimony was heard with attention throughout; no cross-examination was entered on, and the judge, briefly adverting to the case which was before the jury, and from whose immediate consideration subsequent events had in a great measure withdrawn their minds, directed them to deliver a verdict of not guilty.

The words were re-echoed by the jury, who, man for man, exclaimed these words aloud, amid the most deafening cheers from every side.

As I walked from the dock, fatigued, worn-out, and exhausted, a dozen hands were stretched out to seize mine; but one powerful grasp caught my arm, and a well-known voice called in my ear—

"An' ye wor with Bony, Master Tom. Tare and 'ounds, didn't I know you'd be a great man yet."

At the same instant Fortescue came through the crowd towards me, with his hands outstretched.

"We should be friends, sir," said he, "for we both have suffered from a common enemy. If I am at liberty to leave this——"

"You are not, sir," interposed a deep voice behind. We turned, and beheld Major Barton. "The massacre at Kilmacshogue has yet to be atoned for."

Fortescue's face grew actually livid at the mention of the word, and his breathing became thick and short.

"Here," continued Barton, "is the warrant for your committal; and you also, Darby," said he, turning round, "we want your company once more in Newgate."

"Bedad, I suppose there's no use in sending an apology, when friends is so pressing," said he, buttoning his coat as coolly as possible; "but I hope you'll let the master come in to see me."

"Mr. Burke shall be admitted at all times," said Barton, with an obsequious civility I had never witnessed in him previously.

"Faix, maybe you'll not be for letting him out so aisy," said Darby, drily, for his notions of justice were tempered by a considerable dash of suspicion.

I had only time left to press my purse into the honest fellow's hand, and salute Fortescue hastily, as they both were removed, under the custody of Barton; and I now made my way through the crowd into the hall, which opened a line for me as I went; a thousand welcomes meeting me from those who felt as anxious about the result of the trial, as if a brother or a dear friend had been in peril.

One face caught my eye, as I passed; and partly from my own excitement—partly from its expression being so different from its habitual character—I could not recognize it as speedily as I ought to have done. Again and again it appeared; and at last, as I approached the door into the street, it was beside me.

"If I might dare to express my congratulations," said a voice, weak, from the tremulous anxiety of the speaker, and the shame which, real or affected, seemed to bow him down.

"What," cried I, "Mr. Basset!" for it was the worthy man himself.

"Yes, sir. Your father's old and confidential agent—I might venture to say, friend—come to see the son of his first patron occupy the station he has long merited."

"A bad memory is the only touch of age I remark in you, sir," said I, endeavouring to pass on, for I was unwilling at the moment of my escape from a great difficulty to lose temper with so unworthy an object.

"One moment, sir, just a moment," said he, in a low whisper. "You'll want money, probably. The November rents are not paid up; but there's a considerable balance to your credit. Will you take a hundred or two for the present?"

"Take money!—money from you!" said I, shrinking back.

"Your own, sir—your own estate. Do you forget," said he, with a miserable effort at a smile, "that you are Mr. Burke of Cromore, with a clear rental of four thousand a year. We gained the Cluan Bog lawsuit, sir," continued he. "'Twas I, sir, found the satisfaction for the bond. Your brother said he owed it all to Tony Basset."

The two last words were all that were needed to sum up the measure of my disgust, and I once more tried to get forward.

"I know the property, sir, for thirty-eight years. I was over it. Your father and your brother always trusted me——"

"Let me pass on, Mr. Basset," said I, calmly. "I have no desire to become a greater object of mob curiosity. Pray let me pass on."

"And for Darby M'Keown," whispered he.

"What of him?" said I; for he had touched the most anxious chord of my heart at that instant.

"I'll have him free. He shall be at liberty in forty-eight hours for you. I have the whole papers by me; and a statement to the privy council will obtain his liberation."

"Do this," said I, "and I'll forgive more of your treatment of me than I could on any other plea."

"May I call on you this evening, or to-morrow morning, at your hotel? Where do you stop, sir?"

"This evening, be it, if it hasten M'Keown's liberation. Remember,

however, Mr. Basset, I'll hold no converse with you on any other subject, till that be settled, and to my perfect satisfaction."

"A bargain, sir," said he, with a grin of satisfaction, and dropping back, he suffered me to proceed.

Along the quays I went, and down Dame-street, accompanied by a great mob of people, who thought in my acquittal they had gained a triumph; for so it was—every case had its political feature, and seemed to be intimately connected with the objects of one party or the other. Partizan cheers—the watch-words of faction—were uttered as I went, and I was made to suffer that least satisfactory of all conditions, which bestows notoriety without fame, and popularity without merit.

As I entered the hotel, I recognised many of the persons I had seen there before; but their looks were no longer thrown towards me with the impertinence they then assumed. On the contrary, a studied desire to evince courtesy and politeness was evident. How strange is it! thought I—how differently does the whole world smile to the rich man and to the poor! Here were many who could in no wise derive advantage from my altered condition—as perfectly independent of me as I of them; and yet even they showed that degree of deference in their manner which the expectant bestows upon a patron. So it is, however. The position which wealth confers is recognised by all—the individual who fills it is but an attribute of the station.

Life had, indeed, opened on me with a new and very different aspect, and I felt, as I indulged in the day-dreams which the sudden possession of fortune excites, that to enjoy thoroughly the blessings of independence, one must have experienced, as I had, the hard pressure of adversity. It seemed to me that the long road of gloomy fate had at length reached its turning point, and that I should now travel along a calmer and a happier path.

Thoughts of the new career that lay before me were blended with the memories of the past—hopes they were, but dashed with the shadows which a blighted affection will throw over the whole stream of life. Still, that evening was one of happiness—not of that excited pleasure derived from the attainment of a long-coveted object, but the calmer enjoyment felt in the safety of the haven by him who has experienced the hurricane and the storm. With such thoughts I went to rest, and laid my head on my pillow in thoughtfulness and peace. In my dreams my troubles still lingered; but who regrets the anxious minutes of a vision, which wakening thoughts dispel—are they not rather the mountain shadows that serve to brighten the gleam of the sun-light in the plain?

It was thus the morning broke for me; with all the ecstasy of danger passed, and all the crowding hopes of a happy future. The hundred speculations which in poverty I had formed for the comfort of the poor and the humble, might now be realised, and I fancied myself the centre of a happy peasantry, confiding and contented.

It would be hard indeed to forget "the camp and the tented field," in the peaceful paths of a country life; but simple duties are often as

engrossing as those of a higher order, and bring a reward not less grateful to the heart, and I flattered myself to think my ambition reached not above them.

The moments in which such day-dreams are indulged are the very happiest of a lifetime. The hopes which are based on the benefits we may render to others, are sources of elevation to ourselves; and such motives purify the soul, and exalt the mind to a pitch far above the petty ambitions of the world.

To myself, and to my own enjoyments, wealth could contribute less than to most men. The simple habits of a soldier's life satisfied every wish of my mind. The luxuries which custom makes necessary to others I never knew; and I formed my resolution not to wander from this path of humble, inexpensive tastes, so that the stream of charity might flow the wider.

These were my waking thoughts. Alas, how little do we ever realise of such speculations! and how few glide down the stream of life unswayed by the eddies and cross-currents of fortune! The higher we build the temple of our hopes, the more surely will it topple to its fall. Who shall say that our greatest enjoyment is not in raising the pile, and our happiest hours the full abandonment to those hopes our calmer reason never ratified? As yet it had not occurred to me to think what position the world might concede to one, whose life had been passed like mine; nor did I bestow a care upon a matter whereon so much of future happiness depended. These, however, were considerations which could not be long averted. How they came, and in what manner they were met, must remain for a future chapter of my history.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

A HASTY RESOLUTION.

In my last chapter I brought my reader to that portion of my story which formed the turning point of my destiny; and here I might, perhaps, conclude these brief memoirs of an early life, whose chief object was, to point out the results of a hasty and rash judgment, which, formed in mere boyhood, exerted its influence throughout the entire of a lifetime. One only incident remains still to be told; and I shall not trespass on the good-natured patience of my readers by any delay in the narrative.

From being poor, houseless, and unknown, a sudden turn of fortune had made me wealthy and conspicuous in station—the owner of a large estate—almost a leading man in my native county. My influence was enabled to procure the liberation of M'Keown; and my interference in his behalf mainly contributed to procure for Fortescue the royal pardon. The world, as the phrase is, went well with me; and the good luck which attended every step I took, and every plan I engaged in, was become a proverb among my neighbours.

Let not any one suppose I was unmindful or ungrateful, if I confess, that, even with all these, I was not happy. No. The tranquil mind, the spirit at ease with itself, cannot exist where the sense of duty is not. The impulse which swayed my boyish heart still moved the ambition of the man. The pursuits I should have deemed the noblest and the purest, seemed to me, uninteresting, and ignoble—the associations I ought to have felt the happiest and the highest, appeared to me vulgar, and low, and common-place. I was disappointed in my early dream of liberty, and had found tyranny where I looked for freedom, and intolerance where I expected enlightenment; but if so, I recurred with tenfold enthusiasm to the career of the soldier, whose glories were ever before me. That noble path had not deceived me—far from it: its wild and whirlwind excitement, its hazardous enterprise, its ever-present dangers, were stimulants I loved and gloried in. All the chances and changes of a peaceful life were poor and mean, compared to the hourly vicissitudes of war. I knew not then, it is true, how much of enjoyment I derived from forgetfulness—how many of my springs of happiness flowed from that pre-occupation which prevented my dwelling on the only passion that ever stirred my heart—my love for one whose love was hopeless.

How thoroughly will the character of an early love tinge the whole of a life! Our affections are like flowers: they derive their sweetness and their bloom from the soil in which they grow—some budding in joy and gladness, amid the tinkling plash of a glittering

fountain, live on ever bright and beautiful; others, struggling on 'mid thorns and wild weeds, overshadowed by gloom, preserve their early impressions to the last—their very sweetness tells of sadness.

To conquer the memory of this hopeless passion, I tried a hundred ways. I endeavoured, by giving myself up to the duties of a country gentleman, to become absorbed in all the cares and pursuits which had such interest for my neighbours. Failing in this, I became a sportsman. I kept horses and dogs, and entered, with all the zest mere determination can impart, upon that life of manly exertion so full of pleasure to thousands—but here again without succeeding.

I went into society, but soon retired from it, on finding that, among the class of my equals, the prestige of my early life had still tracked me. I was, in their eyes, a rebel, whose better fortune had saved him from the fate of his companions. My youth had given no guarantee for my manhood; and I was not trusted. Baffled in every endeavour to obliterate my secret grief, I recurred to it now, as though privileged by fate, to indulge a memory nothing could efface. I abandoned all the petty appliances by which I sought to shut out the past, and gave myself up in full abandonment to the luxury of my melancholy.

Living entirely within the walls of my demesne, never seen by my neighbours, not making nor receiving visits, I appeared to many a heartless recluse, whose misanthropy sought indulgence in solitude. Others, less harshly, judged me as one whose unhappy entrance on life had unfitted him for the station to which fortune had elevated him. By both I was soon forgotten.

The peasantry were less ungenerous, and more just. They saw in me one who felt acutely for the privations they were suffering; yet never gave them that cheap, delusive hope, that legislative changes will touch social evils—that the acts of a parliament will penetrate the thousand tortuous windings of a poor man's destiny. They found in me a friend and an adviser. They only wondered at one thing—how any man could feel for the poor, and not hate the rich. So long had the struggle lasted between affluence and misery, they could not understand a compromise. Bitter as their poverty had been, it never extinguished the poetry of their lives. They were hungry and naked; but they held to their ancient traditions, and they built on them great hopes for the future. The old family names—the time-honoured memories of place—the famous deeds of ancestors, made an ideal existence, powerful enough to exclude the pressure of actual daily evils; and they argued from what had been, to what might be, with a persistency of hope it seemed almost cruel to destroy. So deeply were these thoughts engrained into their natures, they felt him but half their friend who ventured to despise them. The relief of present poverty—the succour of actual suffering, became in their eyes an effort of mere passing kindness. They looked to some great amelioration of condition—some wondrous change—some restoration to an imaginary standard of independence and comfort, which all the efforts of common interference fell sadly short of; and thus they strained their gaze to a

government, a ruling power, for a boon undefined, unknown, and illimitable.

To expectations like these, advice and slight assistance are as the mere drop of water to the parched tongue of thirst, and so I found it. I could neither encourage them in their hopes of such legislative changes as would greatly ameliorate their condition, nor flatter them in the delusion, that none of their misfortunes were of home origin; and thus, if they felt gratitude for many kindnesses, they reposed no confidence in my opinion. The trading patriot, who promised much, while he pocketted their hard earned savings; the rabid newspaper writer, who libelled the government, and denounced the landlord, were their standards of sympathy, and he who fell short of either, was not their friend.

