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1866.

A. Jones



PREFACE.

I SELDOM trouble my readers with a Preface, and when I do so, it is generally brief and explanatory.

An old love-story connected with the now merged ducal line of Queensberry, furnished the idea of "Letty Hyde and her Lovers;" and in some portions of the work I have endeavoured to give the reader a picture of what the British service was in the days of the hero.

Regimental bullies, termed "triers and provers," existed then among the officers of every regiment of the Line; and to judge by the proceedings of old courts-martial, I do not think the reader will find the *bearing* of Mr. Falshaw overdrawn. It is perhaps difficult to say whether the fighting bully of the last century, or the military practical joker of the present one (equally a poltroon), could prove the greatest nuisance to the service.

Duelling, then one of the institutions of good society, was carried to such excess in the army, that even the rank and file (who wore swords till 1745) indulged in this luxury of their superiors. In the Records of the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, we find a corporal of the Scots Greys, then commanded by the Earl of Stair, committed

prisoner for slaying a sergeant in a duel near Stirling; and such notices frequently appear in old newspapers.

In the course of my story I have given a brief account of the origin of the Scottish Fusilier Guards;—on a history of which corps, a distinguished general officer is now, I believe, engaged.

The story of the left-handed marriage of the Count of Gleichen is a legend of the town of Erfurt. The title then belonged to a now extinct branch of the House of Swartzburg; and for some suggestive details connected with the escape from the prison of Loches I am indebted to the narrative of the Frenchman, De la Tude.

THE AUTHOR.

26, DANUBE STREET, EDINBURGH.

May, 1863.

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LETTY HYDE'S LOVERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TOWER.

OUR battalion of the Household Brigade was quartered in the Tower of London, when the following order was circulated, one evening, just after I had returned with a hundred men from the Ridotto al fresco, in Vauxhall Gardens, where we had formed the usual guard:—

“It is his Majesty’s will and pleasure that the first battalions of his three regiments of Guards shall hold themselves in readiness for foreign service. The officers are to adopt the twisted Ramillies wig, and the ruffles of the sergeants are to be abolished until further orders.

“Given at the War Office, this 4th day of April, 1742.

“To the field-officer in staff, waiting for his Majesty’s three regiments of Guards.”

My friend and countryman, Henry Douglas, earl of Drumlanrig, captain-lieutenant of our regiment (the 3rd Foot Guards), was staff-officer on duty, and had the honour to receive this mandate, which he duly communicated to us as we sat at mess in one of the long and gloomy chambers of the old brick barrack within London’s great citadel of old historic memory.

Dinner was just over, the wine was on the table, and

the last flush of the April sunset—at least, such a flush as makes its way through the smoky atmosphere of London—was being replaced by the wax-lights in the candelabra, when Drumlanrig made his announcement to the mess and arrested the attention of all.

The royal order, so significant in its importance, put an end to the laughter and buzz round the table. The usual chit-chat about duels in Hyde Park, scandals in high life, brawls with the night watch or footpads, the last robbery by the Flying Highwayman, the last new perruque or cut of a tabby vest from Paris, the last new dance, the beauty of this countess or of that courtesan, which of the singers at the Haymarket patched most becomingly, whether the *passé* duchess of D—'s beautiful teeth were a triumph of art or nature, and how Peg—charming Peg Woffington—excelled last night as Sylvia in "The Recruiting Officer." In fact, the King's order cut all our usual topics short.

With some of our graver men the conversation might be on the debates in the Commons between Sir Robert Walpole (who had been created earl of Orford in the preceding February) and his two great opponents, Pulteney and Wyndham, on the affairs of the Queen of Hungary and on the necessity of our sending an army against France; speeches which the ponderous Dr. Samuel Johnson—he of the snuff-coloured suit and mighty wig—duly conveyed to the public in that department of the "Gentleman's Magazine," entitled "The Debates of the Political Club," wherein Lord Bath spoke as Cato, Lord Talbot as T. Quintius, and the duke of Newcastle as Domitius Calvinus.

All the current topics, which the more heedless and thoughtless members of a military mess are wont to discuss amid a small amount of wit but a vast deal of

laughter and nonsense, gave place to the all-absorbing question of the probable scene of our service; for when the drums of the Guards beat the point of war, sharp work may be expected.

That Holland or Germany would be our destination there seemed little doubt, for in the late King William's time we spent all our blood and treasure in defence of his amphibious countrymen the Dutch; and under the first and second Georges we were fated to expend the little that remained of either, in upholding the electoral hats of their well-beloved Hanover.

"Well, gentlemen," said Drumlanrig as he cast aside his sword and gorget, shook back the curls of his Ramillies wig, and threw open the long flowing coat, which we wore until the days of Fontenoy, "I trust you find my tidings welcome."

A round of applause shook the table, and the president of the mess ordered a new allowance of champagne, that we might drink the health of the King and to the confusion of his enemies, whom we had no doubt were Louis of France and Frederick of Prussia.

"And what say *you*, Godfrey?" added the earl, turning to me. "You were complaining yesterday at White's Club, that the great world of London wearied you, and that promotion was slow in the 3rd Foot Guards. Egad! we may soon see Lieutenant Godfrey Lauriston a captain, *vice* some poor fellow killed in action."

"I have no wish to rise in the service over the graves of my friends," said I; "your tidings, Drumlanrig, are welcome to me, yet they may carry sorrow to some hearts."

A shade crossed the earl's face as I spoke.

"To those among us who are lovers, you mean," said he, playing with the diamond buttons of his sleeve ruffles.

"Yes, and to our skulking outlyers* in Westminster and the City," I replied, with a laugh to conceal an emotion which I did not wish *him*, of all men, to detect in me.

"But what does the order import, gentlemen?" asked the earl of Panmure, who was then our first major.

"No French expedition to the coast of Scotland, I hope," remarked some one.

"Impossible! the order says *foreign* service," replied Drumlanrig.

"Perhaps another attack on Carthagena," suggested Sir Henry Rose, our senior captain.

"Scarcely," replied Drumlanrig, with a smile on his very handsome, but somewhat sad face. "The ministry have had quite enough of the Spanish West Indies; besides, the King is not likely to waste the energies of his Guards in attacks on such places as the Castillo Grande and Fort St. Lazare; or in making us food for the sharks at sea and the land-crabs ashore."

"No, no," simpered Ruthven, our youngest ensign, a mere boy; "such service may do very well for Wolfe's marine corps, or mere marching regiments like the Buffs and Royals; but the household troops——"

"Are destined to fight the French; so pass the wine, my little man," said Drumlanrig; "and that I know, almost for a surety."

"For a surety!" reiterated all.

"I have played cards all morning at White's gaming house with Horace Walpole, with Lord Lonsdale, and the Comte d'Anterroche——"

* A term peculiarly understood among the Guards for certain soldiers who were permitted to work at their trades in London, while their pay remained in the hands of the captain of their company. The custom was abolished before 1800.

"Who is he?" asked several.

"Don't you know?—a distinguished officer of the French Guards, who has been here for a time, on leave, in consequence of a duel he had with some friend of Madame Chateau-roux. After losing more money among them than I care to lose again, I had a little luncheon at a quiet tavern with two fair friends——"

"Oh, oh, Drumlanrig!" exclaimed two or three.

"Nay, gentlemen, don't laugh; they were young, pretty, and women of the first quality——"

"Name, name," said Jack Ruthven.

"Nay, sir, no name. They wore purple velvet masques, and green satin sacques, so discover them if you can. I saw them to their sedans in Piccadilly, and soon after, as I rode past Charing Cross, I met the Garter King-of-Arms, with the constables and beadles of Westminster, all marching with heads uncovered and staff in hand. Then came the high constable, the high bailiff, and the devil knows how many more; the 1st troop of the English Horse Grenadiers, with the pursuivants and heralds; then the 1st troop of our Scots Horse Grenadier Guards, under the old earl of Crawford, with trumpets sounding and kettledrums beating; so, wondering what the deuce all this muster and parade were for, I reined up my horse, but the crowd was so great that I would have learned nothing, had not a fellow named Falshaw, whom every one in London knows——"

"Falshaw the roué," said Panmure.

"A blackleg," added I; "a notorious fellow at White's."

"George Frederick Falshaw, a gambler, who is said to be a son of the late King George I. by the ugliest of his German mistresses," said young Ruthven, rashly.

"Yes, yes, gentlemen; well, he most opportunely

thrust himself before me, crying obsequiously, 'Place, place—make way for my Lord Drumlanrig;' thus I got near the Garter King, and heard him read a proclamation in his Majesty's name, commanding all papists or persons suspected to be such, and all non-jurors, to depart from the cities of London and Westminster, and not to approach within *ten* miles of them, under the penalty of death."

"*Death!*" echoed I and several others, while exclamations expressive of astonishment were uttered by all, on hearing of this excessive though not unusual severity on the part of his Majesty King George and the Whig ministry, whose measures thus brought irretrievable ruin on many thousands of good and peaceable citizens.

"Said this proclamation nothing more—was no reason given?" asked Lord Panmure, with something of sternness in his tone, as he clenched his right hand under his ruffles, for the Jacobite sympathies of his family were no secrets to us.

"The Garter King went on to say, that undoubted intelligence had reached the Court of St. James's that the eldest son of the Pret——"

"Drumlanrig!" exclaimed several officers, while a deeper flush crossed the cheek of Panmure.

"I beg pardon, sirs; but I have been so long in England now, that I begin to forget our Scottish etiquette."

"Well," said Panmure, impatiently, while drumming on the table the old air, "You're welcome, Whig, from Bothwell Brig;" "so the Court has heard——"

"That the eldest son of the Chevalier de St. George—will that do?" asked Drumlanrig, with a cold smile.

"Better," said I; "but do go on."

"Has arrived in France from Rome, and that pre-

parations are making at Dunkirk for the invasion of Scotland, in concert with a general revolt of the disaffected there, and in Ireland; and that these movements would be supported by the French squadron now cruising in the Channel. So, depend upon it, this order for the first battalions of the Household Brigade to be in readiness for foreign service has direct reference to these measures."

"Undoubtedly," said Lord Panmure, filling his glass with claret; "but the young gentleman you mentioned is not in France: he serves under his uncle, the Duke of Berwick, in Flanders."

"You appear well informed," said Drumlanrig, smiling.

"I usually am," replied Panmure, gravely.

"Dunkirk,—egad, it is always Dunkirk!" exclaimed Sir Henry Rose.

"Yes; it is the *point d'appui* of every French movement," replied Drumlanrig; "and, as Horace Walpole said with truth this morning, by totally demolishing the mole and dykes of Dunkirk, we should move France *five hundred miles* off in influence."

"A strong place, gentlemen, and I know it well," said old James Stuart, our second major; "I was in garrison there when a volunteer in Dillon's Irish regiment."

"If all this proclamation sets forth be true, the sooner your friend Count d'Anterroche has the English Channel between him and us the better."

"I shall see him to-night," said the earl, rising. "Godfrey, you go with me to Piccadilly, I believe," he added, turning to me.

"Yes, to Queensberry House; I am invited, so let us start, or we shall have to endure the major's song, 'Pardonnez-moi,' and so forth; it usually comes off about this hour."

"The duchess receives to-night—a very few, though. That insufferable coxcomb, Walpole, with his literary anecdotes and courtly gossip, and that dreariest of the dreary, old Maworm, with his malt tax, salt tax, and revolution settlement, will also be there."

"Is your coach at the gate, Drumlanrig?"

"Yes; can I set any of you gentlemen down westward?" said the earl.

"Thank you; I'll go for one," replied Rose, throwing a roquelaure over his uniform. "I don't think his Majesty's order prevents us from amusing ourselves, so I am off to the Ridotto; there is a second to-night."

"And I to the opera at the Haymarket, to see the new dancer," added Ruthven. "What says Pope?"

"'The proper study of mankind——'"

"Is woman; my dear fellow, the late lamented bard of Twickenham was wrong decidedly," interrupted Panmure, laughing, as we buckled on our swords and reached Drumlanrig's ample coach, which stood at the gloomy stone archway of the tower, with its great lamps glaring into the darkness, and two footmen, armed and aiguilleted, standing by the steps, each bearing a blazing link.

"Step in, Panmure; in, in, gentlemen. Are the pistols in the sword-case loaded, Sandy?" he asked.

"With care, my lord, and flinted afresh," replied his Scots valet.

"Then drive to Piccadilly;" and next moment we were rumbling along the dark and narrow thoroughfare called Tower Street; and gloomy it was indeed, for nearly all the oil-lamps, which the Common Council, with praiseworthy economy, ordained all housekeepers to display *before* the moon became full, were already extinguished.

CHAPTER II.

OLD BURLINGTON STREET.

"SERVICE abroad—the order says foreign service—good!" exclaimed Panmure; "thank heaven it is so! Better that than strife at home among our own people. I shall drink deep to-night to the old Scottish toast, 'Long peace at home and plenty wars abroad!'"

Rose sang a lively catch which he had picked up at Ranelagh, where he had taken Peg Woffington to sup at the Rotunda, on which occasion she appeared in the masquerade as a water-nymph, and he as a Triton spouting water from a real shell.