In a word, the social state of the people was rotten to its very core. Their highest qualities, degraded by the combined force of poverty, misrule, and superstition, had become sources of crime and misery. They had suffered so long and so much; their patience was exhausted, and they preferred the prospect of any violent convulsion which might change the face of the land, whatever dangers it might come with, to a slow and gradual improvement of condition, however safe and certain.

To win their confidence at the only price they would accord it, I never could consent to, and without it, I was almost powerless for good. Here again, therefore, did I find closed against me another avenue for exertion, and the only one of all I could have felt a fitting sphere for my labour. The violence of their own passionate natures, the headlong impulses by which they suffered themselves to be swayed, left them no power of judgment regarding those whose views were more moderate and temperate. They could understand the high tory landlord, whom they invested with every attribute of tyranny, as their open, candid opponent. They could see a warm friend, in the violent mob-orator of the day; but they recognized no trait of kindness in him who would rather see them fed than flattered, and behold them in the enjoyment of comfort sooner than in the ecstacy of triumph.

From "Darby the Blast," for he was now a member of my household, I learned the light in which I was regarded by the people, and heard the dissatisfaction they expressed that one who "sarved Boney," should not be ready to head a rising, if need be. Thus was I in a false position on every side. Mistrusted by all, because I would neither enter into the exaggerations of party, nor become blind to the truth my senses revealed before me, my sphere of utility was narrowed to the discharge of the mere duties of common charity and benevolence, and my presence among my tenantry no more productive of benefit, than if I had left my purse as my representative.

Years rolled on, and in the noiseless track of time, I forgot its flight. I now had grown so wedded to the habits of my solitary life, that its very monotony was a source of pleasure. I had entrenched myself within a little circle of enjoyments, and among my books and in my walks my days went pleasantly over.

For a long time I did not dare to read the daily papers, nor learn the great events which agitated Europe. I tried to think that an interval of repose would leave me indifferent to their mention, and so rigidly did I abstain from indulging my curiosity, that the burning of Moscow and the commencement of the dreadful retreat which followed, was the first fact I read of.

From the moment I gave way, the passion for intelligence from France became a perfect mania. Where were the different corps of the "Grand army?" Where the Emperor himself? By what great stroke of genius would he emerge from the difficulties around him, and deal one of his fatal blows on the enemy? were the questions which met me as I awoke, and tortured me during the day.

Each movement of that terrible retreat I followed in the gazettes, with an anxiety verging on insanity, I tracked the long journey on the map, and as I counted towns and villages, dreary deserts of snow, and vast rivers to be traversed, my heart grew faint, to think how many a brave soldier would never reach that fair France, for whose glory he had shed his best blood.

Disaster followed disaster, and as the news reached England, came accounts of those great defections which weakened the force of the "Grand army," and deranged the places formed for its retiring movements.

They who can recall to mind the time I speak of, will remember the effect produced in England by the daily accounts from the seat of war, how heavily fell the blows of that altered fortune which once rested on the eagles of France—how each new bulletin announced another feature of misfortune, some shattered remnant of a great corps d'armée cut off by Cossacks, some dreadful battle engaged against superior numbers, and fought with desperation not for victory, but the liberty to retreat. Great names were mentioned among the slain, and the proudest chivalry of Gaul left to perish on the far off steppes of Russia.

Such were the fearful tales men read of that terrible campaign; and the joy in England was great, to hear that the most powerful of her enemies had at length experienced the full bitterness of defeat. While men vied with each other in stories of the misfortunes of the Emperor, when each post added another to the long catalogue of disasters to the grand army, I sat in my lonely house, in a remote part of Ireland, brooding over the sad reverses of him, who still formed my ideal of a hero.

I thought how, amid the crumbling ruins of his splendid force, his great soul would survive the crash, that made all others despair—that each new evil would suggest its remedy, as it arose, and the mind that never failed in expedient would shine out more brilliantly through the gloom of darkening fortune, than even it had done in the noonday splendour of success. When all others could only see the tremendous energy of despair, I thought I could recognise those glorious outbursts of heroism by which a French army sought and won the favour of their Emperor. The routed and straggling bodies which hurried along in

seeming disorder, I gloried to perceive could assume all the port and bearing of soldiers at the approach of danger, and form their ranks at the wild "houra" of the Cossack, as steadily as in the proudest day of of their prosperity.

The retreat continued. The horrible suffering of a Russian, winter, added to the carnage of a battle-tide, which flowed on unceasingly, from the ruined walls of the Kremlin to the banks of the Vistula. The battle of Borisow and the passage of the Béresena followed fast on each other; and now, we heard that the Emperor had surrendered the chief command to Murat, and was hastening back to France with lightning speed, for already the day of his evil fortune had thrown its shadow over the capital. No longer reckoned by tens of thousands, that vast army had now dwindled down to divisions of a few hundred men. The Old Guard scarce exceeded one thousand, ; and of twenty entire regiments of cavalry, Murat mustered a single squadron as a body-guard. Crowds of wounded and mutilated men dragged their weary limbs along over the hardened snow, or through dense pine forests, where no villages were to be met with—a fatuous determination to strive to reach France, the only impulse surviving amid all their sufferings.

The defections of D'York and Massenbach then began that new feature of disaster, which was so soon to burst forth with all the fell fury of long pent up hatred. The nationality of Germany—so long—so cruelly insulted—now saw the day of retribution arrive. Misfortune hastened misfortune, and defeat engendered treason in the ranks of the Emperor's allies. Murat, too, the favourite of Napoleon, the King of his creation, deserted him now, and fled ignominiously from the command of the army.

The Elbe—the Elbe—was now the cry amid the shattered ranks of that army, which but a year before saw no limit to its glorious path. The Elbe was the only line remaining which promised a moment's repose from the fatigues and privations of months long. Along that road the army could halt, and stem the tide of pursuit, however hotly it pressed. The Prussians had already united with the Russians—the defection of Austria could not be long distant. Saxony was appealed to, as a member of the German family, to join in arms against the Tyrant; and the wild hourra of the Cossack now blended with the loud "Forwärts" of injured Prussia.

Where shall he seek succour now? What remains to him in this last eventful struggle? How shall the Emperor call back to life the legions by whose valour his great victories were gained, and Europe made a vassal at the foot of his throne? Such was the thought that never left me day or night. Ever present before me was his calm brow, and his face paler, but not less handsome than its wont. I could recal his rapid glance—the quick and hurried motion of his hand—his short and thick utterance, as words of command fell from his lips—and his smile, as he heard some intelligence with pleasure.

I could not sleep—scarcely could I eat. A feverish excitement burned through my frame, and my parched tongue and hot hand told how the very springs of health were dried up within me. I walked

with hurried steps from place to place, now muttering the words of some despatch—now fancying that I was sent with orders for a movement of troops. As I rode I spurred my horse to a gallop, and in my heated imagination believed I was in presence of the enemy, and preparing for the fray. Great as my exhaustion often was, weariness brought no rest. Often I returned home at evening, overcome by fatigue, but a sleepless night, tortured with anxieties, and harassed with doubts and fears, followed, and I awoke to pursue the same path, 'till in my weakened frame and hectic cheek the signs of illness could no longer be mistaken.

Terrified at the ravages a few weeks had made in my health, and fearful what secret malady was preying upon me, Darby, without asking any leave from me, left the house one morning at daybreak, and returned with the physician of the neighbouring town. I was about to mount my horse, when I saw them coming up the avenue, and immediately guessed the object of the visit. A moment was enough to decide me as the course to pursue ; for, well knowing how disposed the world ever is to stamp the impress of wandering intellect on any habit of mere eccentricity, I resolved to receive the doctor as though I was glad of his coming, and consult with him regarding my state. This would at least refute such a scandal, by enlisting the physician among the allies of my cause.

By good fortune, Dr. Clibborn was a man of shrewd common sense, as well as a physician of no mean skill. In the brief conversation we held together, I perceived that while he paid all requisite attention to any detail which implied the existence of malady, his questions were more pointedly directed to the possibility of some mental cause of irritation—the source of my ailment. I could see, however, that his opinion inclined to the belief that the events of the trial had left their indelible traces on my mind, which inducing me to adopt a life of isolation and retirement, had now produced the effects he witnessed.

I was not sorry at this mistake on his part. By suffering him to indulge in this delusive impression, I saved myself all the trouble of concealing my real feelings, which I had no desire to expose before him. I permitted him, therefore, to reason with me on the groundless notions he supposed I had conceived of the world's feeling regarding me, and heard him patiently, as he detailed the course of public duty, by fulfilling, which I should occupy my fitting place in society, and best consult my own health and happiness.

"There are," said he, "certain fixed impressions, which I would not so combat. It was but yesterday, for instance, I yielded to the wish of an old general officer, who has served upwards of half a century, and desires once more to put himself at the head of his regiment. His heart was bent on it. I saw that though he might consent to abandon his purpose, I was not so sure his mind might bear the disappointment, for the intellect will sometimes go astray in endeavouring to retrace its steps. So I thought it better to concede what might cost more in the refusal."

The last words of the doctor remained in my head long after he took his leave, and I could not avoid applying them to my own case. Was

not *my* impression of this nature?—were not *my* thoughts all centered on one theme as fixedly as the officer's of whom he spoke? Could I, by any effort of my reason or my will, control my wandering fancies, and call them back to the dull realities amongst which I lived?

These were ever recurring to me, and always with the same reply: It is in vain to struggle against an impulse which has swallowed up all other ambitions. My heart is among the glittering ranks and neighing squadrons of France. I would be there once more. I would follow that career which first stirred the proudest hopes I ever cherished.

That same evening the mail brought the news that Eugene Beauharnois had fallen back on Magdebourg, and sent repeated despatches to the Emperor, entreating his immediate presence among the troops, whom nothing, but Napoleon himself in the midst of them, could restore to their wonted bravery and determination. The reply of Napoleon was briefly—

"I am coming; and all who love me, follow me."

How the words rang in my ears—"*Tous cœux qui m'aiment!*" I heard them in every rustling of the wind and motion of the leaves against the window. They were whispered to my sense by every avenue of my brain, and I sat no longer occupied in reading as usual, but with folded arms, repeating word by word the brief sentence.

It was midnight. All was still and silent through the house. No servant stirred, and the very wind was hushed to a perfect calm. I was sitting in my library when the words I have repeated seemed spoken in a low clear voice beside me. I started up—the perspiration broke over my forehead and fell upon my cheek with terror, for I knew I was alone; and the fearful thought flashed on me—this may be madness! For a second or two the agony of the idea was almost insupportable—then came a resolve as sudden. I opened my desk and took from it all the ready money I possessed. I wrote a few hurried lines to my agent, and then, making my way noiselessly to the stable, I saddled my horse and led him out.

In two hours I was nearly twenty miles on my way to Dublin. Day was breaking as I entered the capital. I made no delay there, but, taking fresh horses, started for Skerries, where I knew the fishermen of the coast resorted.

"One hundred pounds to the man who will land me on the coast of France or Holland," said I to a group that were preparing their nets on the shore.

A look of incredulity was the only reply. A very few words, however, settled the bargain. Ere half an hour I was on board. The wind freshened, and we stood out to sea.

"Let the breeze keep to this," said the skipper, "and we'll make the voyage quickly."

Both wind and tide were in our favour. We held down channel rapidly, and I saw the blue hills grow fainter and fainter, till the eye could but detect a grey cloud on the horizon, which at last disappeared in the bright sun of noon, and a wide waste of blue water lay on every side.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

THE LAST CAMPAIGN.

The snow, half melted with the heavy rains, lay still deeply on the roads, and a dark, lowering sky stretched above, as I hurried onwards, with all the speed I could, towards the east of France.

Already the Allies had passed the Rhine. Swartzenberg, in the south, Blucher in the east, and Bernadotte on the Flemish frontier, were conveying their vast armies to bear down on him whom, singly, none had dared to encounter. All France was in arms, and every step was turned eastwards. Immense troops of conscripts, many scarce of the age of boyhood, crowded the highways. The veterans themselves were enrolled once more, and formed battalions for the defence of their native land. Every town and village was a garrison. The deep-toned rolling of ammunition wagons, and the heavy tramp of horses sounded through the nights long. War, terrible war, spoke from every object around. Strongholds were strengthening, regiments brigading, cavalry organizing on all sides. No longer, however, did I witness the wild enthusiasm which I so well remembered among the soldiers of the army. Here were no glorious outbreaks of that daring spirit which so marked the Frenchman, and made him almost irresistable in arms. A sad and gloomy silence prevailed: a look of fierce, but hopeless, determination was over all. They marched like men to death, but with the step and bearing of heroes.