"I am not a *very* bad fellow after all," said he, in reply to some remark of Drumlanrig upon this mad prank. "I know all that religion and morality inculcate, but in this wide world of London how difficult is it to act up to their true standard."

My companions were very merry at the prospect of active service; but I sat silent in a corner of the large coach, and full of anxious thoughts; for this (to me otherwise welcome) order might crush my dearest hopes for ever, for I was then that most miserable and restless of men—an unsuccessful wooer, contending, as I feared, with a successful rival; and, unfortunately, this rival was my best friend, and one to whom I was bound by no common ties of gratitude and honour.

The order from the War Office, and the route which was sure to follow, would now bring my love affairs to a crisis.

Letty Hyde, the object of all my thoughts and wishes, was a relation and protégée of the duchess of Queensberry with whom she had resided for a season or two in London. Many opportunities had been afforded me

for meeting and seeing her where women, if beautiful or brilliant, are ever seen to the best advantage, and I soon learned to love her.

After the soberly sedate and austere little dames of the gloomy old Scottish capital—for gloomy indeed it became after the Stuarts were exiled, and the Court and Parliament transferred to London,—so gloomy that the summer grass grew rank and thick around its market cross, and before the gates of empty Holyrood,—after its fair ones, so absurdly and austere starched, the women of London delighted our officers; but to me Letty Hyde, by her charming manner, her sound sense, and girlish *espièglerie*, seemed the most pleasing of all I had met in society.

The friendly terms which existed between Lord Drumlanrig and myself procured me a ready *entrée* to Clarendon and Queensberry Houses. At both I had met Letty a hundred times, at the royal drawing-room more than once, and at innumerable parties made up for Vauxhall, for the opera, and for boating by moonlight on the river, where the great gilded barge of the duchess, with its gay rowers in the Douglas livery, and a band of French horns playing at its prow, formed then one of the gay sights of London.

I had never said to Letty that I loved her; but she knew my secret well, yet not the reason for my silence. Alas! Drumlanrig loved her too!

His mother, the duchess, had different views for him, and strove to further an alliance between him and another, the Lady Elizabeth Hope, one of the reigning belles; but such is the perversity of nature, or the mischance that so often controls our affairs, the young earl preferred his penniless kinswoman, Letty Hyde.

The keen-sighted duchess soon discovered my secret, and did all in her power to favour my suit with Letty,

thus affording us many chances of being together; but a knowledge that she had the earl of Drumlanrig for a lover repressed all hope of success in my heart, for I, Godfrey Lauriston, was only a lieutenant in the Scots Footguards, with my pay and my little patrimony of Lauriston (which lies southward of the city-wall of Edinburgh), a barony sorely impoverished by my father's unfortunate participation in the rising for James VIII., in 1715.

I loved well my friend, the noble and brave Drumlanrig; but yet my blood ran cold with an irrepressible emotion of jealousy whenever he approached or spoke to Letty Hyde—yea, even when he looked at her, and bitter thoughts beyond the control of reason rushed upon my mind.

I often asked of myself what demon or what fatality lured me to love so tenderly and so deeply one who seemed to prefer, or tacitly to admit, the attentions of another, and that other a kinsman—a peer, the heir to one of Scotland's best dukedoms.

Yet so it was; for we cannot at all times control our hearts. I loved her, and a thousand little preferences which she had shown to each of us alternately came rushing on my memory as we were whirled along the dark, ill-paved, and muddy streets, and I resolved that, whatever came of it, I would on this night know and seal my fate for ever.

We set down Sir Henry Rose somewhere near Temple Bar, where he was to procure a mask and domino. Panmure borrowed the earl's pistols, and left us at the Haymarket; then we turned down Piccadilly, and soon reached old Queensberry House, before the iron gates of which, in the blaze of some thirty or forty flaring links, we saw a crowd of wigged and liveried lacqueys, with long canes, cocked-hats, and bouquets, several glazed

coaches, as they were then named, with gorgeous hammer-cloths, and chairmen in livery with splendid sedan-chairs. All these indicated the presence of people of distinction; and on this crowd and bustle, and on the wayfarers who loitered without, broad flakes of light fell through the parted curtains of the large windows which faced the street.

Since 1740, the fashionables of London had rapidly been driven in the direction of Piccadilly by the encroachment of wealthy citizens, who had spread into Leicester, Golden, and Soho Squares; thus, his grace of Queensberry occupied a noble mansion, which had been built for him by Leoni, at the southern end of Old Burlington Street.*

With considerable ceremony we were conducted up the great staircase by servants in the Douglas livery, having the duke's coronet and cypher on their sleeves, and were ushered into an apartment which was then known in London as the Gilt Withdrawing-room, the carved mouldings of the wainscot-panels, the stucco ornaments of the elaborate ceiling and of the fireplace, which was supported by four female termini of white marble, and which in its structure ascended to the very cornice, being all gorgeously gilded.

Rows of grotesque bacchanals' heads wreathed with golden vine-leaves formed the frieze, and were alternated with armorial bearings of the ducal house of Queensberry, crested with the winged heart, and supported by two pegasi, while everywhere the bold motto, "Forward," caught the eye.

Opposite the fireplace hung a portrait of the poet Gay,

* "This mansion, after remaining for some time in a state of dilapidation, was purchased by the [late] earl of Uxbridge, who repaired it and gave it his own title."—*Knight's London*.

who died about ten years before this time, and for whom the duke and duchess had a deep regard and esteem. This sentiment embroiled them with the Court in 1729, so they took him with them into Scotland, and tradition asserts that he wrote his famous "Beggar's Opera" while residing with them in the Canongate of Edinburgh. At all events, it was under their roof the poet passed the last years of his life, and died.

Beneath this portrait, on an Italian table of exquisite green marble, bordered with white, lay an entire collection of his works, inscribed to the duchess in his own hand; and near it she was now seated, with a brilliant crowd round her, and in her pretty white hands an open book, which proved to be a volume of Shakespeare.

Through the gay assembly we gradually made our way towards her who formed its centre of attraction.

The duchess was Katherine Hyde, daughter of Henry earl of Clarendon and Rochester. She had been wedded in her extreme youth, and now, when not much past her fortieth year, still preserved much of the bloom of her beauty, while in her manner and figure she retained all the grace and charm of twenty. But she was possessed by a wild and ungovernable temper, and had a wit, which, when inspired by the spirit of malice, was sharp and keen. It was of her, when in her girlhood, that Matthew Prior, the poet and courtier, wrote:—

"Thus Kitty, beautiful and young,
And wild as colt untamed,
Bespoke the fair from whom she sprung,
By little rage inflamed :

"Inflamed with rage at sad restraint,
Which wise mamma ordained ;
And sorely vexed to play the saint,
Whilst wit and beauty reigned."

Many of her extravagances passed for vivacity; society will tolerate so much in a beautiful woman. She had a peculiar dislike for the Scots; and thus often urged her son to exchange into the English Guards; yet, when in Scotland, she always dressed herself in the garb of a poor peasant girl, with a short striped jacket, a coarse blue woollen skirt, and wore her fine hair simply "snooded" with a blue ribbon.

This costume, she averred, was adopted to ridicule the French manners, the rigid stateliness and old-fashioned grandeur of the Scottish gentlewomen, who adhered to the modes of Queen Anne's time; but this oddity in dress once caused an unpleasant mistake.

At a review near Holyrood, when old General Wightman (the same officer who fought the Highlanders and Spaniards in Glenshiel) was inspecting the Kentish Buffs, the fair Katharine was thrust back by the horse grenadiers; and on announcing herself to be duchess of Queensberry was laughed at by a corporal, who pinched her chin, and said he would be happy to be her duke.

She screamed with passion, and would in no way be appeased, until old Wightman assured her, on his honour, that the soldiers would be all flogged or shot for their insolence.

In one of her extravagant moods she went to Queen Caroline's state drawing-room, with a coarse apron tied round her; and when checked by Lord Panmure, of our corps, who was lord in waiting, she tore it off, cast it in his face, and, calling him a "scurvy varlet," stepped forward in her peasant dress and stood before the Queen.

Such was the beautiful duchess of Queensberry, as I remember her.

Her husband, Charles, third duke of Queensberry and

Dover (son of that duke who, by the most skilful bribery and corruption, achieved the great Act of Union between the two kingdoms), though a privy councillor and lord justice-general of Scotland, had nothing remarkable in his character; and he bore meekly the wayward spirit of his duchess—a spirit which fearfully wrecked the life and happiness of her eldest and most beloved son, as these pages will show ere long.

Horace Walpole, then in his twenty-fifth year, was leaning, with an affected air, on the back of her chair. He was splendidly attired in a suit of light-blue silk, covered with silver, and wore a French bag-wig. He was conversing with the duchess in that tone of insufferable egotism which marked his character through life, and he was dealing haughty glances at men and women alike.

The King's proclamation, the consequent distress and dismay of the poor Catholics, formed excellent subjects for Walpole to exercise his wit upon; and this he could do with the greater freedom that, save Count d'Anterroche, there was present not a single friend of the oppressed or unpopular party.

The count, a handsome young man, in white uniform, with silver epaulettes, wore the red ribbon and gold cross of St. Louis, which he had won when serving at the siege of Prague under the elector of Bavaria, who then commanded the French forces.

He told me that he had just received a peremptory notice to quit England, and then resumed his conversation with Henry Lord Lonsdale, a stout man in an enormous wig and square-skirted yellow coat, grandson of the old lord who was famous for nothing but his sycophancy to King William, and his rapid flight when the Highlanders were at Penrith. There too were Viscount Maworm and

Lord Macringer, of that ilk, two Scottish peers who sold their Union votes for fifty pounds each, and were now distinguished among the sixteen representatives (according to the "Rolliad") as—

"Fast friends to monarchy, yet sprung from those
Who basely sold their monarch to his foes;
Since which, atoning for their fathers' crime,
The sons as basely sell themselves to him.
With every change prepared to change their note,
With every government prepared to vote;
Save when, perhaps, on some important bill
They know by second sight the royal will."

These two Scottish worthies kept close to the duke, and the viscount, between many a pinch of snuff, was loudly deploring the misfortunes that overhung his country.

"Because they can no longer be a lucrative source to him," I heard Walpole whisper to the duchess.

"And this huge London bids fair to absorb the whole nation—English as well as Scots," said the viscount.

"Did you ever read the speech made by King James, in the Star Chamber, in 1616?" asked the duke.

"Your grace knows so much—so very much more than other men," whined Macringer, with a low bow and simper.

"Nay, my lord, you flatter me; but his Majesty said something to this effect: 'One of the greatest causes of the desire of those gentlemen who had no call or errand to dwell in London, is the pride of the women; for if they be wives then their husbands, and if they be maids then their fathers, must bring them up to London; because the newest fashion is to be had nowhere but *in* London; and here, if they be unmarried, they mar their marriage; and if they be married, they lose their reputations and

rob their husbands' purses.' It seems to me that there is much truth in what his Majesty then affirmed, and that this domestic ambition, rather than the Union, has raised that fine crop of grass, about which we hear so much, in the streets of Edinburgh."

"Very true, your grace; very true," said the viscount.

This being the duller portion of the company, was far from congenial to me. I was turning away in search of Letty Hyde, after paying my respects to the duchess, when the latter summoned me to her side by a motion of her hand.

She was dressed in green satin brocaded with gold, and wore her fine hair unpowdered, but dressed to perfection. In London she was as famous for the remarkable beauty of her face and form as for a natural grandeur of deportment that was very impressive. To some the latter seemed to indicate pride, to others coldness or *hauteur*; yet it was none of these, for with her friends and even in general society, she was at times artless—even playful.

"This is most *à propos*," said she; "Mr. Lauriston, my good friend of the Foot Guards, and love-maker in ordinary to Piccadilly, come hither and assist me."

"In what, madam?" I asked, reddening, as her odd manner made several smile.

"A discussion we have here on a passage in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' which seems to me a paradox, though Mr. Walpole, with his usual captiousness, will not admit it."

I bowed, and Walpole raised his eyebrows a very little, and gave me first a glance through his glass at my uniform, and then a smiling nod, expressive of impertinent self-complacency, and doubt if a soldier's opinion were of much literary value.

"Here, in the second scene of the second act," resumed the lovely duchess, "we have Demetrius saying to Helena, who follows him into a lonely wood at night, that he marvels much she will commit herself into the hands of one who loves her *not*, although she is both young and beautiful."

"I would deem his want of love for her, perhaps, the lady's best security," said Drumlanrig, laughing.

"Nay, she were surely more secure with one who loved her well, and would respect her lonely position," said I.

"I can assure you, sir," lisped Horace Walpole, "that most of those who dabble in the study of human nature, in considering this strange question—for it is a strange one, duchess—might suppose the fair Helena's danger, in a dark wood at night, to be greatest with a man who really loved her."

"What *do* you mean, Horace?"

"I mean, madam, in plain English, that Demetrius had no desire to become tender with a woman he did not love, though, in the darkness and solitude of a forest, some very odd ideas might have occurred to him, with one whom he really loved."

The dark eyes of Letty Hyde were upon me, and I could not take Walpole's view of this matter. The duchess burst into one of her merry laughs, and saying something to the effect that she would be loth to entrust herself in a dark wood at night with either of us, she suddenly placed Miss Hyde's hand in mine, and giving me the volume of Shakespeare, added waggishly,—

"There, then, go with Letty Hyde—not into a wood, for we have none here—but into a quiet corner, and study over the passage together; then come and tell me about it."

I saw the brow of Drumlanrig darken, and Miss Hyde grow pale, as I led her through the folding-doors into the back drawing-room, where the lights were subdued and the company fewer.

She was trembling and I was confused; but we conversed for some time—Heaven only knows about what; probably our order for foreign service, that I might create a little interest in her breast by the prospect of our early separation.

CHAPTER III.

LETTY HYDE.

I LOVED Letty Hyde tenderly and dearly; but a fear that her heart was already the prize of Drumlanrig, had long fettered my tongue on one hand, while a knowledge of his mother's intentions with regard to Lady Elizabeth Hope, fanned my expectations to the utmost on the other.

The War Office order, which the Earl had delivered on that evening at the Tower, brought about a sort of crisis in our intercourse. I was with her now, almost alone; her hand was on my arm. I pressed it gently to my side; but my heart sank, for there was not the faintest response; how, then, could I gather courage to tell her the secret that seemed to fill my whole soul?

Letty was a noble-looking girl, with extreme softness of features and brilliance of complexion. She had her thick dark-brown hair without powder; but as there was then a great rage for plastering bits of black silk upon the human face, she wore what was named by

coquettes, a kissing patch, at the right corner of her lovely little mouth, on each side of which, when she smiled, there was formed a droll dimple—*la fossette des Graces*—as the French so aptly term them.

It is almost impossible to define the colour of her eyes, which seemed nearly a dark blue violet by day, and black by night; but they were ever full of varying expressions, and by turns were droll or pensive, flashing or soft, as emotion moved her.

To me it seemed as if I had never seen Letty looking more beautiful or more seductive than on this night, in Old Burlington Street. Her smiles were charming and brilliant, and I felt that all the game of life would be lost, and the future become an empty void to me, if I left her and London without an avowal, however brief and hurried, of my unalterable love for her.

We were, I have said, alone, and yet not sufficiently alone for the disclosure I longed to make; thus we conversed in a constrained manner on the merest topics of the day.

The "Messiah" of Handel, which had recently been brought forth in all its glory at Covent Garden, led us readily into the then favourite discussion of the several merits of the rival Italian and German schools of music, and of the opera at Lincoln's-Inn Fields, from whence they had both been so nearly driven by the popularity of Gay's "Beggar's Opera."

A transition was easy to the subject of the theatre, where a new man, named David Garrick, from Ipswich, was making a very good figure, and whom all maintained to excel Thomas Betterton; his appearance as Richard III., in a fashionable Ramillies wig, flapped waistcoat, cuffed coat, and sleeve ruffles, being as ad-

mirable as his acting: so we lingered and conversed on frivolities, while my heart burned with anxiety and love.

"Talking of plays," said I, "the Duchess gave us something to study together."

"True," said she, looking coyly over her fan with a bright smile; "a scene in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"Between Demetrius and Helena."

"Yes, I think it was so."

"The cases between them and us, are, I fear, reversed."

"Them and *us*—how!" said she, with real surprise, while I laid a hand gently on her soft arm, which, however, she did not withdraw.

"The lady loves the gentleman tenderly and truly, yet he flies from her."

"Because a woman should be the pursued and not the pursuer of a poor timid lover into a wood; but *à propos* of this, why do a pair of lovers always seem more elegant, more winning and handsome, to themselves than to others?"

"Because the eye of love embellishes each to the other; it makes the man seem more amiable and gallant in the eyes of the woman; and the woman more amiable, lovely, and perfect to him who loves her; and yet, Miss Hyde—yet—"

"What?" she asked, while I paused, for my voice had become tremulous, my heart rushed to my head, and I found myself blundering."

"My eyes, with all the depth of passion in my heart, could not make *you* seem more lovely than nature has made you."

This was a heavy shot; she did not reply, but played with the tassel of her fan. I glanced hastily round; none were near us, and I thought the eyes of Letty—

"eyes that awakened emotion by *emitting* it,"—never seemed so beautiful, as when she raised them suddenly to mine, with a glance of mingled alarm and drollery—I could well have spared the latter.

While my heart and tongue trembled together, I stole her hand within mine, and with my lips as near her ear as they dared approach,—

"Miss Hyde," I began, "if to love you, as you know I do—to love you with all the tenderness and truth that can be implied by——"

"Champagne, sir!" said a bewigged servant, in a buckram-skirted coat, placing a salver of green glasses almost under my nose.

I hastened to assist Miss Hyde, who laughed at the odd termination to what I was about to say, and I gave the fellow a glance that would have annihilated him, if frowns could kill.

"What were you about to say?" asked Letty, while the colour mounted to her snowy temples, and she laughed so merrily, and with such perfect self-possession, that I felt that my cause as a lover was *lost*. "You surely were not about to make downright love to me at last?"

"At last—what led you to think so?" I asked, with undisguised pique in my tone, and vexation in my heart.

"Because what you said sounded so like it."

"Like what, Miss Hyde?" I enquired, with growing annoyance.

"A bit of a love-passage in a novel; and ah! all the love-makings in these books are terribly dreary and alike."

"Very different from real life you find them, no doubt?" said I, with what I meant to be a malicious air.

"Yes," she replied, laughing so much, that the little kissing-patch dropped from her dimple.

"How?"

"Because there is always so much said."

"Said,—I do not understand?"

"In the novels, I mean."

"True—love is more silent than eloquent. I feel this when with you; so, dearest Letty, hear me now——"

"You must not call me so," said she, averting her head, and holding up her fan between us. Then, sinking her voice into a coquettish whisper, and casting down her fine dark eyes, she added, "but what—what were you about to say?"

"That love, when deep, when true, when tender and passionate as mine, loads the tongue with silence, and fills the heart with thoughts that are unutterable."

"Mr. Lauriston, you—you may be overheard," she exclaimed with confusion, and something very like real terror; "permit me to change the subject, let us rejoin the duchess."

"No, no, none are near; Letty, beloved Letty, hear me now—it may be for the *last* time."

"Well, be quick, please; the last of everything is sad, even the last dance at the ball; for the same set of dancers never *all* meet again in this world."

I drew back, and regarded her fixedly and with sadness, while she coquetted her fan so vigorously, that her fine hair waved to and fro.

"You are heartless!" I exclaimed, bitterly; "and I have poured forth the most tender impulses of a loyal and loving heart before one——"

"Who knows their worth. O yes, Mr. Lauriston, do not misunderstand a poor wayward girl, who has neither father nor mother to guide or to advise her; and do not

misconstruo the affected gaiety under which I seek to hide from you the real pain your long-expected avowal has given me."

"Pain, Letty!"

"Pray call me Miss Hyde, lest he——"

"He—who?"

"Lest others, I mean, should overhear us," she replied, while almost sinking with confusion. "I cannot respond, I can only tremble and listen."

"How glad I am to see you both so happy!" exclaimed the duchess suddenly, as she passed us, radiant with mischief, smiles, and diamonds, and fanning herself as she leant on the arm of Horace Walpole, who added—

"Yes, madam, you see they are

Still amorous, and fond, and billing,
Like Philip and Mary on a shilling."

I never felt more inclined to run any man through the body, than the future Lord of Strawberry Hill at that moment, when I saw Letty Hyde's painful blush.

"By the by," he added, "when does your grace go again to Scotland, that blessed land of Goshen?"

"Never again, if I can help it. I have been twice at Edinburgh, but it is not amusing," said the *blasée* beauty.

To resume our exciting conversation was rather difficult now; yet I attempted it, for I felt bewildered and desperate. I knew not how to advance, how to retreat, or what I said, but Letty listened as if she did not hear me.

She was playing with an April rose, and as she twitched away its pink leaves with her white and pretty fingers, I seemed to feel, that as leaf after leaf fell, so would hope die away in my heart; and yet I dearly loved her!

I followed her glances, and saw that from to time they wandered to where Drumlanrig was promenading with a

lady in a long yellow sacque, that swept the carpet as she leant upon his arm.

She was Lady Elizabeth Hope, daughter of John, Earl of Hopetoun, and had been born in the old tower of Niddry, in Linlithgowshire. She was a pale and pretty young girl, who inherited the large dove-like eyes of her mother (Anne Ogilvie, of the house of Findlater), and she it was to whom the artful duchess had contrived to consign her unwilling son early in the evening, with orders to keep beside her all night; and now the bored and preoccupied air of the earl filled up the measure of my annoyance.

"We must now rejoin the company in the front room," said Miss Hyde, with an almost imploring expression in her eyes.

"As you please," I replied, with positive irritation, and once more we were amid the gay and perfumed throng; and both of us, with minds full of thought and the agitation incident to the recent conversation, strove to mingle in the general topics talked of by those around us, and of the brilliant group where the witty duchess and Horace Walpole formed the centre.

With my heart full of hopeless love for her who leant upon my arm—over whose chair I hung when she seated herself—near whom I felt myself impelled to hover and to linger,—I heard the empty buzz of the polite world with disdain and impatience, and not without an emotion of anger; for Horace Walpole, though young in years, seemed the oracle to whom all listened.

"The Countess (I did not catch the title) was one of the handsomest women in London," said Lord Drumlanrig.

"True," sneered Horace, with a suave smile, "true, my dear lord; but she does not remember that this was

thirty-five years ago, when the good Queen Anne sat upon the throne, and Scottish votes were at a high premium," he added, stealing a furtive glance at old Viscount Maworm. "Last night I saw her at Covent Garden, with her husband, who was in a marvellously antediluvian garb—a coat of skyblue tabby, or watered silk, with silver button-holes, a vest of cloth of gold, and a hat of the Monmouth cock—egad! yes, actually of the Monmouth cock!"

"And the play, Horace,——"

"Was George Lillo's 'Fatal Curiosity.' I found it tiresome, as—as, what shall I say?"

"You at a loss for a simile?"

"As a worn-out intrigue, in which two people continue to play a part they no longer feel."

"It is just three years since Lillo died," said the duchess. "I remember that our friend, Mr. Fielding, wrote a panegyric on him in the 'Champion.'"

But what thought you of young Wilmot's dying scene," asked Drumlanrig; "or, I should rather say, his murder between the wings?"

"What I always think of dying scenes upon the stage," replied Walpole, while alternately playing with his lace ruffles and applying a silver vinaigrette to his well-curved nostril. "It is very strange that on these exciting occasions no one ever thinks of sending for a doctor; but the entire *dramatis personæ* permit the poor suicide, the assassinated hero, or the heart-broken heroine, to die off quietly, altogether ignoring the night-watch and the College of Surgeons. It is very amusing."

"Your idea is more practical than poetical," said Lord Lonsdale, who wore one of those immense periwigs which permitted only the tip of his nose to be visible; "but I

fear me, Mr. Walpole, that the arrival of the night-watch with their lanterns and poles, or of a doctor with a case of lancets, would upset all the arrangements pertaining to the death of Juliet in the tomb, and of Macbeth at Dunsinane."

Altogether oblivious of the pale but handsome girl who leaned upon his arm, and who in secret loved him well, Drumlanrig was chatting in French, and in a low tone, with the gay young D'Anterroche.

"Is it true that among your French ladies marriage is held in disrepute?"

The Count looked almost angry, but replied laughingly,—

"Marriage in disrepute! *Mon Dieu!* 'tis the first I ever heard of its being so—unless among grisettes."

"'Tis said so, here in England."

"I assure you, monsieur," replied the French officer, with an air so courteous that it was impossible to know whether or not he quizzed the young earl, "that marriage is so highly esteemed in Paris, that I have known a woman who was married, in six months, to six different men. *Ma foi!* what the devil would you have?"

The guests were now beginning to leave. Old Lord Maworm, with his lady, splendid in false diamonds, approached the duchess, and making one of the bows that were in fashion when James VII. was in Holyrood, said,

"Madam, we are your grace's most humble servants, and good night."

"Yours, my good lord and lady," replied the duchess, curtseying as they backed out of the room. "Oh, the odious!" she whispered behind her fan to Walpole; "his periwig emits such an odour of tobacco, that it kills even our pulvilio; they are always the first to come and the last to go."

Tired of this kind of entertainment, I prepared to take my departure also, but first sought Letty.

"Miss Hyde," said I, in a low voice, "to-morrow the duchess goes on the river somewhere in her barge; the duke, I know, must be at Windsor; and Drumlanrig is for guard at the Haymarket;—will you, in pity's sake, remain at home, and grant me an hour's interview,—it may be for the last time?"

"Yes," she replied, but with hesitation, though looking at me with full, earnest, and beautiful eyes, that seemed imploring me not to say aught that would pain her.