I entered the little town of Vervier. The day was breaking; but the troops were under arms. The Emperor had but just taken his departure for Chalons-sur-Marne. They told me of it as I changed horses; not with that fierce pride which a mere passing glance at the great Napoleon would once have evoked. They spoke of him without emotion. I asked if he were paler or thinner than his wont: they did not know. They said that he travelled post, but that his staff were on horseback. From this I gathered that he was either ill, or in that frame of mind in which he preferred to be alone. While I was yet speaking, an officer of engineers came up to the carriage, and called out—

"Unharness these horses, and bring them down to the barracks. These, sir," said he, turning towards me, "are not times to admit of ceremony. We have eighteen guns to move, and want cattle."

"Enough, sir," said I. "I am not here to retard your movements, but, if I can, to forward them. Can I, as a volunteer, be of any service at this moment?"

"Have you served before?—Of course you have though: in what arm?"

"As a hussar of the guard, for some years."

"Come along with me: I'll bring you to the general at once."

Re-entering the inn, the officer preceded me up stairs, and after a moment's delay, introduced me into the presence of General Letort, then commanding a cavalry brigade.

"I have heard your request, sir. Where is your commission? Have you got it with you?"

I handed it to him in silence. He examined it rapidly, and then turning the reverse, read the few lines inscribed by the minister of war.

"I could have given you a post this day, sir, this very hour," said he, "but for a blunder of our commissariat people. There's a troop here waiting for a re-mount, but the order has not come down from Paris, and our officials here will not advance the money till it arrives, as if these were times for such punctilio. They are to form part of General Kellerman's force, which is sadly deficient. Remain here, however, and perhaps by to-morrow——"

"How much may the sum be, sir?" asked I, interrupting.

The general almost started with surprize at the abruptness of my question, and in a tone of half reproof, answered—

"The amount required is beside the matter, sir; unless," added he, sarcastically, "you are disposed to advance it yourself."

"Such was the object of my question," said I calmly, and determining not to notice the manner he had assumed.

"*Parbleu,*" exclaimed he; "that is very different. "Twenty thousand francs, however, is a considerable sum."

"I have as much, and something more, if need be, in my carriage—if English gold be no objection."

"No, *pardie*, that it is not," cried he, laughing; "I only wish we saw more of it. Are you serious in all this?"

The best reply to his question was to hasten down stairs, and return with two small canvas bags in my hands.

"Here are one thousand guineas," said I, laying them on the table.

While one of the general's aid-de-camps was counting and examining the gold, I repeated, at his request, the circumstances which brought me once again to France, to serve under the banner of the Emperor.

"And your name, sir," said he, as he seated himself to write, "is Thomas Burke, *ci-devant* captain of the eighth hussars of the guard. Well, I can promise you the restoration of your old grade. Meanwhile, you must take command of these fellows—they are mere partizan troops, hurriedly raised, and ill organized; but I'll give you a letter to General Damremont, at Chalons, and he'll attend to you."

"It is not a position for myself I seek, general," said I. "Wherever I can best serve the Emperor, there only I desire to be."

"I have ventured to leave that point to General Damremont," said he, smiling. "Your motives do not require much explanation. Let us to breakfast now, and by noon we shall have every thing in readiness for your departure."

Thus rapidly, and as it were by the merest accident, was I again become a soldier of the Emperor, and that same day was once more

at the head of a squadron, on my way to Chalons. My troop were indeed very unlike the splendid array of my old hussars of the guard. They were hurriedly raised, and not over well equipped, but still they were stout-looking, hardy peasants, who, whatever deficiency of drill they might display, I knew well would exhibit no lack of courage before an enemy.

On reaching Chalons I found that General Damremont had left with the staff for Vitry only a few hours before, and so I reported myself to the officer commanding the town, and was ordered by him to join the cavalry brigade then advancing on Vitry.

Had I time at this moment I could not help devoting some minutes to an account of that strange and motley mass which then were brigaded as imperial cavalry. Dragoons of every class, heavy and light-armed, grenadiers-a-cheval and hussars, cuirassiers, carbineers, and lancers, were all, pell-mell, mixed up confusedly together, and hurried onwards, some to join their respective corps if they could find them, but all prepared to serve wherever their sabres might be called for. It was confusion to the last degree, but a tumult without enthusiasm or impulse. The superior officers, who were well acquainted with the state of events, made no secret of their gloomy forebodings. The juniors lacked energy in a cause where they saw no field for advancement, and the soldiers, always prepared to imbibe their feelings from their officers, seemed alike sad and dispirited. What a change was this from the wild and joyous spirit which once animated every grade and class—from the generous enthusiasm that once warmed each bold heart, and made every soldier a hero! Alas! the terrible consequences of long defeat were on all;—the tide of battle that rolled disastrously from the ruined walls of the Kremlin still swept along towards the great palace of the Tuileries. Germany had witnessed the destruction of two mighty armies—the third and last was now awaiting the eventful struggle on the very soil of their country. The tide of fugitives, which preceded the retiring columns of Victor and Ney, met the advancing bodies of the conscripts, and spread dismay and consternation as they went. The dejection was but the shadow of the last approaching disaster.

On the night of the 27th January, the cavalry brigade, with which I was, received orders to march by the forest of Bar on Brienne, where Blucher was stationed in no expectation of being attacked.

The movement, notwithstanding the heavy roads, was made with great rapidity, and by noon on the following day we came up with the main body of the army in full march against the enemy. Then, once more, did I recognize the old spirit of the army. Joyous songs and gay cheers were heard from the different corps we passed. The announcement of a speedy meeting with the Prussians had infused new vigour among the troops. We were emerging from the deep shade of the wood into a valley, where a light-infantry regiment were bivouacked. Their fires were formed in a wide circle, and the cooking went merrily on, amid the pleasant song and jocund cries. Our own brief halt was just concluded when the bugles sounded to resume the march, and I

stood for a moment admiring the merry gambols of the infantry, when an air I well remembered was chanted forth in full chorus; but my memory was not left long in doubt as to where and how these sounds were first heard. The wild uproar at once recalled both, as they sang out—

"Hurrah for the Faubourg of St. Antoine!"

No sooner did I hear the words than I spurred my horse forward and rode down towards them—

"What regiment's yours, comrade?" said I to a fellow hurrying to the ranks.

"The fifth, *mon officier*," said he—"voltigeurs of the line."

"Have you a certain François, a maitre-d'-armes, still among you?"

"Yes, that we have. There he is, yonder, beating time to the roulade."

I looked in the direction he pointed, and there stood my old friend. He was advanced in front of a company, and with the air of a tambour-major, he seemed as if he was giving the time to the melody.

"Ah, *sacré* conscripts that ye are!" cried he, as with his fist clenched he gesticulated fiercely towards them. "Can't ye keep the measure? Once, now, and all together. Picardy first, and then ——"

"Holloa! Maitre François, can you remember an old friend?"

The little man turned suddenly, and, bringing his hand to the salute, remained stiff and erect, as if on parade.

"*Connais pas—mon Capitaine*," was his answer, after a considerable pause.

"What! not know me!—me, whom you made one of your own gallant company, calling me 'Burke of ours?'"

"Ah, *par la barbe de St. Pierre!* is this my dear comrade of the eighth? Why, where have you been? They said you left us for ever and aye."

"I tried it, Francois, but it wouldn't do."

"*Mille bombes!*!" said he, "but you're back in pleasant times—to see the Cossacks learning to drink Champagne, and leave us to pay the score. Come along, however—take your old place here. You are free to choose now, and needn't be a dragoon any longer;—not but that your old General will be glad to see you again."

"General D'Auvergne—where is he now?"

"With the light cavalry brigade, in front. I saw him pass here, two hours since."

"And, how looks he, François?"

"A little stooped, or so—more than you knew him—but his seat in the saddle seems just as firm. *Ventre bleu!* if he'd been a voltigeur, he'd be a good man those ten years to come."

Delighted to learn that I was so near my dearest and oldest friend in the world, I shook François' hand, and parted—but not without a

pledge, that, whenever I joined the infantry, the 5th Voltigeurs of the line were to have the preference.

As we advanced towards Brienne, the distant thundering of large guns was heard—which gradually grew louder, and more sustained, and betokened that the battle had already begun. The roads, blocked up with dense masses of infantry, and long trains of wagons, prevented our rapid advance—and when we tried the fields at either side, the soil, cut up with recent rains, made us sink to the very girths of our horses—still, order after order came for the troops to press forward, and every effort was made to obey the command.

It was five o'clock as we debouched into the plain, and beheld the fields whereon the battle had been contested—for, already, the enemy were retiring, and the French troops in eager pursuit. Behind, however, lay the town of Brienne, still held by the Russians, but now little better than a heap of smoking ruins—the tremendous fire of the French artillery having reduced the place to ashes. Conspicuous above all, rose the dismantled walls of the ancient military college—the school where Napoleon had learned his first lesson in war—where first he essayed to point those guns, which now with such fearful havoc, he turned against itself.

What a strange, sad subject of contemplation for him who now gazed on it! On either side, the fire of the artillery continued till nightfall—but the Russians still held the town. A few straggling shots closed the combat, and darkness now spread over the wide plain, save where the watchfires marked out the position of the French troops. A sudden flash of lurid flame, however, threw its gleam over the town, and a wild cheer was heard rising above the clatter of musketry. It was a surprise party of grenadiers, who had forced their way into the grounds of the old Chateau, where Blucher held his head-quarters. Louder and louder grew the firing, and a red glare in the dark sky told how the battle was raging.

Up that steep street, at top of which the venerable Chateau stood, poured the infantry columns in a run. The struggle was short—the dull sound of the Russian drum soon proclaimed a retreat—and a rocket darting through the black sky, announced to the Emperor that the position had been won.

The next day, the Emperor fixed his head-quarters at the Chateau, and a battalion of the guard bivouacked in the park around it. I had sent forward the letter to General Damremont, and was wondering when, and in what terms, the reply might come, when the general himself rode up, accompanied by a single aide-de-camp.

"I have had the opportunity, sir, to speak of your conduct in the proper quarter," said he, courteously, "and the result is, your appointment as major of the 10th Hussars—or, if you prefer it, the staff."

"Wherever, sir, my humble services can best be employed. I have no other wish."

"Then take the regimental rank" said he; "your brigade will see

enough of hot work, ere long—and now, push forward to Maiziere, where you'll find your regiment—they have received orders to march to-morrow early."

I was not sorry to be relieved from the command of my irregular horse, who went by the title of "brigands" in the army generally—though if truth were to be told, the reproach, on the score of honesty, came ill from those who conferred it. Still, it was a more gratifying position, to hold rank in a regiment of regular cavalry, and one whose reputation was second to none in the service.

"I wish to present myself to the colonel in command, sir," said I, addressing an officer, who, with two or three others, stood chatting at the door of a cottage.

"You'll find him here, sir," said he, pointing to the hut—but as he spoke, the clank of a sabre was heard, and at the same instant, a tall, soldier-like figure, stooped beneath the low door-way, and came forth.

"The colonel of the 10th, I presume," said I, handing the despatch from General Damremont.

"What! my old college friend, and companion," cried the colonel, as he stepped back in amazement—"have I such good fortune, as to see you in my regiment?"

"Can it be really so?" said I, in equal astonishment—"are you Tascher?"

"Yes, my dear friend—the same Tascher you used to disarm so easily at college—a colonel at last—but, why are you not at the head of a regiment long since? Oh! I forgot, though," said he, in some confusion—"I heard all about it; but, come in here, I've no better quarters to offer you—but, such as it is, make it yours."

My old companion of the Polytechnique was, indeed, little altered by time—careless, inconsiderate, and good-hearted as ever—he told me that he had only gained the command of the regiment a few weeks before—"and," added he, "if matters mend not soon, I am scarcely like to hold it much longer. The despatches just received, tell that the Allies are concentrating at Trannes—and if so, we shall have a battle against overwhelming odds. No matter, Burke, you have got into a famous corps—they fight splendidly—and my excellent uncle, his Majesty, loves to indulge their predilection."

I passed the day with Tascher, chatting over our respective fortunes; and in discussing the past and the future, the greater part of the night went over. Before dawn, however, we were on the march towards Chaumiere, whither the army was directed, and the Emperor himself then stationed.