"At what hour shall I have the honour to——"

"*Two.*"

I pressed her hand, and the pressure was returned, in the most gentle and scarcely perceptible manner; but it sent a thrill of joy through my every pulse and nerve!

In ten minutes more I was in a hackney-coach, being driven through the then dark and ill-paved streets, with my servant seated on the box beside the driver, with a large flambeau in his hand, and a brace of loaded pistols in his girdle.

I seemed still to feel the pressure of Letty's hand lingering in mine: would she, or did she love me after all? With closed eyes, I abandoned myself to an ecstasy of thought.

"But who did she mean by *he*—*he* that might overhear us?" I muttered. "Ah!—who but Lord Drumlanrig. Perhaps she wished to spare him the pain of seeing that I was preferred by her."

I loved and esteemed this young noble for his qualities of head and heart; for his bravery of bearing and manliness of character; but my soul sickened whenever he approached or spoke to Letty Hyde; for I had long felt, with all the bitterness of wounded self-esteem, that he

had hitherto been apparently the more successful lover, and I only somewhat of an intruder. Yet I could not relinquish the new hopes which the pressure of that little hand had kindled into an ecstasy of happiness.

O how I longed for the morrow, and for the hour when I should know all,—that she was to be mine or another's.



CHAPTER IV.

LONDON.

I WAS roused from my waking dreams by a violent shock, and found that we had come into collision with a carriage, which had been overturned, and lay completely wrecked in a large muddy hole or open sewer, near where Long Acre crosses Drury Lane.

Assisted by the night watchmen, with their dim horn lanterns and long poles—queer old fellows they were, in towperiwigs, long coats and unflapped hats—outscrambled Sir Henry Rose, of our corps, one of the wildest, if not worst, bargains made by King George since his accession, *sans* sword, hat, and wig. Then they disinterred a lady in a hoop-petticoat and black silk mask, whom he asked me to deposit at a house which stood within a pretty garden, just outside of Temple Bar.

After this he proceeded with me to our barracks in the Tower, which we reached without other hindrance or adventure.

From the occurrence of such mishaps, the reader will perceive that the London of *that* time was very different in its internal economy, from the London of the latter days of George III.

After studying at the University of Edinburgh (my

native city), I had joined the Scottish regiment of the household brigade but a short time before the period at which my narrative commences, and I cannot describe how great and wondrous was the change I found, even in the London of that time, from the melancholy and drooping capital of Scotland, with its dull population of some sixty thousand souls—a population crushed alike by baneful political and religious influences, till almost every instinct of life, of energy, and of generosity departed, and nothing remained but noisy cant, profound hypocrisy, political corruption, and general dissimulation, amid which a few hungry lawyers lied, cringed, and scrambled for the crumbs which the Union had left them—for the benefits of that measure were of non-effect for nearly fifty years after it;—and to this state of things did 1707 reduce the city of the Stuarts, dooming it for ever to pettiness and ultra-provincialism.

“A dreary weariness seemed to have fallen on every one, as though life offered no more prizes for exertion, and the day of noble ambition had set for ever.” None could see the *future*, and the only good which as yet accrued to the Scots, was that they had no longer the power of *misgoverning themselves*.

The religion of the people inculcated gloom in this world and terror in that to come; sources of grief were hailed as chastening blessings and heavenly dispensations; joy and laughter as sure signs of approaching woe; thus hypocrisy and corruption were sure to become the only paths to local honour and reward.

From this state of things my appointment to the Scots Foot Guards removed me to London, where very different scenes awaited me.

I shall endeavour to describe to you what was then the great metropolis of England.

It had but *one* bridge by which the river could be crossed, and the watermen were consequently a vast, unruly and rapacious horde, amid a busy population of seven hundred thousand souls. There was scarcely a dock, and hence the Thames was crowded with shipping beyond all description, till its broad bosom resembled a vast raft of decks wedged together.

The thoroughfares were muddy, and frightfully ill paved; thus the cry of "I'll clean your honour's shoes," from the shoeblacks at every street corner, was incessant; and when the household brigade lined King Street or Union Street, on his Majesty going to Parliament, faggots were thrown into the deep ruts, lest the state coach, which was like a great apple-pie upon gilded wheels, might be jolted to pieces, and the elector-king cast floundering in the kennel. Then the footways were so narrow, that if the passengers would avoid being crushed by the wheels of coaches and drays, they had to shrink close to the houses, which were destitute of spouts or gutters; thus in wet weather the rain poured mercilessly down from eaves and swinging signboards, till the cocking of one's hat, and even the well-curled wig beneath, became filled with water.

Public executions were fearfully frequent. On these occasions were to be seen carts rumbling along the streets, on their way to Tyburn, conveying some eight or ten malefactors, robbers, forgers, or footpads, all singing, shouting, wailing, or blaspheming, though bound for the gallows. Others took leave of the world at the place called Execution Dock, where sailors were hanged about low-water mark, and left till *three* tides had overflowed their corpses.

On the banks of the Thames scores of pirates swung in chains, with the obscene sea-birds, and the crows from

the adjacent fields wheeling round them; while the whitened skulls of many unfortunate Scottish gentlemen who had risen in arms for James VIII. and the right divine of kings, made horrible Temple Bar and the Southwark end of old London Bridge—the more so, that the latter was then a crowded mass of shops and dwelling-houses.

There were deep holes and open cesspools in almost every street. In these one would be certain to stumble by night, but for the flaring link held over them by some homeless boy or haggard wretch, who waited the charity of the belated wayfarer, whose pity or gratitude they excited, by reminding him that they had saved his neck or limbs. The act for paving and lighting London was not passed till 1762, twenty years *after* this time.

Thieves were still quite as daring as when they plotted to stop the coach of good Queen Anne (her late Majesty of glorious memory!), on returning from a supper in the City; while bullyrooks, mohocks, and others, made all the dark streets full of peril from sunset to sunrise.

The very sports of the people tended to degrade all ranks. Cocks were fought, bears baited, and, on one occasion, a fine English horse was actually worried in public by dogs, and then stabbed to death with knives; while “a stalled deer” was shot (by advertisement) at the “Greyhound,” in Islington. Forty men entered for it, at 2*s*. 6*d*. per shot, and it was killed by George Frederick Falshaw, *gentleman*; and what shall I say of the revolting displays at the Cockpit and at Hockley-in-the-Hole!

The rows, murders, and scenes that took place in the geneva-shops, mumbeer and cyder-cellars, where thieves and outlaws resorted, and where the feeble arm of the civil power dared not to penetrate, were beyond all parallel in the history of London.

Archery, quarterstaff, and wrestling, with other manly old English sports, had almost disappeared, and in their place we had pugilism and sword-playing, when two ruffians like Bully Broughton or Bill Willis, the Fighting Quaker, decorated with ribbons tied over their shirt-sleeves, cut and slashed each other to mincemeat with sharp rapiers, to the great delight of all ranks; for around the platforms on which such exhibitions were made, I have seen Parliament-men, divines, even the polished Horace Walpole, and the "hero of Culloden," pell-mell among butchers, watermen, pickpockets, and sweeps, and courtezans, all hoops, paint, and patches.

I have seen twelve of the latter running races along Pall Mall, per advertisement, "for a Holland smock and a pair of striped stockings;" and when visiting my sentinels about daybreak, have passed, almost without interest or remark, some poor fellow carried home on a ladder or a shutter, shot or run through the body. He was only the victim of a duel in the park close by.

I have seen Ranelagh and Vauxhall with their splendid fireworks, their jets of water, their fine music, and arcades of varied lamps, deserted by men of fashion and good citizens, who preferred to witness a bear disembowelled by dogs, or to bet upon Bully Broughton or an ass-race at May Fair.

At this time robberies were actually committed in open daylight in Piccadilly; and for many years after, a fellow known as the Flying Highwayman made every path unsafe for twenty miles round London, though a string of skeletons that hung on gibbets in no way added to the beauty of the Edgeware Road; and then we thought nothing of having the mail-bag rooked at Hounslow Heath or Wimbledon.

Our regiment was distinguished from the other Guards

by its grenadier-caps, and, as a Scottish one, was viewed with extreme disfavour by the people and by the King—a monarch who, like his father before him, “could speak no English” (as Mary Montague says), “and was past the learning of it.” However, he could mispronounce a little French, and swear most fluently in his native German.

The charming parks were then the favourite resort of all fashionables; but the East-end people seldom ventured there, lest they might be pinked or mauled by gentlemen or their valets, especially after my Lady Coventry and Walpole’s niece were mobbed by some impudent apprentices.

The pillories were never without a victim, in the form of a French Jesuit or other dissenting clergyman in full canonicals, a Jacobite poet, or a libeller of some kind, to be pelted with rotten eggs, or to have their ears sliced off, their nostrils slit, and then burned with a hot iron by the hangman, amid cries of “No popery!” “Down with the Pretender!” and “Long live King George!”

When other sources of excitement failed the lively Londoners, we had occasionally a fire, such as that which burned down Devonshire House in Piccadilly, or all the dwellings between Temple Bar and the Butcher Row. Then we had riots at the theatre, such as that which occurred, when a mob of lacqueys in livery, armed with bludgeons, forced their way into Drury Lane, and put to flight the prince and princess of Wales; or when that enlightened and patriotic rabble, with a true English contempt for all foreigners (his Britannic Majesty excepted), attacked a company of French players when representing “*L’Embaras des Riches*” at the Haymarket, and, sword in hand, valiantly drove the poor people off the stage, maltreating the actresses, and forcing the orchestra to play “*Britons, strike home!*”

On the 30th of January, the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles I., I commanded a party of the Scots Foot Guards, which was sent to disperse a number of Whig noblemen and gentlemen, who met at a French tavern in Suffolk Street, where they displayed from a window a calf's head dressed up in bloody clothes. Even the rough fellows among the mob which immediately gathered in the street, resented this insult to fallen royalty. They broke into the house, and threw out of the windows all the furniture, together with several of the guests, among whom were my Lords Maworm and Macringer, who were dragged forth from under a bed, and would have been torn to pieces by some Irish chairmen, but for the timely arrival of my men, who charged down the street with fixed bayonets.

In the Marshalsea the poor prisoners were loaded with irons, and in many instances they were actually tortured to death by William Acton, clerk of that prison, in his endeavours to extort money from them; while, with the same profitable end in view, a ruffian named Bambridge, warden of the Fleet, robbed and murdered more than one of his prisoners before the Legislature cared to interfere.

Such was London in the early days of George II.; and now, with the reader's pardon for this long digression, I shall resume the story of my own adventures.



CHAPTER V.

THE BUBBLE BURSTS.

ENCOURAGED by the memory of the gentle pressure returned by that beloved hand, I longed for the meeting of the morrow; for that interview which would decide

my fate, and inform me whether Letty Hyde loved me, or was lost to me for ever.

By a blind infatuation, I fanned or fed my hopes to the utmost, and the idea never occurred to me, that the momentary response on which I was rearing such a world of fancy, might have been accorded merely by friendship—by kindness for one who was probably on the eve of departure for the scene of a long and bloody war.

In all our intercourse I had never said that I loved her, but she must long have believed that I did so; and the duchess, who from motives of self-interest was my sincerely, knew it well, and doubtless would inform her of the passion she had inspired.

Thus until last night we had been free to meet and part as friends, for in the great world of fashion—of refined civilization, or indeed, of the merely well-bred—every emotion of the heart, the bitterness of hatred, the glow of revenge, the fury of rage, the tenderness of love—love, the most powerful emotion that God has planted in us—with every other variety of our variable nature, must be concealed and smoothed over by the calm and conventional—and hence, perhaps, the useful—exterior, which society compels us to assume; for its rules are, at times, stronger fetters to the tongue and hands than bonds of refined steel could be.

After an unusually careful toilet—in which I substituted for the uniform of the Guards a coat and flap-waistcoat of cherry-coloured silk, lined with white and laced with broad bars of silver; a pair of sky-blue satin small-clothes, and white silk stockings with gold clocks,—I dropped into Wilding's, the perruquier, to have my hair fashionably dressed with a single row of curls. When my attire was complete, even to new silver tassels for my sword and clouded cane, I summoned a sedan, placed my

hat under my arm, and punctually at two o'clock found myself, with a palpitating heart, at the door of Queensberry House in Old Burlington Street.

The sound of music met my ear, as I was ushered into the Gilt Withdrawing-room, and with a half blush and a whole smile on her sweet face, Letty Hyde rose from the spinnet to receive me.

She was charmingly dressed, and I thought that *her* toilet had been also made with more care than usual. She had a hoop of the newest fashion, flat in front, but projecting at the sides; her little cap, apron and sleeves were edged with the finest black lace and trimmed with knots of purple ribbon, which was then the fashionable colour. Her silk dress was of the same, and it well became her dark eyes and hair, which she still wore without powder.

"Count d'Anterroche has just paid his farewell visit," said she, "and I have been trying over some of Lulli's music which he left with me."

My heart beat quicker, for now she had a kissing-patch at each corner of her mouth. When I seated myself beside her, and as a prelude, began to converse of the preceding evening and of those we had met, I observed, that while speaking with a nervous quickness, as if in dread of the topic that was coming, more than once she trembled and grew pale.

She permitted me to retain her hand and to press it, but she grew more pale and less self-possessed when I told her, that being aware of the long separation before us, and that I was bound for a land of perils and suffering,—a land from which I might never return,—I could not leave London without avowing that I had long loved her—dearly and tenderly loved her.

I know not in what fashion this avowal was framed,

and it matters little; but such was its purport. She heard me in silence, and with tears in her downcast and half-averted eyes. Then, slowly withdrawing her hand, she said with hesitation:—

“I—I did not know that you loved me so, Mr. Lauriston; I merely thought that we were good friends—the best of friends, and nothing more.”

“You did not know that I loved you! Oh, Miss Hyde—oh, Letty—my eyes and actions must have interpreted but poorly the secret of my heart, if you have not long since discovered how deeply and devotedly I loved you. My fortune is not great, certainly——”

“Oh, I seek neither rank or fortune, though destitute of both,” said she, hurriedly, while playing nervously with the frills of her little apron; “but hear me, Godfrey Lauriston——” She paused.

“What, dearest Letty?” I whispered, with my lip close to her ear, for her face was again averted, though I had regained possession of her hand.

“I know not what I was about to say; how foolish of me to permit this painful meeting!” she exclaimed with increasing emotion.

“I will spare you further annoyance, Letty,” said I, making every effort to appear calm; “but you have permitted me to love you, while” (the words almost faltered on my tongue, so bitter seemed the admission to myself) “loving *another*; is it not so?”

She was silent, and more than ever confused, for her bosom heaved painfully.

“Whom do you love; or need I ask?” I whispered, while pressing her trembling hand.

“Do not urge me to say—in pity do not.”

“I trust this favoured rival is in no way my inferior,” said I, bitterly.

"In bearing he is your equal, Godfrey; in birth——"

"My superior. I thank you, madam; he is——"

"Lord Drumlanrig," she added; and turning round gazed me full and earnestly in the face, with her eyes swimming in tears. "Why must we be lovers, you and I?" she exclaimed, while taking both my hands in hers. "Can we not be, as we have hitherto been, good and kind friends? I shall love you, Mr. Lauriston, as a sister would do; for a true woman never fails to feel a deep interest in the man who has paid her the highest tribute she can receive on earth—the honest love of a good and sincere heart. But oh, let us never again broach this most painful subject," she added imploringly, and I kissed both her hands in an agony of love and mortification.

"Had I met you *first*," she resumed, in a soft, low voice, "I am sure I might have loved you, Mr. Lauriston; but here the avowal comes too late; and now, my dear friend, permit me to leave you, for a carriage has stopped at the gate."

"So bursts the bubble I have followed so long!" said I, clasping my hands impetuously.

"But you will soon learn to forget me," said she, smiling through her tears, and laying a hand kindly on my shoulder.

"Forget you, Letty; forget you?"

"Yes, and learn perhaps to hate me."

"To hate you?" I repeated.

"Yes; I know such things come to pass."

"How do you know this; why do you say so?"

"I do not love you,—at least as you would wish to be loved. All such regard is involuntary; but *not* so is hatred. That comes after due consideration, and with the bitter sense of wounded self-esteem."

The pretty casuist's cool demeanour piqued me; but I did not see the truth of her remarks at that time.

"It may be so," said I, with a bitter sigh; "we cannot control our hearts."

"And, dear Mr. Lauriston, you love me."

"Fondly, madly, do I love you, Letty!"

"And just so you will as readily love some one else; at least I hope so, for I wish you to forget me, or to remember me only as a friend. Could I have controlled my own heart, it had not been stolen by—by your friend Drumlanrig."

"And he, too, has unwittingly stolen the heart of another."

"Another?" she faltered.

"Lady Elizabeth Hope, the bride his mother has chosen for him, and whom she is resolved with all the strength of her implacable will that he shall marry."

Miss Hyde grew deadly pale at this bitter rejoinder, which I was weak or cruel enough to make with something of malice.

"Forgive my harshness, Letty; but Drumlanrig is to be envied; a title gives so many advantages."

"A title is nothing to me, Mr. Lauriston."

"Oh, in this moment of quarrel——"

"Do not say quarrel, I pray you, Godfrey," she said, in an imploring voice, while her tears fell fast; "but hush, for Heaven's sake; I hear Drumlanrig's voice on the staircase."

"Then I shall retire; in this moment of bitterness and humiliation I cannot meet with him," I exclaimed, starting from the sofa on which we had been seated. "Farewell, Letty, farewell, and for ever. Henceforward I shall be a man without hope and without a future; for

though your image will ever be before me, it must be as the bride and the love of another. There are those in this world to whom the future is ever brighter and better than the past or present ; but now the *past*, with its dreams of love and its sweet illusions, must be all the world to me !”

I pressed my lips on her hand, and rushed away by the door of the inner drawing-room, just as Drumlanrig, who had come off duty at the Haymarket Theatre (where a captain's guard of forty privates was posted when an opera was performed either by day or night), entered by another way.

I saw that he was still in uniform, and wore his crimson sash, gilt gorget and tall conical grenadier cap.



CHAPTER VI.

COUNT D'ANTERROCHE.

QUITTING the house in a mood of mind sorely changed since I had entered it, I wandered through the streets without caring whither.

How bitter was the conviction that I had left her with a favoured rival ; and that when with *him*, she would the sooner commit to oblivion all that I had said to her.

As the iron gates of Queensberry House clanked behind me, I thought my heart would have broken or burst ; yet, fortunately, hearts do neither burst nor break at two and twenty, and I had just reached that mature age on last Gunpowder-Plot day.

And my undoubted rival was the earl of Drumlanrig—my dearest friend ! How I cursed this fatality, though perhaps, it was the saving of one or both of us ; for had

the object of her affection been any other man in London, ay, or in the household brigade, in the bitterness of my heart, and the heat of jealousy, and youthful folly, I certainly would have paraded him in Hyde Park, with a choice of weapons, on the morrow.

But to him, for whom I and all our corps had a regard so sincere—to him who by his good offices and powerful interest at the court of St. James's and with the legal sycophants at the head of affairs in Scotland, had restored to me all that the civil war and the confiscation incident to the battle of Sheriffmuir, had left of my father's heritage—to him whose whole life seemed inspired by a desire to win the esteem of men and women, I felt that I could only surrender in silence my long-treasured love, in the hope that she would not mar his happiness by unwisely revealing that he owed it to the sacrifice of a friend.

I hurried out of Old Burlington Street and along Piccadilly careless of whither I went; and as the dark had set in, I narrowly escaped a mauling from the chairmen of a woman of fashion (two Irish giants in cocked hats and gold aiguilletted coats), whose sedan I nearly overturned. Then, in my irritation, I knocked a saucy link-bearer into a deep muddy kennel, where his flambeau sputtered and went out.

Reckless alike of the present and of the future, I would now with stern joy hear the alarm-drum beaten, for I was inspired by the most passionate longing to forget her amid the wild excitement of war, or to perform some great and brilliant deed of arms, that she might hear of it and say, "It is poor Godfrey, who loved so much—or who loves me still!" If her ambition were thus kindled, she might think kindly of me for my fame, if not for myself alone.

These were high heroic thoughts for a poor sub of

two and twenty; but then came another idea. I might be knocked on the head—the first bullet from the enemy's ranks might lay me low, and leave my place in this world as vacant as it was before I came into it. Would Letty Hyde weep for me then? Would one tear dim her deep-blue violet eyes—one sigh make her dear bosom swell in memory of the honest heart that loved her so fondly and so vainly?

I dared to hope so, and in my wild boyish enthusiasm would almost have courted a soldier's death, to create a momentary interest in her heart.

But—asked cold reason—what would that avail me with one, whose soft cheek was now perhaps reclined upon my rival's breast?

And thus, full of black and gloomy thoughts that fed and exasperated themselves, I wandered to and fro.

If aught could add to the bitterness of my recent rejection, it was the knowledge that I had left her with a rival as handsome as the earl. In France or Flanders a ball might lay him low; but this idea was torture too, and I thrust it aside, for Drumlanrig was my tried and trusted friend.

Then a strange emotion of vengeance at Letty Hyde, mingled with the love and mortification it failed to suppress; and with this emotion came the peculiar, but not unwise idea of attempting to replace her image by another; but that suggestion of a restless mind I thrust aside too, and with a choking sensation in my breast looked hurriedly about for a coffee-house or hotel, as I longed for a deep draught of cool champagne to quench my burning thirst, and to drown all reflection and care.

I knew not to what part of London I had wandered, but I seemed to have turned my steps unconsciously into the city, or in that direction.

"*Sacré bleu!* where the devil are you going, *mon camarade!*" exclaimed a tall, swinging fellow, in a furred roquelaure and unflapped hat, against whom I stumbled in the dark; and now, on looking about me, I found myself at the corner of Drury Lane, and near where Sir Henry Rose's coach had been overturned on the preceding night.

Except the blazing link held by a bareheaded boy, beside the hole, to prevent other accidents, the street was dark, and I was quite in the mood to quarrel with anyone.

"Did you hear me speak?" asked the person against whom I had stumbled, and who, by his accent, seemed a foreigner, "or am I to deem you deaf as well as blind?"

"Count d'Anterroche!" I exclaimed, recognizing the speaker.

"The same—and you? Oh, pardon me, Monsieur Lauriston, but I did not know you."

"May I ask why you are here afoot, and at this time of night, when the streets of London are so perilous, especially to strangers?"

"I might repeat your question to yourself, Monsieur Lauriston," replied the count, laughing; "but I am about to give Monsieur Falshaw his revenge before I leave England."

"How?"

"Last night I won every shilling he possessed."

"And you are now on your way to ——"

"The Gaming-house he frequents hereabout; exactly, monsieur."

"It is a dangerous place for you who are a stranger here; and, moreover, he is a ruffian known to all London."

"*Peste!* I have my sword, Lauriston, and can use it a little;" said the French noble, gaily; "and I have heard they keep capital wine there."

"That will suit me, for I now find myself overwhelmed by thirst and disappointment; thus I shall accompany you—but be assured, you will be exposed to roguery."

"*Tudieu!* it does not matter. I have really come to the conclusion, that what we stigmatize as roguery is only a happy system which enables one-half of the world to get the better of the other. The whole could never get on without it."

"I have heard that a large reward is now offered for the capture of the Flying Highwayman, with a particular description of the three horses he rides."

"A black, a sorrel, and a grey."

"The first is a bald-faced nag."

"But he generally hides the face by a black cat's skin."

"'Tis said that he has leaped over Colnbrook turnpike at least ten times within a fortnight, and, on the last occasion, dropped a purse containing fifty guineas, of which he had eased a citizen the same night in the fields between London and Marylebone, where he had won them in the bowling alleys."

"*Ma foi!* here we are at last," said the count, as he rattled the brass knocker of a small and humble-looking door, at the corner of a dark and narrow alley which opened on the right hand off Drury Lane.

It was immediately unclosed, and, careless of whither I went, or what I did, if enabled to escape from my own thoughts, I drew tighter the buckle of my sword-belt, and followed D'Anterroche among some very singular company.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAMING-HOUSE.

THE place in which we found ourselves had a low and squalid aspect; yet it was one of the best frequented in London, for the gaming-houses of the year 1742 were in character, and in the rank of their visitors, very different from the gorgeous saloons and aristocratic club-houses of later times.

If the reader has ever seen Hogarth's picture of White's gaming den, in the "Rake's Progress," he may be able to realize something of the scene that opened before us.

A wainscotted room, with a ceiling blotched by damp or stains, and all darkened by the hazy smoke of the tin-shaded sconces that hung on the dirty walls, which in some places bore the marks of sword thrusts and pistol shots. Caricatures with vast noses, obscene legends, and figures swinging on gibbets were chalked here and there, while the atmosphere was thickened by smoke issuing from long clay pipes of tobacco used by nearly all who were present.

Above the fire-place hung a print of bold Dick Turpin, who was hanged in 1739, three years before, and who had been a frequenter of these rooms

Piles of gold and silver were on the tables, and around them were men of fashion in splendidly laced silk and velvet coats, with rich sword-belts and spotless ruffles; there, too, were known pickpockets, suspected highwaymen, and miserly money lenders, with rapacious looks and flinty hearts, colluding with mad spendthrifts,—rank, crime, avarice, and infamy, all mingled together, or sitting side by side, with nervous fingers, gloating eyes, and

eager souls, urging the wild race to casual wealth or ultimate ruin.

Brows were knit; cheeks flushed or grew pale; fierce oaths were heard, and chuckles of exultation, as the heaps of gold were shuffled about, and changed owners with startling rapidity.

So absorbed were all in the desperate work before them, that our entrance was scarcely noticed. I knew that we were in the company of reckless men, many of whom would no doubt make their final exit at Tyburn; but from other causes than lucre I was too reckless to care, and sought only change of scene and excitement.

Count d'Anterroche looked round for his antagonist, Mr. Falshaw, but he was not present. However, that worthy personage soon swaggered in, evidently flushed with wine, and carrying in one hand his drawn sword, in the other a large horn lantern. His wig was awry, and half the curls on one side were cut or burned off.