It was the first of February, and the weather was dark, louring, and gloomy—a cold wind drove the snow-drift in fitful gusts before it, and the deep roads made our progress slow and difficult. As our line of advance, however, was not that by which the other divisions were marching, it was already past noon before we knew that the enemy was but three leagues distant.

On advancing farther, we heard the faint sounds of a cannonade,

and then they grew louder and louder, till the whole air seemed tremulous with the concussion.

"A heavy fire, colonel," said a veteran officer of the regiment. "I should guess there are not less than eighty or a hundred guns engaged."

"Press on, men, press on," cried Tascher. "When his Majesty provides such music, it's scarcely polite to be late."

At a quick trot we came on, and about three o'clock debouched in the plain behind Oudinot's battalions of reserve, which were formed in two dense columns, about a hundred yards apart.

"Hussars to the front!" cried an aide-de-camp, as he galloped past, and waved his cap in the direction of the space between the columns.

In separate squadrons we penetrated through the defile, and came out on an open plain behind the centre of the first line.

The ground was sufficiently elevated here, so that I could overlook the front line; but all I could see was a dense heavy smoke, which intervened between the two positions, in the midst of which, and directly in front, a village lay. Towards this, three columns of infantry were converging, and around, the sounds of battle were raging. This was La Giberie—the hamlet formed the key of the French position, and had been twice carried by, and twice regained from the allies. As I looked, the supporting columns halted, wheeled and retired, while a tremendous shower of grape was poured upon them from the village, which now seemed to have been retaken by the allies.

"Cavalry to the front!" was now the order, and a force of six thousand sabres advanced from between the battalions, and formed for attack. It was Nansouty who led them, and his heavy cuirassiers were in the van; then came the grenadiers à cheval; ours was the third, in column. As each regiment debouched, the word "Charge!" rung out, and forward we went. The snow drifting straight against us, we could see nothing, nor was I conscious of any check to our course, till the shaking of the vast column in front, and then the opening of the squadrons, denoted resistance, when suddenly a flash flared out, and a hurricane of cannon-shot tore through our dense files. Then, I knew that we were attacking a battery of guns, and not till then. Mad cheers, and cries of wounded men, burst forth upon the air, with the clashing din of sabres and small arms. The mass of cavalry appeared to heave ,and throe like some great monster in its agony. The trumpet to retreat sounded, and we galloped back to our lines, leaving above five hundred dead behind us, on a field where I had not yet seen the enemy. Meanwhile the Russians were assembling a mighty force around the village, for now the cannonade opened with tenfold vigour in front, and fresh guns were called up to reply to the fire. Hitherto all was shrouded in the blue smoke of the artillery, and the dense flakes of the snow-drift, when suddenly a storm of wind swept past, carrying with it both sleet and smoke, and now, within less than five hundred yards, we beheld the allied armies in front of us. Two of the three villages, which formed our advanced position,

already had been carried, and towards the third, La Rothiere, they were advancing quickly.

Ney's corps, ordered up to its defence, rushed boldly on, and the clattering musketry announced that they were engaged, while twelve guns were moved up, in full gallop, to their support, and opened their fire at once. Scarce had they done so, when a wild hurra was heard, and like a whirlwind, a vast mass of cavalry, the Cossacks of the Don, and the Uhlans of the south, commingled and mixed, bear down on the guns. The struggle is for life or death. No quarter given. Ney recalls his columns, and the guns are lost.

"Who shall bring the Emperor the tidings," said Tascher, as his voice trembled with excitement. "I'd rather storm the battery single-handed than do it."

"He has seen worse than that already to-day," said an aide-de-camp, at our side. "He has seen Lahories' squadrons of the dragoons of the guard cut to pieces by the Russian horse."

"The guard! the guard!" repeated Tascher, in accents where doubt and despair were blended.

"There goes another battalion to certain death," muttered the aide-de-camp, as he pointed to a column of grenadiers emerging from the front line. "See, I knew it well, they are moving on La Rothiere. But here comes the Emperor."

Before I could detect the figure among the crowd, the staff tore rapidly past, followed by a long train of cavalry moving towards the left.

"His favourite stroke," said Tascher: "an infantry advance, and a flank movement with cavalry."

And as the words escaped him, we saw the horsemen bearing down at top speed towards the village. But now we could look no longer; our brigade was ordered to support the attack, and we advanced at a trot. The enemy saw the movement, and a great mass of cavalry were thrown out to meet it.

"Here they come!" was the cry repeated by three or four together, and the earth shook as the squadrons came down. Our column dashed forward to meet them, when suddenly through the drift, we beheld a mass of fugitives, scattered and broken, approaching. They were our own cavalry, routed in the attempt on the flank, now flying to the rear broken and disordered.

Before we could cover their retreat, the enemy were upon us. The shock was dreadful, and for some minutes carried all before it; but then rallying, the brave horsemen of France closed up and faced the foe. How vain all the efforts of the redoubted warrior of the Dnieper and the Wolga against the stern soldier of Napoleon. Their sabres flashed like lightning glances, and as fatally bore down on all before them; and as the routed squadrons fell back, the wild cheers of *Vive l'Empereur* told that one great moment of success at least, atoned for the misfortunes of the day.

"His Majesty saw your charge, Colonel," said a general officer to Tascher, as he rode back at the head of a squadron. "So gallant a thing as that never goes unrewarded."

Tascher's cheek flushed as he bowed in acknowledgment of the praise, but I heard him mutter to himself the same instant—"Too late—too late!—fatal words they were—the presage of the mishap they threatened!

A great attack on La Rothiere was now preparing. It was to be made by Napoleon's favourite manœuvre of cavalry, artillery, and infantry combined, each supporting and sustaining the other. Eighteen guns, with three thousand sabres, and two columns of infantry, numbering four thousand each, were drawn up in readiness for the moment to move. Ney received orders to lead them, and now, they issued forth into the plain.

Our own impatience at not being of the number was quickly merged in intense anxiety for the result. It was a gorgeous thing, indeed, to see that mighty mass unravelling itself. The guns galloping madly to the front, supported on either flank by cavalry; while masked behind, marched the black columns of infantry, their tall shakos nodding like the tree tops of a forest. The snow was now falling fast, and the figures grew fainter and fainter, and all that remained within our view was the tail of the columns, which were only disengaging themselves from the lines. A deafening cannonade opened from the allied artillery on the advance, unreplied to by our guns, which were ordered not to fire until within half range of the enemy. Suddenly a figure is seen emerging from the heavy snow-drift at the full speed of his horse. Another, and another follows him in quick succession. They make for the position of the Emperor. "What can it be?" cries each in horrible suspense. See! the columns have halted. Dreadful tidings! The guns are imbedded in the soft ground—the horses cannot stir them—one-half of the distance is scarcely won—and there they are, beneath the withering cannonade of the allied guns, powerless and immoveable. Cavalry are dismounted, and the horses harnessed to the teams—all in vain—the wheels sink deeper in the miry earth; and now the enemy have found out the range, and their shot are sweeping through the dense mass with frightful slaughter. Again the aides-de-camp hasten to the rear for orders; but Ney can wait no longer. He launches his cavalry at the foe, and orders up the infantry to follow. Meanwhile a great cloud of cavalry issues from the allied lines, and directs its course towards the flank of the column. The Emperor sees the danger, and despatches one of his staff to prepare them to receive cavalry. Too late!—too late! The snow-drift has concealed the advance, and the wild horsemen of the desert ride down on the brave ranks. Disorder and confusion ensue. The column breaks and scatters. The lancers pursue the fugitives through the plain, and before the very eyes of the Emperor, the Guard—*his* Guard—are sabred and routed.

What is to become of our cavalry is now the cry; for they have advanced unsupported against the village? Dreadful moment of suspense! None can see them. The guns lie deserted, alike by friend and foe. Who dares approach them now? "They are cheering yonder," exclaimed an officer. "I hear them again."

"Hussars, to the front," calls out Damremont—"to your comrades'

rescue—Men, yonder;" and he points in the direction of the village.

Like an eagle on the swoop, the swift squadrons skim the plain, and mount the slope beyond it. The drift clears, and what a spectacle is before us! The cavalry are dismounted; their horses, dead or dying, cumber the ground; the men, sabre in hand, have attacked the village by assault. Two of the enemy's guns are taken, and turned against them; and the walls are won in many places.

An opening in the enclosure of a farm-yard admits our leading squadron; and in an instant we have taken them in flank and rear.

The Russians will neither retreat nor surrender; and the carnage is awful: for, though overpowered by numbers, they still continue the slaughter, and deal death while dying. The chief farm-house of the village has been carried by our troops; but the enemy still holds the garden. The low hedge offers a slight obstacle; and over it we dash; and down upon them ride the gallant 10th, with cheers of victory.

At this instant the crashing sound of cannnon-shot among masonry is heard. It is the allied artillery, which, regardless of their own troops, has opened on the village. Every discharge tells; the range is at quarter distance; and whole files fall at every fire. The trumpet sounds an retreat; and I am endeavouring to collect my scattered followers, when my eye falls on the aigulette of a general officer among the heap of dead; and at the same time I perceive that some old and gallant officer has fallen sword in hand, for his long white hair is strewn loosely across his face. I spring down from my horse, and push back the snowy locks, and with a shriek of horror I recognise the friend of my heart, General D'Auvergne. I lift him in my arms, and search for the wound. Alas! a grape-shot had torn through his chest, and cut asunder that noble heart, whose every beat was honour. Though still warm, no ray of life remained. The hand I had so often grasped in friendship, I wrung now in the last energy of despair, and fell upon the corpse in the agony of my grief.

The night was falling fast; all was still around me; none remained near; the village was deserted by both. The deafening din of the cannonade continued; and at times some straggling shot crashed through the crumbling walls, and brought them thundering to the earth—but all had fled. By the pale crescent of a new moon I dug a grave beneath the ruined wall of the farm-house. The labour was long and tedious; but my breaking heart took no note of time. My task completed, I sat down beside the grave, and taking his now cold hand in mine, pressed it to my lips. Oh! could I have shared that narrow bed of clay, what rapture would it have brought to my sorrowing soul. I lifted the body, and laid it gently in the earth; and as I arose, I found that something had entangled itself in my uniform, and held me. It seemed a locket, which he wore by a ribbon round his neck. I detached it from its place, and put it in my bosom. One lock of the snowy hair I severed from his noble head, and then covered up the grave.

"Adieu for ever," I muttered, as I wandered from the spot. It was the death of a true D'Auvergne "on the field of battle."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE BRIDGE OF MONTERAU.

Ere I left the village, a shower of shells was thrown into it from the French lines, and in a few minutes the whole blazed up in a red flame, and threw a wide glare over the battle-field. Spurring my horse to his speed, I galloped onward, and now discovered that our troops were retiring in all haste. The allies had won the battle, and we were falling back on Brienne.

Leaving seventy-three guns in the hands of the enemy, above one thousand prisoners, and six thousand killed in battle, Napoleon drew off his shattered forces, and marched through the long darkness of a winter's night. Thus ended the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, the most fatal for the hopes of the Emperor since the dreadful day of Leipzic.

From that hour fortune seemed to frown on those whose arms she had so often crowned with victory; and he himself, the mighty leader of so many conquering hosts, stood at the window of the chateau at Brienne the whole night long, dreading lest the enemy should be on his track. He whose battles were wont to be the ovations of a conqueror, now beheld with joy his masses retiring unpursued.

Why should I dwell on a career of disaster, or linger on the expiring moments of a mighty empire? Of what avail now are the re-inforcements which arrive to our aid—the veteran legions of the Peninsula? The cry is ever—"Too late! too late!" Dreadful words, heard at every moment!—sad omens of an army devoted and despairing! From Brienne we retreat to Troyes—from thence to Bar-sur-Aube—ever nearer and nearer to that capital, to which the allies tend with wild shouts of triumph. On the last day of February our head-quarters are at Nogent—not thirty leagues from Paris—Nogent, with the great forest of Fontainbleu on its left, and Meaux, the ancient bishopric of the monarchy, on its right, and, behind that screen, Paris! Leaving Bourmont in command of the line which holds the Austrians in check, the Emperor himself hastens to oppose Blucher, the most intrepid and the most daring of all his enemies.