"Hollo! what have we here?" cried a fellow in a faded suit of green and gold; "Samson just from the lap of Dalilah—Samson with his wig shorn?"

"No; but you have George Freddy Falshaw; one who may stuff it down your throat, my gay Jackadandy," replied the tipsy *roué*.

"Zounds, Master Falshaw," said another, with a pimply nose, a patch over one eye, and wearing a coat of peach-coloured velvet, the cuffs and flaps of which were stiff with very faded silver embroidery, and who carried at his girdle a pair of brass-butted pistols; "what are you doing with that lantern,—searching for a wise man, eh?"

"It is a trophy of victory, my dear Sir Bob. I have beaten a rascally watchman to a jelly with his own pole for obstructing my way in Long Acre; that is all. Your servant, count; yours, Mr. Lauriston," he added, bowing

to us, and leaving him of the peach-coloured velvet to pursue his game. Fortune ran high in favour of this fellow, who was known about town as Sir Robert Lockett, but who was hanged as plain Bob in May, 1744, for being concerned in several street robberies. On the night I describe he was playing with Brigadier Huske, a coarse man of very brutal aspect, in jack boots and a Ramillies wig,—the same officer who subsequently behaved with marked cowardice at the battle of Falkirk.

“Harkee, Mr. Lauriston,” resumed Mr. Falshaw, “are you to join the count and me in our little game to-night? If so, I have a friend here, a Templar, who——”

“Thank you, no; I would rather be excused,” said I, with a significant smile which he quite understood, for he knit his brows and said cavalierly,—

“Sink me! you’ll join us in some wine, at least.”

I bowed, but said,—

“The last I drank here with you was very bad; it disagreed with me, at all events.”

“You took too much of it, perhaps?”

“One generally takes a double dose when with a dull or disagreeable fellow,” I retorted.

“Thank you, my dear sir,” sneered the other; “we shall have some wine in spite of your jibe, and then to play!” And as he ordered some wine, which we were to pay for, he gave both D’Anterroche and me a sinister smile.

Mr. George Frederick Falshaw was alleged to be (as I have mentioned elsewhere) a son of the late King George I., by the plainest of his many plain German mistresses. On what authority, apart from a strong resemblance to some portraits of the monarch, this was said in London, I know not; but the man’s character seemed almost a corroboration of the story.

His mother, Fraülein Valshagh, had been a tirewoman

of "the Maypole," as the tall skeleton, old Madam Kielmansegg (the first mistress of the Defender of the Faith) was named before she figured in the British peerage as Erangarde Elosine, Countess of Faversham, Duchess of Kendal and Munster; but poor Valshagh had not the luck to obtain a coronet like her mistress, or that still more ugly friend of George I., who was known in London as "the Elephant," and who in the Royal Gazette for 1722 appeared as Melosine, Baroness of Aldborough and Countess of Walsingham, in Norfolk, for life.

The Fraülein's son came forth to the world as plain George Falshaw, gentleman. He once occupied rooms in Hampton Court, and was present at the banquet given there, in 1731, to Charles of Lorraine, afterwards Emperor of Germany. On that occasion he got tipsy, committed many extravagances, and insulted old Melosine by calling her "the Elephant," to the great delight of the Jacobites and the rabble of London.

He was in his thirty-eighth year, and had a powerful figure above six feet in height. His face, which was bloated by the effect of his constant potations, was chiefly remarkable for its receding forehead, thick lips, and pale watery eyes; but it possessed at times an expression of reckless impudence and brutal daring. He had shamefully deceived and abandoned several women of good position; he had spent all the money left him by his mother and her relations; and now he had no other revenue than such as the dice-box afforded him.

His dress was decidedly shabby; a coat of rich blue velvet, stained and threadbare at the seams, bound with silver lace now tarnished and black; his stock had once been white cambric, but now had no particular hue. He wore long boots, a handsome sword, a dirty periwig all awry, and, as we have already said, shorn of some of its

curls, and a cocked hat of the hunting fashion placed on the right side of his head.

Such was Mr. George Frederick Falshaw, whose name will occur in these pages more than once, and more than I would wish.

Constrained by being with D'Anterroche to speak with this fellow, whom it was alike dangerous to court or to quarrel with (as he was secretly protected by the King), I drank wine with him before they began to play.

"Mr. Lauriston," said he, as he flung the watchman's lantern to the further end of the apartment, and seated himself half astride a chair, "you know Captain Home?"

"Of our regiment?"

"Yes."

"A veteran officer who served with the corps under Dalzell at Almenara long before my time. What of him?"

"Sink me! but he is a lucky dog!"

"He has married the Lady Betty Finch."

"Hence I term him a lucky dog. The Lady Betty hath a forty-thousand-pounds fortune! A pretty gentlewoman she is, and he man of fashion still, for all that he served at Almenara. Why the devil is not such luck mine!"

"Because monsieur is not a guardsman," said Count d'Anterroche. "In France *we* pick up all the heiresses—the mousquetaires, red, grey, or black, haven't a chance with us at Versailles or Marli le Roi."

"But what woman in her senses, Mr. Falshaw, would marry a fellow so wild as you?" said I.

"With his estate in his breeches-pocket—ha! ha! ha!" and laughing, he swung himself to and fro on his chair. "Sink me! a regular soldier's thigh! But I have always these lovely bits of ivory," he added, producing two

venerable dice, which rumour more than once affirmed to be cogged. "You will be my banker, Mr. Lauriston, and will pay for this wine, till I see how fortune favours me with the count. My pocket was picked at Tyburn to-day."

"A pleasant locality, and very suggestive to you."

"I saw four Jews hung. Sink me! I could with equal pleasure have seen the twelve tribes of Israel all strung up at once. Pass the bottle—thanks; this expected war with France will double the tax on wines—let us drink while they are cheap. Zounds! I am an enemy to all taxation, and yet, believe me, I am quite disinterested in the matter."

"How so?"

"Because I do not possess a single farthing or an article that is taxable—unless his Majesty's ministers impose it on my ruffles, shoe buckles, or periwig; and now, count, for our game and my revenge."

The wine he had just taken, when added to his previous potations, made Mr. Falshaw's utterance somewhat thick; and his eyebrows rose and fell in a spasmodic manner, as he seated himself at the table opposite D'Anterroche, who surveyed him with a smile of contempt on his handsome lip; but still the French noble was determined to keep his word and play with Falshaw, for gambling in all its forms was then a madness—a moral disease that possessed all classes.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BRAWL.

I HAD not the slightest interest personally in the scene of vice and dissipation around me. My whole thoughts were with her I had left—with Letty Hyde—and I could only torture myself by surmising whether Drumlanrig was with her still. Tiring speedily of the place, restless and wretched, I would gladly have gone elsewhere; but was loth to leave D'Anterroche, who was an officer of bravery and distinction, in such a den alone, and at night too.

I affected to read, and drew from my pocket Dodsley's "Sir John Cockle at Court," a book which I had bought that day at his shop in Pall Mall, and strove in vain to fix my attention on its pages, till at last I thrust it aside, and began to attend to the game.

Falshaw had evidently little or nothing in his purse to begin with, but he obtained, heaven knows how—a sum in gold from a confiding money-lender, who sat behind a little desk in a corner, and the gambling at once began at a table, where a number of reckless dogs were playing lansquenet.

I forget the sums staked, but they were large.

The count was dealer at first, and having to contend with ten, he had to lay down a stake equal to the whole, and at such a game one may win or lose a great deal in a very short time.

Fortune favoured D'Anterroche, who played with ease, chatting and laughing the whole time, while the gold of the party accumulated before him, and their faces fell in proportion as their funds waxed low.

Falshaw lost, borrowed, and lost again

Starting from the table with a fierce malediction on his lips, and a dreadful expression in his bloodshot eyes, he applied again to the money-lenders.

They were inexorable; no one would lend him anything, for his character was too well known; he did not ask *me*, and I was not foolish enough to offer him my purse; but on coming to the little *guéridon* or tripod table at which I was seated, he filled up a bumper of champagne and drained it at a draught. Then, bestowing a glance of hatred at D'Anterroche, who was still playing and chatting, even humming songs the while, Falshaw said to me,—

"Harkee, sir—you came hither with this so-called count?"

"So-called? 'Sdeath, sir; yes, he is my friend," I replied, coldly and sternly.

"Then tell him, I shall parade him in the morning, where, when, or how he likes, and make him dance a cotillion to the tune of two bare blades."

"You will be very rash," said I, quietly.

"Sink me! why?" asked Falshaw, scowling.

"He is more than a match for three of you, with the small sword. He is said to be the best fencer in France."

"Being challenged, he will have the choice of weapons, and may adopt the pistol," said Falshaw, with a grimace; "we shall then be equal."

"Not so; with your bulk he has double the chance of hitting."

"We shall see—you will bear him my message and confer with my friend, Sir Bob Lockett."

"As an officer of the Foot Guards, I decline to have my name associated with either yours or his," said I, rising, while Falshaw ground his teeth and darted a

ferocious glance at me; but my cool bearing quelled him.

Perceiving that this fellow, whom I heartily despised, wished to fasten a quarrel upon me, during a pause in the game I asked D'Anterroche, in French, to retire with me, adding that I was most impatient to be gone; and as the dealing had long since passed into other hands, he politely rose at once.

"Going, ha! ha!" exclaimed Falshaw; "I thought so."

"How, sir," I asked haughtily; "by what right do you think about me, or concern yourself in my movements?"

"Pray, sir, be calm; though impatience is, I know, the failing of all lovers and idlers."

"Zounds, sir!" I exclaimed, enraged by his harsh voice, which grated on my ear, and by his laugh, which sounded like the cackle of a strange bird; "among which do you class *me*?"

"Among the former, most assuredly; among the latter, most probably."

"How know *you* that?" I asked, contemptuously.

"I have seen you in the presence of Miss ——"

"Silence!" I exclaimed, with a hand on my sword; "silence! Is this foul den the place wherein to utter a lady's name?"

Falshaw looked steadily at me, and perceiving the sternness of my face, his eye quailed, and his tactics changed.

"Oh yes, there is no denying it, my dear sir," said he, adopting a tone of good-humoured banter. "I could read your eyes, your lips, your whole face."

"And what saw you there?" I asked, while glancing at D'Anterroche, who had resumed play and was again winning.

"Homage, my dear sir, homage. I saw that in the

presence of a beautiful girl, like every well-bred man, you became a courtier in bearing—a lover, a servant, a slave! Sink me! yes; for hearts will glow, and pulses quicken in the presence of beauty—ay, and heads will bow that rarely bend to kings—especially such as my good kinsman George.”

The air of good humour he assumed, and his praise of Letty Hyde—for it was she to whom he referred—compelled me even in that place to forgive the impertinence of the allusions; but, after joining Sir Bob Lockitt and two other footpad-like gamblers, who were each stripped of their last shilling, I saw him whispering in their ears, and ere long they began to survey with ominous glances, D’Anterroche and me, but more particularly the count, who by fair play and extreme rashness had now amassed a vast sum in gold.

A great quantity of wine had been ordered at his expense, and all had been drinking freely, when I heard a distant church clock striking.

“Two in the morning!” said I; “count, we must indeed be gone.”

“Nonsense, Mr. Lauriston,” said Falshaw, interposing between us and the door; “consider the difference of clocks, and that neither of you have wives—of your own, at least—awaiting you.”

“Count, let us go,” said I, starting up, as several of the candles were extinguished by those with whom Falshaw had been whispering.

“Two o’clock here, is only six, seven, or eight o’clock elsewhere, just as the world wags,” said Sir Bob Lockitt, buttoning up his peach-coloured coat.

“D’Anterroche,” said I, “the streets hereabout are very unsafe.”

“I have my sword,” said he, rising from the table;

"good night, gentlemen," he added, with a polite bow to all.

"If the streets are unsafe," shouted Falshaw, "why the devil don't you stay where you are? Only last night a gentleman was stopped on Holborn Hill by eight footpads, who shot him dead, and robbed him of everything. Eh, Lockitt, were there eight?"

Lockitt muttered an angry oath.

"But they were all dressed like gentlemen, in full-bottomed wigs and cuffed coats,—at least, so says the 'Hue and Cry;' and one was just about your height and appearance, Sir Bob."

As Falshaw said this, he quickly turned the key in the chamber door, and stuck it in his girdle. Then, drawing his sword, he cried,—

"Out with the lights, boys; down with the French papist, and recapture the money he has cheated us of!"

"Cheated — *ah, coquin!*" exclaimed D'Anterroche, furiously, as he drew his sword.

"Ay, Frenchman, money of which you have cheated us, for the cursed Popish Pretender's service, no doubt," added the rascal named Lockitt.

"Harkce, Brigadier Huske, attack him in the rear—at him, lads, and pink him!" he added, making several lunges at the count, between himself and whom he had the wisdom to keep the entire breadth of the gaming-table.

As for Brigadier Huske, though colonel of a dragoon regiment, he was no way famous for valour; but he drew his sword, and retired into a corner, with the intention only of defending himself, if attacked.

Though the villain Falshaw was known to be under the protection of the Court, I placed the point of my sword at his throat, saying,—

"Instantly unlock that door, or I shall pass this blade through your heart!"

"D—n you for a scurvy Scots Foot Guard," he retorted; and raising himself to his full stature, which was very great, he beat down my sword, and now began a regular cut-and-thrust brawl, in which the odds were all against D'Anterroche and me. I was maddened with fury, for the dread that, if slain, it should be said I fell in such a place, and by such dishonourable hands.

The table was instantly overturned, the chairs were dashed to pieces, and D'Anterroche and I had severely wounded several of our assailants, whom we both excelled in the use of the sword, before the proprietor had the door burst open, and entered with the night-watch in strong force.

At that critical moment, Falshaw had his sword upraised to run it through the back of D'Anterroche, who had stumbled over a chair, and lay helpless on his face. I was contending against three, but by a vigorous kick I contrived to overturn this sprig of royalty, and to save the Frenchman's life.

"Secure the villains!" shouted Falshaw; "secure them in the King's name!" and darting past the watch, he reached Drury Lane, and disappeared in the darkness.

Sir Bob Lockett and several others attempted to follow his example; but being less powerful, or less adroit, and being pressed by the long poles of the watch in front, and by the count, the brigadier, and myself in the rear, they were soon beaten down, disarmed, and secured with ropes.

As all the nearest watch-houses, lock-ups, and prisons were full of unfortunate Catholics, who had delayed to obey the King's tyrannical edict, by retiring ten miles from the cities of London and Westminster, we assisted the guardians of the night to convey their new captives

to St. Martin's round-house, where they were all locked up; and just as morning was breaking, I bade Count d'Anterroche adieu at his lodgings in the Strand.

He left London that day, and when next we met it was in another land, and under very different circumstances. He was the same "Count d'Anterroche, lieutenant of grenadiers," whom Voltaire mentions so prominently, together with the Duc de Biron, and the Count de Chambanne, in his account of the battle of Fontenoy; but I am anticipating.

I had received several cuts and bruises, and I was doctoring these, with the assistance of my servant, in my quarters in the Tower, when one of the Scots Horse Grenadiers galloped in with an order, signed by Fielding (one of the justices of Middlesex), for a company of our corps, with twenty rounds of ammunition per man, to march at once through the City, as a dangerous riot had taken place.

Drumlanrig had not yet returned, but his company, being the first for duty, was detailed by Lord Panmure for this service, and under my command. Thus, though harassed and weary after the adventures of the preceding day and sleepless night, I had to conduct my party double quick along Thames Street, Fleet Street, the Strand and other crowded thoroughfares, until we reached St. Martin's round-house, where we halted about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and where a very singular scene was taking place.

Such was the interest taken by Falshaw and his associates in the arrest of Sir Bob Lockitt and others, who had been seized in the house at Drury Lane, that about forty desperate thieves, gamblers, and rogues of every kind, armed with cutlasses, bludgeons, and pistols, had attacked and routed the watch who guarded the prison.

The massive doors resisted long, but the iron-grated windows were dashed to pieces, and arms were handed in through the apertures, from whence several shots were fired, at random, into the streets, where three persons were wounded.

The entrance was now assailed by crowbars, and at the moment I formed my company in line accross the street, the door was burst open, and with a wild huzzah, out rushed Lockitt at the head of all the prisoners.

A pale, wild, haggard and dissipated band they looked, in the clear sunshine of the April noon. The cheers of the mob were mingled with yells of defiance at us, and shouts of "Stand to it, my freeborn Englishmen!" "To it, brave boys!" "Down with the Scots Foot Guards and all foreigners!"

Charging in line with fixed bayonets, under a storm of stones, dead cats and brickbats, we cleared the street without injuring any one, and captured about twenty of the rioters, who were speedily all chained together, and committed to Newgate.

Sir Bob Lockitt escaped in his shirt and small-clothes, with his face blacked and his wig reversed; but, as I have mentioned elsewhere, he left this world with a rope round his neck, two years afterwards.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUCHESS AND HER SON.

ON waking from a profound slumber, the result of recent exhaustion of mind and body, of late hours and mental excitement, I started from the sofa on which I had thrown myself, divested of coat, belt and sash, and found Lord Drumlanrig seated near me.

He was gazing listlessly towards Tower Hill, which was opposite the windows of my quarters; and with the sight of him all the bitterness of my last interview with Letty Hyde rushed back upon me.

"Pardon me," said I, "but I knew not that you were here, Drumlanrig."

"I have been here for two hours, Godfrey."

"And it is now——"

"Four o'clock in the afternoon."

"Then I have slept since one. A deuced disturbance those rascals made at the round-house this morning."

"So I have heard. You charged along the street?"

"Yes, and captured some prisoners; yet that notorious fellow Lockitt escaped. But you look pale, Drumlanrig, you are ill!"

"Ill and sick at heart," said he.

"Has anything unpleasant occurred?" I inquired anxiously, for an idea, a faint but desperate hope, that Letty might have rejected him also, flashed upon me.

"I missed you yesterday at Burlington Street, and perhaps it was as well. Letty was terribly agitated and in tears——"

"Indeed!" interrupted I, fearing some awkward explanations with my friend and rival were about to ensue.

"Yes, poor girl! absolutely in tears, and thus I left her, weeping bitterly. I have had a most unpleasant interview with my mother, the duchess. She discovered us together."

"Was that all?"

"Letty's head was upon my shoulder, and my arm was round her waist. She could not mistake our mutual regard, or the position in which we considered ourselves. We were sitting in silence and in the twilight, and so full of our own deep thoughts and of each other, that we did not hear the duchess approach, until she suddenly stood before us, and then——"

Drumlanrig paused, struck his forehead, and starting up, paced hurriedly to and fro.

From his excited account, I could gather that a stormy and rather unseemly interview had taken place between him and his proud, excitable and passionate mother, whom, however, he tenderly loved, and who possessed a strange sway and power over all his actions.

Clad in her green satin sacque, and her straw hat wreathed with flowers, she had just come from Vauxhall, where she had been, attended as usual, by eight tall footmen, in rich liveries of the Douglas colours, with powdered hair and blazing torches, and with long canes to beat off the crowd which always pressed about her sedan when she stepped from her canopied barge, which was never without a band of French horns sounding in its prow.

Without altering her attire, she had suddenly entered the drawing-room, and found the lovers seated together. On beholding the confirmation of all her suspicions and the destruction of her darling scheme—an alliance with the Hopes of Hopetoun, her fine eyes sparked with resentment, her cheeks flushed scarlet, her little hands were

tightly clenched; and in one of those bursts of ungovernable fury, in which it was her nature to indulge, she imperiously commanded Miss Hyde to quit the house without delay, and never to enter it more.

"Madam," said the earl, rising, but still retaining Letty's right hand in his, "remember that I love this lady, so be wary of what you say."

"Love," replied the duchess, scornfully, "such love is a very transient affair indeed!"

"Is this your experience, madam? if so, you compliment his grace, my father, in an odd fashion."

"I mean transient, as compared with friendship. Lady Elizabeth Hope loves you as dearly—be assured of it,—dearer, than this presumptuous girl; and, as she is your equal, after passion subsides, will become your faithful friend."

"So may Letty Hyde," said the earl; and by kissing the drooping girl on the forehead, he added fuel to his mother's wrath. "Oh, mother," he added, on perceiving that Letty was crushed in heart and in an agony of tears, "you know not how fondly I love her!"

"Love is all very well in romances, or on the boards at the Haymarket; but is worth little in real life; it seldom leads to contentment; still less to rank or wealth; and never can gratify ambition."

"What are either rank or wealth in a wife to me?" asked the earl proudly; "I have enough of both already to satisfy a dozen men."

"But scarcely enough for one peer—at least, such as I would wish to see you."

"Our wealth is a taunt, as the price of a people's honour," said the earl, bitterly.

"A taunt by the Jacobites and Tories."

"A taunt by the entire Scottish nation," said the

earl, who resented his grandfather's share in the Union, which was still too recent to be a popular measure in either England or Scotland, but especially in the latter.

"But shall this girl, the penniless orphan of a Kentish vicar—a wasp whom I have fed and fostered—succeed me—*me*, Katherine Hyde of Clarendon and Rochester, as duchess of Queensberry? Oh! Drumlanrig," she exclaimed, stamping her right foot, "it is intolerable! This girl has artfully flattered you into loving her for purposes of her own."

"Oh, madam!" appealingly moaned poor Letty, ready to sink.

"Nay, mother," rejoined the earl, "flattery between lovers would be mere impertinence."

"This girl is a beggar—yea, a very beggar!" screamed the duchess, losing all dignity and command over herself, and dashing down her spinning-wheel, which was of polished oak inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and which chanced, unluckily, to stand in her way. "She shall go back,—not by coach as she came, but, as befits her, by the first waggon—back to the obscure village in Kent from whence, in an evil hour, I brought her. And *you*, Drumlanrig, have dared to love her!"

"And still do so," said the earl, with a calm smile.

"And you have avowed this affection."

"Yes," said the earl, impatiently, "many, many times—dearest Letty!"

"She was pleased?" still queried the duchess, with profound scorn expressed on her short upper lip.

"Nay, madam, when first I told her so she wept."

"Oh, of course—we can understand all that! To see the eldest son of the duke of Queensberry and Dover, a captain in the Guards, at her feet, was enough to make her weep."

"For what?"

"Joy, that her schemes were likely to succeed."

"Oh, madam—oh, your grace!" murmured poor Letty, "you deeply wrong me. I wept with sorrow for my humble position on one hand, and at the splendour of a proposal on the other—an offer, which I knew, if accepted, would fire your heart with pride, and disappoint your greater views. Lord Drumlanrig," she added, imploringly, "permit me to retire, if you would not see me sink at your feet."

The earl respectfully kissed her hand, and led her to the door of the room.

Loving the gentle Letty so dearly as I did, the idea of her in tears, sorrow, and humiliation, with all the bitter details of this scene, sank deep in my heart.

"Madam,—mother, how can you treat her so cruelly?" asked the earl.

"She is an ungrateful minx."

"She is an angel in gentleness."

"And, like most angels, was so poor when she came here, that she had scarcely decent clothes to cover her," retorted the furious duchess; "but she shall go back to Kent—back to bake, and brew, and pick hops, as the thrifty wife of a country curate or clodpole; and under a dreadful penalty, I forbid you, Drumlanrig, to see her more! A rare *mésalliance*—we should be the laughing-stock of all Piccadilly—the gossip of all London!"

The duchess tossed aside her straw hat, and, seating herself at a little Indian writing-table, attempted to write some instructions concerning Miss Hyde's departure; but fiery thoughts came too fast for the pen; she bit it with her teeth, and beat the rich carpet with her pretty foot.

"*Mésalliance*," echoed the earl, with a bitter laugh; "she is only a Hyde, certainly."

"But not, as I am, the daughter of a family which gave a Lord Chancellor to England! The wealth and position of Lady Elizabeth Hope, the wife I have selected for you——"

"Show but ideal advantages. We, the Douglasses of Queensberry, even when but lairds of Drumlanrig—for such we were for ages before King James VI. granted a coronet to our family—have ever been rich enough and powerful enough to share with others the gifts that heaven gave us; and if Miss Hyde——"

"Boy," exclaimed the duchess, starting from her seat, "I forbid you, at your peril, to speak or think more of Letty Hyde; and bear in mind, that even with the duke your father my word has been ever as an irrevocable law."

Then, with a stern expression on her still beautiful face, she was about to sweep out of the room, when the earl, whom she had wearied and exasperated, grasped her arm, and exclaimed in a frenzied voice—for he too was excitable as herself, and inherited her fiery nature,—

"Beware, mother, lest you drive me mad—**MAD** even as my uncle, my predecessor in this hollow earldom of Drumlanrig, was! Beware, I tell you," he added, in a terrible voice, and with a wildness in his eye, before which even *she*, with all her boldness, shrunk; "beware, lest you revive in me that insanity which made him a byword and a horror in Scotland; for there is a curse upon the House of Queensberry, and you know it!"

The duchess uttered a shrill cry, and covering her face with her white fingers, through which the hot tears were falling, sank upon the sofa, as the earl, her son, strode remorselessly away and left her, for he referred to a dreadful story which long cast a gloom upon his family.

And in these bitter terms the mother and son parted.

The story of which he reminded her was as follows:—

When his family were residing at Edinburgh, thirty-five years before this time, James, earl of Drumlanrig (eldest son of that duke who was High Commissioner to the Scottish Parliament, and who happily achieved the greatest treaty ever formed by England and Scotland—the union of the two kingdoms), was an idiot, whom his father detained in constant seclusion in an apartment on the ground floor of the western wing of old Queensberry House, a large and gloomy mansion, having high black walls, situated within a court, on the south side of the Canongate of Edinburgh.