A cross-march in the depth of winter, with the ground covered with half-frozen snow, will bring him on the flank of the Prussian army. It is dared. Dangers and difficulties beset every step—the artillery are almost lost, the cavalry exhausted. But the cry of "The enemy!" rouses every energy; they debouch on the plain of Champ-Aubert, to fall on the moving column of the Russians under Alsufief. Glorious stroke of fate! Victory again caresses the spoiled child of fortune. The enemy is routed, and retires on Montmirail and Chalons. The advanced army of the Prussians hear the cannonade, and fall back to support the allies on Montmirail; but the Emperor already awaits them with the bat-

talions of the Old Guard, and another great battle ends in victory. Arcola and Rivoli were again remembered, and recalled by victories not less glorious, and, once more, hope returned to the ranks it seemed to have quitted for ever. Another dreadful blow is aimed at Blucher's columns, and Marmont attacks them at Vaux-Champs, and the army of Silesia falls back beaten; and now the Emperor hastens towards Nogent, where he has left Bourmont in front of the Austrians. "Too late! too late!" is again the cry. The column of Oudinot and Victor are already in retreat. Schwartzenberg, with a force triple their own, advances on the plains of the Seine. The Cossacks bivouack in the forest of Fontainbleu. Staff-officers hurry onward with the news that the Emperor is approaching: the victorious army which had subdued Blucher is on the march, reinforced by the veteran cavalry of Spain and the tried legions of the Peninsula. They halt, and form in battle. The allies arrest their steps at Nangis, and again are beaten. Nangis becomes another name of glory to the ears of Frenchmen.

Let me rest one instant in this rapid recital of a week whose great deeds not even Napoleon's life can show the equal of—the last flash o. the lamp of glory ere it darkened for ever. Three days had elapsed from the sad hour in which I laid my dearest friend in his grave, ere I opened the locket I had taken from his bosom. The wild work of war mingled its mad excitement in my brain with thoughts of deep sorrow, and I lived in a kind of fevered dream, and hurried from the affliction which beset me into the torrent of danger.

The gambler who cares not to win, rarely loses—so he that seeks death in battle, comes unscathed through every danger. Each day I threw myself headlong into some post where escape seemed scarcely possible, but recklessness has its own armour of safety.

On the field of Montmirail I was reported to the Emperor; and for an attack on the Austrian rear-guard at Melun, made colonel of a cuirassier regiment on the field of battle. Such promotions reigned on every side. Hundreds were falling each day. Many regiments were commanded by officers of twenty-three or twenty-four years of age. Few expected to carry their new epaulettes beyond the engagement they gained them in. None believed the empire itself could survive the struggle. Each played for a mighty stake. Few cared to outlive the game itself. The Emperor showered down favors on the heads which each battle-field laid low.

It was on the return from Melun I first opened the locket, which I continued to wear around my neck. In the full expansion of a momentary triumph, to see myself at the head of a regiment, I thought of him who would have participated in my pride. I was sitting in the doorway of a little cabaret on the roadside, my squadrons picqueted around me, for a brief halt; and as my thoughts recurred to the brave D'Auvergne, I withdrew the locket from my bosom. It was a small oval case of gold, opening by a spring. I touched this, and as I did so, the locket sprung open, and displayed before me a miniature of Marie de Meudon. Yes, beautiful as I had seen her in the forest of Versailles, her dark hair clustering around her noble brow, and her

eyes, so full of tender loveliness, were there, shadowed by their deep fringes, as I remembered them. The lips were half parted, as though the artist had caught the speaking expression; and as I gazed, I could fancy that voice, so musically sweet, still ringing in my ears. I could not look on it enough. The features recalled the scenes when first I met her, and the strong current of love against which so long I struggled and contended, flowed on with ten-fold force once more. Should we ever meet again—and how? were the questions which rushed to my mind, and to which hope and fear dictated the replies. The locket was a present from the Empress to the general—at least so I interpreted an inscription on the back, and this—shall I confess it—brought pleasure to my heart.

Like one whose bosom bore some wondrous amulet—some charm against the approach of danger—I now rode at the head of my gallant band. Life had grown dearer to me, without death becoming more dreaded. Her image next my heart made me feel as if I should combat beneath her very eyes; and I burned to acquit myself as became one who loved her. A wild, half-frantic joy animated me as I went, and was caught by the gay companions around me.

At midnight a despatch reached me, ordering me to hasten forward by a forced march to Monterau, the bridge of which town was a post of the greatest importance, and must be held against the Austrians till Victor could come up. We lost not a moment. It was a calm frosty night, with a bright moon, and we hastened along without halting. About an hour before daybreak we were met by a cavalry patrol, who informed us that Gerard and Victor had both arrived, but too late. Monterau was held by the Wurtemburg troops, who garrisoned the village, and defended the bridge with a strong force of artillery. Twice the French troops had been beaten back with tremendous loss, and all looked for the morrow, to renew the encounter. We continued our journey; and as the sun was rising, discovered, at a distance on the road beside the river, the mass of an infantry column. It was the Emperor himself, come up with the guard, to attack the position.

Already the preparations for a fierce assault were in progress. A battery of twelve guns was posted on a height to command the bridge. Another, somewhat more distant, overlooked the village itself. Different bodies of infantry and cavalry were disposed wherever shelter presented itself, and ready for the command to move forward. The approach to the bridge was by a wide road, which lay for some distance along the river bank, and this was deeply channelled by the enemy's artillery, which stationed on and above the bridge, seemed to defy any attempt to advance.

Never, indeed, did an enterprise seem more full of danger. Every house which looked on the bridge was crenelated for small arms, and garrisoned by sharp-shooters—the fierce jägers of Germany, whose rifles are the boast of the Vaterland. Cannon bristled along the heights, their wide mouths pointed towards that devoted spot—already the grave of hundreds. Withdrawn under cover of a steep hill, my regiment was halted, with two other heavy cavalry corps, awaiting

orders, and from the crest of the ridge I could observe the first movements of the fight.

As usual, a fierce cannonade was opened from either side, which, directed mainly against the artillery itself, merely resulted in dismantling a stray battery here and there, without further damage. At last the hoarse roll of a drum was heard, and the head of an infantry column was seen advancing up the road. They passed beneath a rock, on which a little group of officers were standing, and as they went, a cheer of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" broke from them. I strained my eyes towards the place, for now I knew the Emperor himself was there. I could not, however, detect him in the crowd, who all waved their hats, in encouragement to the troops.

On they went, descending a steep declivity of the high road, to the bridge. Suddenly the cannonade redoubles from the side of the enemy; the shot whistles through the air, while ten thousand muskets peal forth together. I rivet my eyes to watch the column, but what is my horror, to perceive that none appear upon the ridge: the masses move up—they mount the ascent—they disappear behind it—and then are lost to sight for ever. Not one escapes the dreadful havoc of the guns, which, from a distance of less than two hundred yards, enfilades the bridge.

But still they moved up. I could hear, from where I lay, the commands of the officers, as they gave the word to their companies. No fear nor hesitation there; they went to death. In less than fifteen minutes twelve hundred fell, dead or wounded, and at last the signal to fall back was given, and the shattered fragment of a column reeled back behind the ridge. Again the cannonade opened, and increasing on both sides, was maintained for above an hour, without intermission. During this, our guns did tremendous execution on the village, but without effecting any thing of importance respecting the bridge.

The grenadiers of the guard had reached the scene of combat, by forced marches from Nangis, and after a brief time to recruit their strength, were now ordered up. What a splendid force that massive column, conspicuous by their scarlet shoulder-knots and tall shakos of black bear-skin! With what confidence they move! They halt beneath the rock—the Emperor is there too—and see, the officer who stands beside him descends from the height, and puts himself at the head of the column: it is Guyot, the colonel of the battalion—he waves his plumed hat, in answer to the Emperor.—That salute is the last he shall ever give on earth. The drums rolls out; but the hoarse shout of "*en avant*" drowns their tumult. On they rush—they are over the height—they disappear down the descent—and see! there they are on the bridge! "*Vive la Garde!*" shout ten thousand of their comrades, who watch them from the heights—"*Vive la Garde!*" is echoed from the tall cliffs beyond the river. The column moves on, and already reaches the middle of the bridge, when eighteen guns throw their fire into it; the blue smoke rolls down the rocky heights, and settles on the bridge—broken here and there by flashes, like the forked gleam of lightning; the cloud passes over; the bridge is empty, save of dead and dying: the grenadiers of the guard are no more!

"What heart is his who gives his fellow-men to death like this!" was my exclamation as I witnessed this terrible struggle.

"The cuirassiers and carbineers of the guard to form by threes in column of attack," shouted an aide-de-camp, as he rode up to where I lay; and no more thought had I of *his* motives, who now opened the path of glory to myself.

The squadrons were arrayed under cover of the ridge; the shot and shells from the enemy's batteries flew thickly over us—a presage of the storm we were about to meet.

The order to mount was given; and as the men sprung into their saddles, a group of horsemen galloped rapidly round the angle of the cliff, and approached. One glance showed me it was the Emperor and his staff.

"Cuirassiers of the Guard," said he, as with raised chapeau he saluted his brave followers, "I have ordered two battalions to carry that bridge. They have failed. Let those who never fail advance to the storm. Monterau shall be inscribed on your helmets, men, when I see you on yonder heights. Go forward."

"Forward, forward!" shouted the mailed ranks, half maddened by the exciting presence of Napoleon.

The force was formed in four separate columns of attack, the 1st cuirassiers leading, followed by the carbineers of the guard, then my own regiment; and lastly, the fourth, the corps of poor Pioche. What would I have given to know he was there; but there was not time for such inquiry now. The squadrons were ready, awaiting the moment to dash on. A loud detonation of nigh twenty guns shook the earth; and in the smoke that rolled from them the bridge was concealed from view. A trumpet sounded, and the cry of "charge!" followed. The mass sprung forth. What a cheer was theirs, as they swept past. The cannonade opens again—the whole ground trembles. The musketry follows; and the clatter of a thousand sabres mingles with the war-cries of the combatants. It is but brief—the tumult is already subsiding; and now comes the order for the carbineers to move up. The cuirassiers have been cut to pieces. A few, mangled and bleeding, have reeled back behind the hill; but the regiment is gone.

"Where are the troops of Wagram and Eylau?" said the Emperor in bitterness, as he saw the one broken squadron, sole remnant of a gallant corps, reeling, blood-stained and dying, to the rear. "Where is that cavalry that carried the Russian battery at Moskowa? You are not what you once were!"

This cruel taunt at the very moment when the earth was steeped in the blood of his brave soldiers, was heard in mournful silence. None spoke a word, but with clenched lip and clasped hand sat waiting the command to charge. It came; but no cheer followed. The carbineers dashed on, prepared to die. What death so dreadful as the cold irony of Napoleon!

"*En avant!* cuirassiers of the 10th," called out the Emperor, as the last squadrons of the carbineers went by, "support your comrades. Follow up there, men of the fourth. I must have that bridge."

And now the whole line moved up. As we turned the cliff in full trot, the scene of combat lay before us. The terrible bridge now actually choked up with dead and wounded—the very battlements strewn with corpses. In an instant the carbineers were upon it; and struggling through the mass of carnage, they rode onward. Like men goaded to despair, they pressed on, and actually reached the archway beyond, which, defended by a strong gate, closed up the way. Whole files now fell at every discharge; but others took their places, to fall as rapidly beneath the murderous musketry.

"A petard to the gate," is now the cry—"a petard, and the bridge is won."

Quick as lightning four sappers of the guard rush across the road, and gain the bridge. They carry something between them, but soon are lost in the dense masses of the horse. The enemy's fire redoubles, the bridge crashes beneath the cannonade, when a loud shout is raised—

"Let the cavalry fall back."

A cheer of triumph breaks from the town as they behold the retiring squadrons. They know not that the petard is now attached to the gate, and that the horsemen are merely withdrawn for the explosion.

The bridge is cleared, and every eye is turned to watch the discharge which shall break the strong door, and leave the passage open. But unhappily the fuze has missed, and the great engine lies inert and inactive. What is to be done? The cavalry cannot venture to approach the spot, which at any moment may explode with ruin on every side; and thus the bridge is rendered impregnable by our own fault.

"Fatality upon fatality!" is the exclamation of Napoleon, as he heard the tidings. "This to the man who puts a match to the fuze!" said he, as he detaches the great cross of the legion from his breast, and holds its aloft.

With one spring I jump from my saddle, and dash at the burning match a gunner is holding near me, a rush is made by several others; but I am fleetest of foot, and before they reach the road, I am on the bridge. The enemy has not seen me, and I am half way across, before a shot is aimed at me. Even then a surprise seems to arrest their fire, for it is a single ball whizzes past. I see the train; I kneel down; the fuze is faint, and I stoop to blow it, and then my action is perceived, and a shattering volley sweeps the bridge. The high, projecting parapet protects me, and I am unhurt. But the fuze will not take. Horrible moment of agonising suspense, the powder is clotted with blood, and will not ignite. I remember that my pistols are in my belt, and detaching one, I draw the charge, and scatter the fresh powder along the line. My shelter still saves me, though the balls are crashing like hail around me. It takes, it takes, the powder spits and flashes, and a loud cry from my comrades burst out, "Come back! come back!"

Forgetting in the intense anxiety of the moment, I spring to my legs; but scarce is my head above the parapet, when a bullet strikes me in the chest. I fall covered with blood.

"Save him!—save him!" is the cry of a thousand voices, and a rush is made upon the bridge. The musketry opens on these brave fellows, and they fall back wounded and discouraged. Crouching beneath the parapet, I try to staunch my wound, but the blood is gushing in torrents, my senses are reeling, the objects around grow dimmer, the noise seems fainter; but suddenly I feel a hand upon my neck, and at the same instant, a flask is pressed to my lips. I drink, and the wine rallies me; the bleeding is stopped, my eyes open again, and dare I trust their evidence. Who is it that now shelters beneath the parapet beside me? Minette the Vivandiere! Her handsome face flushed; her eyes wild with excitement, and her brown hair in great tangled masses on her back and shoulders.

"Minette, is it indeed thee?" said I, pressing her hand to my lips.

"I knew you at the head of your regiment, some days ago, and I thought we should meet ere long. But lie still, we are safe here. The fire slackens too; they have fallen back since the gate was forced."

"Is the gate forced, Minette?"

"Ay, the petard has done its work; but the columns are not come up. Lie still till they pass."

"Dear, dear girl, what a brave heart is thine," said I, gazing on her beautiful features, tenfold handsomer from the expression which her heroism had lent them.

"You would surely adventure as much for me," said she, half timidly, as she pressed her handkerchief against the wound, which still oozed blood.

The action entangled her fingers in a ribbon. She tried to extricate them, and the locket fell out, opening by accident at the same moment. With a convulsive energy she clasped the miniature in both hands, and rivetted her eyes upon it. The look was wild as that of madness itself, and her features grew stiff as she gazed, while the pallor of death overspread them. It was scarce the action of a second; in another, she flung back the picture from her, and sprang to her feet. One glance she gave me, fleeting as the lightning flash, but how full of storied sorrow! The moment after, she was in the middle of the bridge. She waved her cap wildly above her head, and beckoned to the column to come on. A cheer answered her. The mass rushed forward, the fire again pealed forth, a shriek pierced the din of all the battle, and the leading files halt. Four grenadiers fall back to the rear, carrying a body between. It is the corpse of Minette the Vivandiere, who has received her death-wound.

The same evening saw me the occupant of a bed in the ambulance of the guard. Dreadful as the suffering of my wound was, I carried a deeper one within my heart.

"The Emperor has given you his own cross of the legion, sir," said the surgeon, endeavouring to rally me from a dejection whose source he knew not.

"He has made him a general of brigade, too," said a voice behind him.

It was General Letort who spoke—he had that moment come from

the Emperor with the tidings. I buried my head beneath my hands, and felt as though my heart was bursting.

"That was a gallant girl, that Vivandiere," said the rough old general. "She must have had a soldier's heart within that corsage. *Parbleu!* I'd rather not have another such in my brigade though, after what happened this evening."

"What is it you speak of?" said I faintly.

"They gave her a military funeral this evening, the fourth cuirassiers. The emperor gave his permission, and sent General Degeon of the staff to be present. And when they placed her in the grave, one of the soldiers, a corporal I believe, kneeled down to kiss her, before they covered in the earth; and when he had done so, he lay slowly down on his face on the grass. 'He has fainted,' said one of his comrades; and they turned him on his back. *Morbleu!* it was worse than that—he was stone dead—one of the very finest fellows of the regiment."

"Yes—yes, I know him," muttered I, endeavouring to smother my emotion.

The general looked at me, as if my mind was wandering, and briefly added—

"And so they laid them in the same grave, and the same fusillade gave the last honors to both."

"Your story has affected my patient over much, general," said the doctor. "We must leave him to himself for some time."

CHAPTER LXXXV.

FONTAINBLEAU.

An order from Berthier, written at the command of the Emperor, admitted me into the ancient palace of Fontainbleau, where I lay for upwards of two months under my wound. Twice had fever nearly brought me to the grave; but youth and unimpaired health succoured me, and I rallied through all. A surgeon of the staff accompanied me; and by his kind companionship, not less than by his skill, did I recover from an illness where sorrow had made an inroad not less deep than disease.

In my little chamber, which looked out upon the court-yard of the palace, I passed my days, thinking over the past and all its vicissitudes. Each day we learned some intelligence either from the seat of war or from Paris — defeat in one, treason and disaffection in the other, were rapidly hastening the downfall of the mightiest empire the genius of man had ever constructed. Champ Aubert, Montmirail,

and Monterau, great victories as they were, retarded not the current of events. "The week of glory" brought not hope to a cause predestined to ruin.

It was the latter end of March. For some days previous the surgeon had left me, to visit an outpost ambulance near Melun, and I was alone. My strength, however, enabled me to sit up at my window; and even in this slight pleasure my wearied senses found enjoyment after the tedious hours of a sick bed. The evening was calm, and, for the season, mild and summer-like; the shrubs were putting forth their first leaves; and around the marble fountains the spring flowers were already showing signs of blossom. The setting sun made the tall shadows of the ancient beech trees stretch across the wide court, where all was still as at midnight. No inhabitant of the palace was about—not a servant moved—nor a footstep was heard. It was a moment of such perfect stillness as leads the mind to reverie; and my thoughts wandered away to that distant time when gay cavaliers and stately dames trod those spacious terraces—when tales of chivalry and love mingled with the plashing sounds of those bright fountains, and the fair moon looked down on more lovely forms than even those fair marbles around.

I fancied the time when the horn of the Chasseur was heard echoing through those vast courts, its last notes lost in the merry voices of the *cortege* round the Monarch; and then I called up the brilliant group, with caracolling steeds and gay housings, proudly advancing up that great avenue to the royal entrance, and pictured the ancient ceremonial that awaited his coming—the descendant of a long line of kings. The frank and kingly Francis—the valiant Henry IV.—the "Grand Monarch" himself—all passed in review before my mind as once they lived, and moved, and spoke in that stately pile.

The sun had set, the mingled shadows threw their gloom over the wide court, and one wing of the palace was in deep shade, when suddenly I heard the roll of wheels and the tramp of horses on the distant road. I listened attentively. They were coming near. I could hear the tread of many together; and my practised ear could detect the clank of dragoons, as their sabres and sabretasches jingled against the horses flanks. Some hurried news from the Emperor, thought I; perhaps some marshal wounded, and about to be conveyed to the palace. The same instant the guard at the distant entrance beat to arms, and an equipage drawn by six horses dashed in at full gallop. A second, followed as fast, with a pelaton of dragoons at the side. My anxiety increased. What if it were the Emperor himself, thought I; but as the idea flashed across me, it yielded at once on seeing that the carriages did not draw up at the grand stair, but passed on to a low and private door at a distant wing of the palace.

The bustle of the *cortege* arriving was but a moment's work. The carriages moved rapidly away, the dragoons disappeared, and all was as still as before, leaving me to ponder over the whole, and actually ask myself could it have been reality. I opened my door to listen;

but not a sound awoke the echo of the long corridors. One could have fancied that no living thing was beneath that wide roof, so silent was all around.

A strange feeling of anxiety, the dread of something undefined, I knew not what, or whence coming, was over me, and my nerves, long irritable from illness, became now jarringly sensitive, and banished all thought of sleep. Wild fancies and incoherent ideas crossed my mind, and made me restless and uneasy. I felt, too, as if the night wrre unusually close and sultry; and I opened my window to admit the air. Scarcely had I drawn the curtain aside, when my eye rested on a long line of light that, issuing from a window on the ground-floor of the palace, threw its bright gleam far across the court-yard.

It was in the same wing where the carriages drew up—it must be so; some officer of rank, wounded in a late battle, was brought there. Poor fellow, thought I, what suffering may he be enduring amid all the peacefulness and calm of this tranquil spot. Who can it be? was the ever-recurring question to my mind, for my impression had already strengthened itself to a conviction.

The hours went on, the light shone steadily as at first, and the stillness was unbroken. Wearied with thinking, and half forgetful of my weakness, I tottered along the corridor, descended the grand stair, and passed out into the court. How refreshing did the night air feel—how sweet the fair odours of the spring, as, wafted by the motion of the *jet d'eau*, they were diffused around. The first steps of recovery from severe sickness have a strange thrill of youthfulness about them. Our senses seem once more to revel in the simple enjoyments of early days, and to feel that their greatest delight lies in the associations which gave pleasure to childhood. Weaned from the world's contentions, we seem to have been lifted, for the time, above the meaner cares and ambitions of life, and love to linger a little longer in that ideal state of happiness calm thoughts bestow; and thus, the interval that brings back health to the body, restores freshness to the heart; and, purified in thought, we come forth, hoping for better things, and striving for them with all the generous ardor of early years.

How happy was I as I wandered in that garden—how full of gratitude to feel the current of health once more come back in all my veins—the sense of enjoyment which flows from every object of the fair world restored to me, after so many dangers and escapes. As I moved slowly through the terraced court, my eye was constantly attracted to the small and star-like light which glimmered through the darkness; and I turned to it at last, impelled by a feeling of undefinable sympathy. Following a narrow path, I drew near to a little garden, which once contained some rare flowers. They had been favorites of poor Josephine in times past; but the hour was over in which that gave them a claim to care and attention; and now they were wild grown and tangled, and almost concealed the narrow walk which led to the door-way. I reached this at length; and as I stood, the faint moonlight, slanting beneath a cloud, fell upon a bright and glistening

object almost at my feet. I stepped back, and looked fixedly at it. It was the figure of a man sleeping across the entrance of the porch. He was dressed in Mameluke fashion; but his gay trappings and rich costume were travel-stained and splashed. His unsheathed scimitar lay grasped in one hand, and a turkish pistol seemed to have fallen from the other.

Even by the imperfect light I recognised Rostan, the favourite Mameluke of the Emperor, who always slept at the door of his tent and his chamber—his chosen body-guard. Napoleon must then be here. His equipage it was which arrived so hurriedly—his, the light which burned through the stillness of the night. As these thoughts followed fast on each other, I almost trembled to think how nearly I had ventured on his presence, where none dared to approach unbidden. To retire quickly and noiselessly was now my care; but my first step entangled my foot. I stumbled. The noise awoke the sleeping Turk; and with a loud cry for the guard he sprang to his feet.

"*La Garde!*" called he a second time, forgetting in his surprise that none was there; but then, with a spring, he seized me by the arm, and as his shining weapon gleamed above my head, demanded who I was, and for what purpose there.

The first words of my reply were scarcely uttered, when a small door was opened within the vestibule, and the Emperor appeared. Late as was the hour, he was dressed, and even wore his sword at his side.

"What means this?—who are you sir?" was the quick, sharp question he addressed to me.

A few words—the fewest in which I could convey it—told my story, and expressed my sorrow that, in the sick man's fancy of a moonlight walk, I should have disturbed his Majesty.

"I thought, sire," added I, "that your Majesty was many a league distant with the army——"

"There is no army, sir," interrupted he, with a rapid gesture of his hand; "to-morrow there will be no emperor. Go, sir, go, while it is yet the time. Offer your sword and your services where so many others, more exalted than yourself, have done. This is the day of desertion—see that you take advantage of it."

"Had my name and rank been less humble, they would have assured your Majesty how little I merited this reproach."

"I am sorry to have offended you," replied he in a voice of inexpressible softness. "You led the assault at Monterau? I remember you now. I should have given you your brigade, had I——" he stopped here suddenly, while an expression of suffering passed across his pale features; he rallied from it, however, in an instant, and resumed—"I should have known you earlier—it is too late! Adieu."

He inclined his head slightly as he spoke, and extended his hand. I pressed it fervently to my lips, and would have spoken, but I could not—the moment after he was gone.

It is too late!—too late!—the same terrible words which were uttered beneath the blackened walls of Moscow, repeated at every new

disaster of that dreadful retreat—now spoken by him whose fortune they predicted. Too late!—the exclamation of the proud marshal, harassed by unsuccessful efforts to avert the destiny he saw inevitable. Too late!—the cry of the wearied soldier. Too late!—the fatal expression of the Czar, when the brave and faithful Macdonald urged the succession of the King of Rome and the regency of the Empress.

Wearied with a wakeful night, I fell into a slumber towards morning, when I started suddenly at the roll of drums in the court beneath. In an instant, I was at my window. What was my astonishment to perceive that the court-yard was filled with troops. The grenadiers of the guard were ranged in order of battle, with several squadrons of the *chasseurs*, and the horse artillery; while a staff of general-officers stood in the midst, among whom I recognized Belliard, Montesquieu, and Turenne—great names, and worthy to be recorded for an act of faithful devotion. The Duc de Bassano was there, too, in deep mourning; his pale and care-worn face attesting the grief within his heart. The roll of the drums continued—the deep, unbroken murmur of the salute went on from one end of the line to the other. It ceased, and ere I could question the reason, the various staff-officers became uncovered, and stood in attitudes of respectful attention, and the Emperor himself slowly, step by step, descended the wide stair of the "Cheval Blanc," as the grand terrace was styled, and advanced towards the troops. At the same instant, the whole line presented arms, and the drums beat the salute. They ceased, and Napoleon raised his hand to command silence, and throughout that crowded mass not a whisper was heard.

I could perceive that he was speaking, but the words did not reach me. Eloquent and burning words they were, and to be recorded in history to the remotest ages. I now saw that he had finished, as General Petit sprung forward with the eagle of the first regiment of the guards, and presented it to him. The Emperor pressed it fervently to his lips, and then threw his arms round Petit's neck, while suddenly disengaging himself, he took the tattered flag that waved above him, and kissed it twice. Unable to bear up any longer, the worn, hard-featured veterans sobbed aloud like children, and turned away their faces to conceal their emotion. No cry of *Vive l'Empereur* resounded now through those ranks where each had willingly shed his heart's blood for him. Sorrow had usurped the place of enthusiasm, and they stood overwhelmed by grief.

A tall and soldier-like figure, with head uncovered, approached the Emperor, and said a few words. Napoleon waved his hand towards the troops, and from the ranks rushed many towards him, and fell on their knees before him. He passed his hand across his face and turned away. My eyes grew dim, a misty vapour shut out every object, and I felt as though the very lids were bursting. The great tramp of horses startled me, and then came the roll of wheels. I looked up; an equipage was passing from the gate, a pelaton of dragoons escorted it; a second followed at full speed; the colonels formed their men, the word to march was given, the drums beat out, the grenadiers moved

on, the chasseurs succeeded, and last the artillery rolled heavily up: the court was deserted, not a man remained—all, all were gone. The Empire was ended, and the Emperor, the mighty genius who created it, on his way to exile.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE CONCLUSION.

France never appeared to less advantage in the eyes of Europe than at the period I speak of. Scarcely had the proud star of Napoleon set, when the whole current of popular favour flowed along with those, whom, but a few days before, they accounted their greatest enemies. The Russians and the Prussians, whom they lampooned and derided, they now flattered and fawned on. They deemed no adulation servile enough to lay at the feet of their conquerors—not esteeming the exaltation of their victors sufficient, unless purchased at the sacrifice of their own honor as a nation.

The struggle was no longer who should be first in glory, but who foremost in desertion of him and his fortunes, whose word had made them. The marshals he had created, the generals he had decorated, the ministers and princes he had endowed with wealth and territory, now turned from him in his hour of misfortune, to court the favor of one, against whom every act of their former lives was directed.

These men, whose very titles recalled the fields of glory to which he led them, now hastened to the Tuileries, to proffer an allegiance to a monarch they neither loved nor respected. Sad and humiliating spectacle! The long pent-up hatred of the royalists found a natural vent in this moment of triumphant success. Chateaubriand, Constant, and Madame de Stael led the way to those declarations of the press, which denounced Napoleon as the greatest of earthly tyrants, and inveighed even against his greatness and his genius, as though malevolence could produce oblivion.

All Paris was in a ferment of excitement—not the troubled agitation of a people whose capital owned the presence of a conquering army, but the tumultuous joy of a nation intoxicated with pleasure. Fêtes and balls, gay processions, and public demonstrations of rejoicing, met one everywhere; and ingenuity was taxed to invent flatteries for the very nations, whom, but a week past, they scoffed at as barbarians and Scythians.

Sickened and disgusted with the fickleness of mankind, I knew not where to turn. My wound had brought on a low, lingering fever, ac-

companied by extreme debility, increased, in all likelihood, by the harassing reflections every object around suggested. I could not venture abroad without meeting some evidence of that exuberant triumph by which treachery hopes to cover its own baseness; besides, the reputation of being a Napoleonist was now a mark for insult and indignity, from those who never dared to avow an opinion until the tide of fortune had turned in their favour. The white cockade had replaced the tri-color, every emblem of the empire was abolished, and that uniform, to wear which was once a mark of honourable distinction, was now become a signal for insult.

I was returning one evening from a solitary ramble in the neighbourhood of Paris—for, by some strange fatality, I could not tear myself away from the scenes to which the most eventful portions of my life were attached—and at length, reached the Boulevard of Mont-Martre, just as the leading squadrons of a cavalry regiment were advancing up the wide thoroughfare. I had hitherto avoided every occasion of witnessing any military display, which should recall the past; but now, the rapid gathering of the crowd to see the soldiers pass, prevented my escape, and I was obliged to wait patiently until the cortege should move forward.

They came on in dense column, the brave chasseurs of the guard—the bronzed warriors of Jena and Wagram—but to my eyes, they seemed sterner and sadder than their wont, and heeded not the loud vivas of the mob around them. Where were their eagles? Alas! the white banner that floated over their heads, was a poor substitute for the proud ensign they had so often followed to victory.

And here were the dragoons—old Kellerman's brave troopers. Their proud glances were changed to a mournful gaze upon that crowd, whose cheers they once felt proud of; and there, the artillery, that glorious corps, which he loved so well, did not the roll of their guns sound sorrowfully on the ear! They passed, and then came on a strange cortege of mounted cavaliers, old and withered men, in uniforms of quaint antique fashion; their chapeaux decorated with great cockades of white ribbon, and their sword knots garnished with similar ornaments. The order of St. Louis glittered on each breast, and in their bearing you might read the air of men who were enjoying a long wished for, and long expected triumph. These were the old seigneurs of the monarchy, and truly they were not wanting in that look of nobility their ancient blood bestowed. Their features were proud; their glance elated. Their very port and bearing spoke that consciousness of superiority, to crush which, had cost all the horrors and bloodshed of a terrible revolution. How strange! it seemed as if many of their faces were familiar to me. I knew them well. But where and how, my memory could not trace. Yes, now I could recall it: they were the frequenters of the old "Pension of the Rue Mi Careme," the same men I had seen in their day of adversity, bearing up with noble pride against the ills of fortune. There they were, revelling in the long sought after restoration of their former state.

Were they not more worthy of admiration in their hour of patient and faithful watching, than in this the period of their triumph.

The pressure of the crowd obliged the cavalcade to halt; and now the air resounded with the cries of "*Vive le Roi!*" the long forgotten cheer of loyalty. Thousands re-echoed the shout, and the horsemen waved their hats in exultation. "*Vive l'Roi!*" cried the mob, as though the voices had not called "*Vive le Empereur!*" but yesterday.

"Down with the Napoleonist—down with him!" screamed a savage looking fellow, who, jammed up in the crowd, pointed towards me, as I stood a mere spectator of the scene.

"Cry *Vive le Roi!* at once," whispered a voice near me, "or the consequences may be serious. The mob is ungovernable at a moment like this."

A dozen voices shouted out at the same time, "Down with him! Down with him!"

"Off with your hat, sir," said a rude looking fellow beside me, as he raised his hand to remove it.

"At your peril!" said I, as I clenched my hand, and prepared to strike him down the moment he should touch me. The words were not well uttered, when the crowd closed on me, and a hundred arms were stretched out to attack me. In vain all my efforts to resist. My hat was torn from my head, and, assailed on every side, I was dragged into the middle of the street, amid wild cries of vengeance and taunting insults. It was then, as I lay overcome by numbers, that a loud cry to fall back issued from the cavalcade, and a horseman, sword in hand, dashed upon the mob, slashing on every side as he went, mounted on a high mettled horse. He cleared the dense mass with the speed of lightning, and drove back my assailants.

"Catch my horse's mane," said he hurriedly. "Hold fast for a few seconds, and you are safe."

Following the advice, I held firmly by the long mane of his charger, while clearing away the mob on either side, he protected me by his drawn sabre above my head.

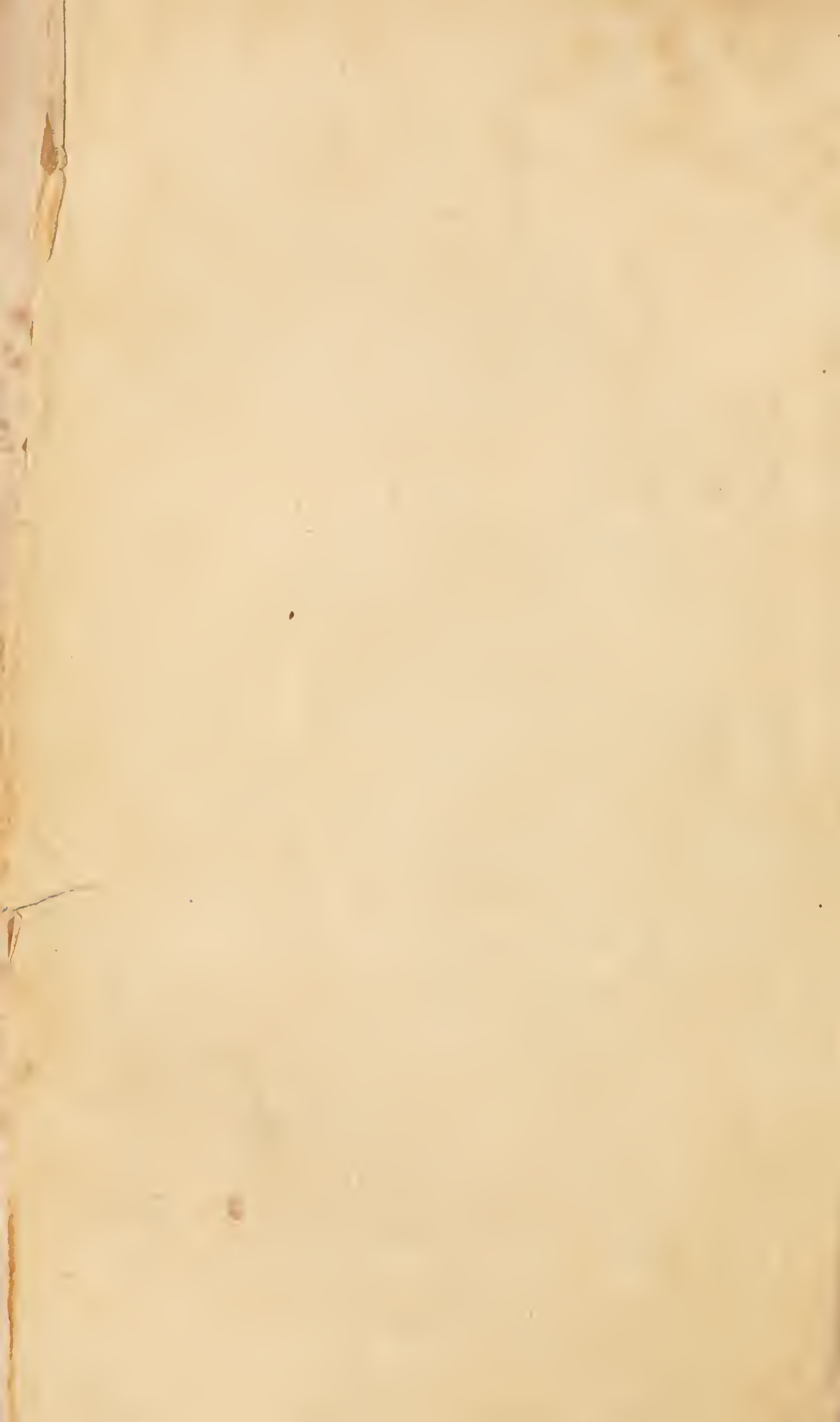
"Safe this time," said he, as we arrived within the ranks; and then turning round, so as to face me, added, "Safe! and my debt acquitted. You saved my life once, and though the peril seemed less imminent now, trust me, yours had not escaped the fury of that multitude without me."

"What, Henri de Beauvais—do we meet again?"

"Yes; but with altered fortune, Burke. Our king, as the words of our *Garde Ecossaise* song says, our king has "got his own again." The day of loyalty has again dawned on France, and a grateful people may carry their enthusiasm for the restoration, even as far as vengeance on their opponents, and yet not merit much reproach. But no more of this. We can be friends now; or if not, it must be your fault."

"I am not too proud, De Beauvais, either to accept or acknowledge a favour at your hands."

"Then we are friends," said he joyfully; "and in the name of



friendship, let me beg of you to place this *cordon* in your hat." And so saying, he detached the cockade of white ribbon he wore from his own, and held it towards me. "Well, then, at least remove the tricolor. It can but expose you to insult. Remember, Burke, its day is over."

"I am not likely to forget it," replied I sadly.

"Monsieur le colonel, his royal highness wishes to speak with you," said an aide-de-camp, riding up beside De Beauvais' horse.

"Take care of the gentleman for me," said De Beauvais, pointing to me, and then, wheeling round his horse, he galloped at full speed to the rear.

"I will spare you all trouble on my account, sir," said I. "My way lies yonder, and at present I see no obstacle to my pursuing it.'

"Let me at least send an escort with you."

I thanked him, and declined the offer, and leaving the ranks of the procession, mingled with the crowd, and in a few minutes after reached my hotel without further molestation.

The hour was come, I saw plainly, in which I must leave France. Not only was every tie which bound me to that land severed, but to remain, was only to oppose myself singly to the downward current of popular opinion which now threatened to overturn every landmark and vestage of the empire. Up to this moment, I never confessed to my heart with what secret hope I had prolonged each day of my stay—how I cherished within me, the expectation that I should once again, though but for an instant, see her who lived in all my thoughts, and, unknown to myself, formed the main spring of all my actions.

This hope only became confessed, when about to leave me for ever.

As I busied myself in the preparations for departure, a note arrived from De Beauvais, stating that he desired particularly to see and confer with me, that same evening, and requesting me on no account to be from home, as his business was most pressing. I felt little curiosity to know to what he might allude, and saw him enter my room some hours later, without a single particle of anxiety as to his communication.

"I am come, Burke," said he, after a few common places had been exchanged between us. "I am come, Burke, on a mission which I hope you will believe. The sincerest regard for you has prompted me to undertake, and which, whatever objections it may meet with from you, none can arise, I am certain, on the score of his fidelity who now makes this proposition to you. To be brief. The Count D'Artois has sent me to offer you your grade and rank of his majesty, Louis XVIII. Your last gazette was as colonel; but there is a rumour you should have received your appointment as general of brigade. There will be little difficulty in arranging your brevet on that understanding; for your services, brief as they were, have not been unnoticed. Marshal Ney himself bears testimony to your conduct at Monterau; and your name twice occurs on the list of the minister of war for promotion. Strange claims these, you will say, to recompense from the rightful sovereign of France, gained as they were in the service of the

usurper; but it is the prerogative of legitimacy to be great and noble-minded, and to recognize true desert, whenever it occurs. Come. What say you? Does this proposal meet your wishes?"

"If to surpass my expectations, and to flatter my pride, were to convince my reason, and change my estimation of what is loyal and true, I should say, yes, De Beauvais, the proposition does meet my wishes. But not so. I wore these epaulettes first in my admiration of him whose fortunes I have followed to the last. My pride—my glory were to be his soldier. That can be no longer, and the sword I drew in his cause, shall never be unsheathed in another's."

"Are you ignorant that such arguments apply with equal force to all those great men who have, within these few weeks past, sworn allegiance to his majesty. What say you to the list of marshals? Not one of whom has refused the graciously offered favour of his majesty. Are Ney, Soult, Augureau, Mac Donald, and Marmont, nothing as examples."

"I will not say so, De Beauvais—but this I will say, they had both more respect and esteem from me had they done otherwise. If they were true to the Emperor, they can scarce be loyal to the king."

"Can you not distinguish between the forced services exacted by a tyrant and the noble duty rendered to a rightful sovereign."

"I can better estimate the fascinations which lead men to follow a hero, than to be the parade-soldier around the gilded gates of a palace.'

De Beauvais' cheek flashed scarlet, and his voice was agitated, as he replied—

"The nobles of France, sir, have shown themselves as high in deeds of chivalry and heroism as they have ever done in the accomplishments of true-born gentlemen."

"Pardon me, De Beauvais. I meant no imputation of them and their motives. There is every reason why you and your gallant companions should enjoy the favours of that crown your efforts have placed upon the head of the King of France. Your true and fitting station is around the throne your bravery and devotion have restored. But as for us—we who have fought and marched—have perilled limb and life to raise the fortune and elevate the glory of him who was the enemy of that sovereign—how can we be participators in the triumph we laboured to avert, and rejoice in a consummation we would have died rather than witness?"

"But it has come. The fates have decided against you. The cause you would serve is not merely unfortunate—it is extinct. The empire has left no banner behind it. Come, then, and rally around one whose boast it is to number among its followers the high born and the noble—to assert the supremacy of rank and worth above the claim of the base and low."

"I cannot—I must not."

"At least, you will wait on the Count D'Artois. You must see his Royal Highness, and thank him for his gracious intentions."

"I know what that means, De Beauvais. I have heard that few

can resist the graceful fascinations of the Prince's manner. I shall certainly not fear to encounter them, however dangerous to my principles."

"But not to refuse his Royal Highness," said he quickly. "I trust you will not do that."

"You would not have me yield to the flattery of a prince's notice what I refuse to the solicitations of a friend—would you?"

"And such is your intention—your fixed intention?'

"Undoubtedly it is."

De Beauvais turned away impatiently, and leaned on the window for some minutes. Then, after a pause, and in a slow and measured voice, added—

"You are known to the court, Burke, by other channels than those I have mentioned. Your prospects of advancement would be most brilliant, if you accept this offer. I scarcely know to what they may not aspire. Reflect for a moment or two.—There is no desertion, no falling off here.—Remember that the empire was a vision, and like a dream it has passed away. Where there is no cause there can be no fealty."

"It is but a sorry memory, De Beauvais, that only retains while there are benefits to receive. Mine is a more tenacious one."

"Then my mission is ended," cried he, "taking up his hat. I may mention to his Royal Highness that you intend returning to England—that you are indisposed to service at present. It is unnecessary to state more accurately the views you entertain?"

"I leave the matter completely to your discretion."

"Adieu, then. Our roads lie widely apart, Burke; and I for one regret it deeply. It only remains that I should give you this note, which I promised to deliver into your hands in the event of your declining to accept the Prince's offer."

"He blushed deeply, as he placed a small sealed note in my fingers; and, as if anxious to get away, pressed my hand hurriedly, and left the room.

My curiosity to learn the contents of the billet, made me tear it open at once; but it was not before I had perused it several times, that I could credit the lines before me. They were but few, and ran thus:—

"Dear Sir—May I request the honour of a visit from you this evening at the Hotel de Grammont.—Truly yours,

"Marie D'Auvergne.

"Née de Meudon.

"Colonel Burke."

How did I read these lines over again and again—now interpreting them as messengers of future hope, now fearing they might exclude every ray of it for ever. One solution recurred to me at every moment, and tortured me to the very soul. Her family had all been royalists. The mere accidents of youth had thrown her brother into

the army and herself into the court of the Empire, where personal devotion and attachment to the Empress had retained her. What if she should exert her influence to induce me to accept the Prince's offer? How could I resist a request, perhaps an entreaty from her? The more I reflected over it, the more firmly this opinion gained ground with me; and the more deeply did I grieve over a position environed by such difficulty; and ardently as I longed for the moment of meeting her once more, the desire was tempered by a fear that the meeting should be our last.

The eventful moment of my destiny arrived, and found me at the door of the Hotel de Grammont. A valet in waiting for my arrival conducted me to a *salon*, saying the Countess would appear in a few moments.

What an anxious interval was that. I tried to occupy myself with the objects around, and distract my attention from the approaching interview; but every sound startled me, and I turned at each instant towards the door by which I expected her to enter.

The time appeared to drag heavily on; minutes became like hours; and yet no one appeared. My impatience had reached its climax, when I heard my name spoken in a low, soft voice. I turned, and she was before me.

She was dressed in deep mourning, and looked paler, perhaps thinner, than I had ever seen her—but not less beautiful. Whether prompted by her own feelings at the moment, or called up by my unconsciously fixed look, she blushed deeply as our eyes met.

"I was about to leave France, Colonel," said she as soon as we were seated, "when I heard from my cousin, De Beauvais, that you were here, and delayed my departure to have the opportunity of seeing you."

She paused here, and drew a deep breath to continue; but leaning her head on her hand, she seemed to have fallen into a reverie for some minutes, from which she started suddenly, by saying—

"His Royal Highness has offered you, your grade in the service, I understand."

"Yes, madame; so my friend De Beauvais informs me."

"And you have refused—is it not so?"

"Even so, madame."

"How is this, sir? Are you so weary of a soldier's life that you would leave it thus early?"

"This was not the reason, madame."

"You loved the Emperor, sir," said she hastily, and with a tone of almost passionate eagerness, "even as I loved my dear, kind mistress; and you felt allegiance to be too sacred a thing to be bartered at a moment's notice.—Is this the true explanation?"

"I am proud to say, you have read my motives—such were they."

"Why are there not many more to act thus?" cried she, vehemently; "Why do not the great names *he* made glorious, become greater by fidelity than ever they were by heroism? There was one, sir, who, had he lived, had given this example to the world."

"True, most true, madame; but was not his fate happier than to have survived for this."

A long pause, unbroken by a word on either side, followed; when at last, she said—

"I had left with De Beauvais some few relics of my dear brother, hoping you would accept them for his sake. General D'Auvergne's sword—the same he wore at Jena—he desired might be conveyed to you, when you left the service. These, and this ring," said she, endeavouring to withdraw a rich brilliant from her finger, "are the few souvenirs I would ask you to keep for their sakes, and for mine. You mean to return to England, sir?"

"Yes, madame; that is, I had intended—I know not now whither I shall go. Country has few ties for one like me."

"I, too, must be a wanderer," said she, half musingly, while still she endeavoured to remove the ring from her finger. "I find," said she, smiling, "I must give you another keepsake—this will not leave me."

"Give it me, then; where is it?" said I. "Yes, Marie, the devotion of a heart, wholly yours, should not go unrewarded. To you I owe all that my life has known of happiness, to memory of you, every high and noble hope. Let me not, after years of such affection, lose the guiding-star of my existence—all that I have lived for—all that I love."

These words, poured forth with all the passionate energy which a last hope inspires, were followed by a story of my long-concealed love. I know not how incoherently the tale was told; I cannot say how often I interrupted my own recital by some appeal to the past—some half-uttered hope, that she had seen the passion which burned within me. I can but remember the bursting feeling of my bosom as she placed her hand in mine, and said—"It is yours."

These words ended the story of a life, whose trials were many, and encountered at an age in which few have braved the world's cares. The lessons I had learned, however, were acquired in that school, adversity, where few are taught in vain; and if the morning of my life broke in clouds and shadow, the noon has been not less peaceful and bright, and the evening, as it draws near, comes with an aspect of calm tranquility, ample enough to recompense every vicissitude of those early days, when the waves of fortune were roughest.

A Parting Word.

Dear Friends—

Time has hallowed the custom of a word at parting, and I am unwilling to relinquish the privilege. In the tale I have just concluded, my endeavour was to pourtray, with as little aid from fiction as might be, some lights and shadows of the most wonderful and eventful period of modern history—the empire of Napoleon. The character I selected for my hero was not all imaginary, neither were many of the scenes, which bear less apparent proofs of reality. The subject was one long meditated on before undertaken; but as the work proceeded, I felt at some places, the difficulty of creating interest for persons, and incidents removed both by time and country from my reader; and at others, my own inadequacy to an effort, which mere zeal could never accomplish. These causes induced me to deviate from the plan I originally set down for my guidance, and combined with failing health, have rendered what might have been a matter of interest and amusement to the writer—a task of labour and anxiety.

It is the first time I have had to ask my reader's indulgence on such grounds; nor should I now allude to it, save as affording the only apology I can render for the many defects in a story, which, in defiance of me, took its colouring from my own mind at the period, rather from the reflex of the events I related.

The moral of my tale is simple. The fatal influence, crude and uncertain notions of liberty will exercise over a career, which, under happier direction of its energies, had won honour and distinction, and the impolicy of the effort, to substitute an adopted for a natural allegiance.

My estimate of Napoleon may seem to some, to partake of exaggeration; but I have carefully distinguished between the Hero and the Emperor, and have not suffered my unqualified admiration of the one, to carry me on to any blind devotion of the other.

Having begun this catalogue of excuses and explanations, I know not where to stop, so, once more asking forgiveness for all the errors of these volumes, I beg to subscribe myself, in great respect and esteem,

Your humble and obedient servant,

Harry Lorrequer.

Templeogue House, August 25th, 1844.

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