There, though thus confined, Earl James attained to vast stature and herculean strength; but his aspect was dreadful, and so repulsive, that even the duchess, his mother (who was Mary Boyle, daughter of the earl of Burlington and Cork), shrunk back with horror and nearly swooned, when once she saw him, after a lapse of years, glaring forth upon her from his den; and this being from whom she shrunk, was her own son, whom she had borne into the world and nurtured at her breast!

His complexion was sallow; he had the deeply-set and large black eyes of the Douglas line, a savage mouth with straggling and enormous teeth, a great round head covered by a mass of dark hair that fell in wild elf-locks upon his shoulders, and therein he loved to let the rats—his only companions—nestle at night.

He was a rabid glutton, moreover, and was wont to tear flesh with his teeth, or with his long fingers, as he devoured it raw or churned it in his mouth with shrieks of idiot laughter, that made the passers in the streets without shudder and hasten on, when they neared the closed gates and high sombre walls of Queensberry House; and this miserable being was blazoned forth in

the books of the Lyon King-of-Arms, as James, earl and viscount of Drumlanrig, Lord Douglas of Hawick and Tibbers, the future marquis of Beverly, duke of Queensberry and Dover.

On that great day, the 1st of May, 1707, when the Act of Union was passed collaterally by the last Parliaments of England and of Scotland, the whole population of Edinburgh were massed at the western or upper portion of the city, awaiting with anxiety in their faces, and aversion in their hearts, the issue of that "foul debate," for so they termed it, and were only restrained from the sack of the House, and slaughter of the ministry, by the presence of a military force—the cannon of the Train, and the muskets of the Scottish Guards—horse, foot, and grenadiers—who occupied all the adjacent streets, prepared for any emergency.

The numerous household of the Queen's Commissioner were there, with every one else. Curiosity had drawn all into the streets, and none remained in the great mansion of Queensberry, save three persons—the idiot earl in his dark den, an old porter who was asleep at the gate, and a little boy who turned the spit in the great kitchen.

The unusual stillness which reigned in the house impressed the mind of the caged maniac with a strange desire for liberty, and putting his superhuman strength to an unwonted test, he tore out the decayed iron bars of his window, dashed away the outer shutters by a single blow of his clenched hand, and shrieked with wild joy as the blinding sunlight of May streamed like a golden flood into his dark and squalid den.

He leaped out, and with vacant wonder rambled, half-nude and in rags, about the great but deserted chambers of his father's house; and after whooping and

dancing for a time in the lofty picture-gallery, which is seventy feet in length, lured by the odour of the roasting meat, which excited all his fierce gluttonous propensities, he descended stealthily to the kitchen, and suddenly presented himself before the terrified little boy, who was turning the spit at the fire, which blazed within an arched chimney.

Uttering a yell that shook the rafters, the earl of Drumlanrig sprang forward, tore the hot meat from the long steel spit, thrust the latter through the body of the unfortunate boy, and proceeded deliberately to roast and devour him !

In this awful occupation he was discovered by the duke's household when, amid the ringing of bells and the thunder of cannon, they returned from the Parliament House.

After a dreadful conflict, in which the gigantic maniac fought with the spit in one hand and the boy's mangled remains in the other, he was beaten down at last, heavily ironed, and restored to his den.*

Mystery shrouded his future.

One account says that he was destroyed by suffocation ; another, that he died soon after in England ; but the Scottish people of 1707 felt no commiseration for the wretched father, and in the deed of his witless son saw only the judgment of God on the Whig noble who sold his country ; and when, four years after, the poor duke died a living death, in which the flesh fell piecemeal from his bones, in London, they superstitiously and exultingly

* "This James, Earl of Drumlanrig," says Mr. Chambers, "early grew to an immense height, which is testified by his coffin in the family vault at Durrisdeer, still to be seen, of great length, and unornamented with the heraldic follies which bedizen the violated remains of his relations."

were wont to say, that the hand which signed the Act of Union perished *first*!

By a new patent, issued in 1708, all his titles in Scotland and England were conveyed to his second son, and the idiot firstborn was committed to oblivion.

Such was the terrible, but then recent family legend, to which, in his rage and excitement, my friend Drumlanrig referred, and there was a pallor in his cheek and a wildness in his aspect as he turned away which appalled his mother, and made her shrink from him—but *not* from her purpose, which she was resolved to carry through, if life was spared to them both.

But to return from this digression.

"Tell me, Drumlanrig," I asked, with an anxiety which I could scarcely conceal, "has Letty—has Miss Hyde left London?"

"Yes."

"For where—Kent?"

"Poor girl! I know not; but a closely-shut travelling-coach left Burlington Street last night late; since then I have not seen Letty, nor shall I have time to trace her if my faithful fellow Sandy fails; for rumour speaks of immediate war, and of our embarkation for foreign service. So, thrice welcome to me shall be the order to march!"

I was rejected, and he was separated from her; his mother was the ally of my suit, but the enemy of his; so neither of us were much to be envied.

What might not the arts, the influence and counsel of the duchess avail me in our absence? Were such hopes generous to my friend? Yet I could not help indulging in them.

I was all love, doubt, and perplexity.

Time and a separation might *change* all our relative positions; from the future I had now something to hope,

in the present, nothing ; but, like Drumlanrig, I felt that war alone could wean me from the turmoil of thoughts that swelled in my heart.

And wild war came anon !



CHAPTER X.

ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

ON the day succeeding this stormy interview between the duchess and her son, the thunder of the Tower guns as they fired twenty-one rounds, announced to the people of London that his Brittanic Majesty George II. had espoused the cause of the beautiful Maria Theresa, the empress-queen of Hungary, and had declared war against all who were allied for the despoliation of her territories—to wit, the French, Prussians, Saxons, and Bavarians ; and, though one of the chief ends he had in view was the protection of his beloved little Hanover—the cradle of his house—the mighty roar of cheers that ran through the streets of London expressed how thoroughly the people sympathised with the war, so we were likely to have hard blows and bloody work before us.

France was mustering vast forces for the strife. The lovely Madame Pompadour, now mistress of Louis XV. *vice* Madame de Mailley of whom he had grown weary, urged him into this war, though an attempt had been made to propitiate her, by the unfortunate queen of Hungary, who condescended to write that lady a letter with her own royal hand, while at the same time the prosy tyrant, Frederick of Prussia formed a literary alliance with M. de Voltaire, who was then a rising author.

Separated as we were from the continent by that mighty fosse the ocean, some persons marvelled what all this fuss was about; and there were many impertinent politicians (but they were chiefly Jacobites, *never* loyal Whigs), who openly expressed discontent that the blood and treasure of Britain should be squandered in defence of a petty electorate, the security of which depended on preserving the balance of power in the German empire; for if the royal crown of Maria Theresa fell, the electoral hat of Hanover would certainly be trod in the mire; so to war John Bull resolved to go, and an army for the continent was prepared with unusual celerity.

A week after that day of April when war was declared, I was subaltern of the guard at St. James's Palace. We had adopted the new twisted Ramillies wig, in compliance with his Majesty's order of the 4th instant, and our men had their skirts looped up, to show their new blue regimental breeches.

The yeomen of the guard in their scarlet doublets, the horse grenadiers with their conical caps, were all under arms, and their ranks looked gay and glittering in the sunshine of the April noon, and the old brick palace, with its octagon towers and casements, seemed full of life and bustle.

There was an unusual crowd within and about the ancient gateway; a host of liveried lacqueys with saddled horses were there, together with sedans and splendidly gilt coaches with stately hammercloths and gorgeous coats armorial.

With a mind preoccupied by sad thoughts, I surveyed, like one in a dream, the gay scene and the shining equipages around me.

If my last interview with Letty Hyde had crushed my hopes for the future, it also extinguished that senti-

ment which might have proved a beacon and a guiding star amid the perils and temptations that lay before me; it sent me on foreign service with recklessness of disposition and the bitterness of disappointment, which, in my solitary moments, inspired me with a fierce resolution, literally "to seek the bubble reputation even at the cannon's mouth"—to perish, or to secure for myself a name that would compel Letty to admire, if she could not love me!

Let us see to what end all these fine resolutions and fierce inspirations led.

A Privy Council was sitting in the palace; thus my guard, which was commanded by Sir Henry Rose, our senior captain, remained permanently under arms, so many dignitaries of Church and State were passing in and out. There I saw the Lord Chancellor Yorke (afterwards earl of Hardwicke), who had raised himself to that high position by his talents, though but the son of an attorney in Dover; the Lord Harrington, President of the Privy Council, one of the most distinguished soldiers and statesmen of the previous reign; the great marshal earl of Stair; Duke William of Cumberland, so flabby and obese, as to be scarcely able to walk, though barely in his twenty-fifth year; the Lord Carteret, Secretary of State for England; and the marquis of Tweeddale, Secretary of State for Scotland; the duke of Queensberry, in his full-bottomed wig and green laced coat; the Lord Lonsdale, in his vast peruke; and many others, among whom came Viscount Maworm, one of the leaders of the Scottish Whigs, with the green ribbon of the Thistle across his breast.

He arrived in a hackney sedan, borne by two slipshod Irish chairmen; but, nevertheless, we presented arms, while our drums beat a march, as if this shabby peer had

been a marshal of France, or John duke of Argyle and Greenwich, in person.

When the bustle subsided a little, and the order was given to "Stand at ease," some one touched me on the shoulder, and on turning I encountered the tall figure, the bloated face, and pale wicked eyes of Mr. George Frederick Falshaw.

An easy and impudent smile now curled his coarse thick lips, and for nearly a minute I gazed at the fellow in surprise, alike at his audacity in addressing me, and at the costume he wore.

He appeared in a complete suit of regimentals, with the regulation Ramillies wig, a cocked hat, scarlet coat and small-clothes, a sword at his side, a crimson sash round his waist, and a gilt gorget hung by a silk ribbon at his neck.

Remembering how and where we had last met, my heart glowed with contempt for the man, and with something of indignation to find him thus attired; but being aware of his secret interest in high quarters, I was compelled to dissemble, and, but for a recent strict order concerning duels, I would certainly have paraded him, cheat, duellist and bully though he was.

"Your servant, Mr. Lauriston—Sir Henry Rose, yours," said he, bowing and sucking the ivory head of his cane; "you see I am become one of you—damme! this wig seems just the thing—eh."

"What does this metamorphosis mean?" asked Sir Henry Rose, coldly and haughtily; "have you gone mad, or been at a masquerade?"

"Ah—it beats anything in Ovid, doesn't it? Well, it means that as the King is going to war, he can't do so without me, so I now hold a pair of colours in a marching regiment."

"Which corps in his Majesty's service is so honoured?" said I.

"Battereau's Foot*—sink me! a corps of old fire-eaters," said he, pirouetting about. "My mother bequeathed me all, that I might become a gentleman of the surplice, and rise, of course, to be archbishop of Canterbury; my father hoped that I might become a distinguished member of the long robe; my aunt gave me her all, that I might become a pretty man of fashion and marry an heiress; but their funds might as well have been sunk in the Darien scheme or the South Sea bubble of 1720. I spent everything, and now, *damme*, I have mounted the sash and gorget with the black cockade of Brunswick!"

"Battereau's regiment is ordered for foreign service," said Sir Henry Rose, with a peculiar smile; "you'll smell gunpowder ere long."

"I don't care how soon—*damme*, no—gazetted yesterday and in harness to-day! Brisk work, is'nt it?"

"Your baggage?"

"Oh, that will be light enough."

"And your purse too, I suppose, after the night you spent with D'Anterroche," said I, with a dark look.

"I have gained my commission by storming the roundhouse—Mons or Namur would have sounded better. My purse, you say? Sink me! Yes, *it* is light enough, and will be so, till I take a turn at White's. But a sharp fellow, who can use his dice to win, and his sword to defend his winnings, can always procure anywhere a supper, a bed, a cheerful glass, and a kiss too perhaps. Begad! I have lived too long about town,

* A regiment disbanded in 1749.

with a spit at my thigh and the devil's ivories for an inheritance, not to know that."

"The service must prize such an acquisition!" muttered Rose, with a combined glance of drollery and disgust, as Falshaw stuck his cocked hat very much over his right eye, and strutted along the line of the palace guard, which was paraded under arms. "Did you ever see such an air, Lauriston—half bullying and wholly self-satisfied?"

"Blessed be my stars, this appointment frees me from all my creditors," said he, returning; "and I can assure you, my dear sirs, that their number is legion and their avidity more than infamous."

"They may follow you to Germany."

"Follow me! 'sdeath, if any one of them is rash enough to do so, after all I have been despoiled of, I shall make of him a terrible example to the rest. On the continent, killing is not coarsely called murder, as in this city of gibbets and holiday justices of the peace."

"And roundhouses," said I.

"Ay, of roundhouses," he echoed, giving me a diabolical smile. "When camps are formed, courts of law, d—n them, are sure to disappear. This morning I had just donned my scarlet coat, and was practising before my mirror such warlike frowns as I thought might become one of Battereau's Foot, when the door was opened, and a shabby fellow in a scratch wig appeared, with a cringing bow and a paper in his hand.

"'Who the devil are you?' I demanded.

"'Your honour's bootmaker,' quoth he, trembling; 'I have come to beg——'

"'What?' cried I, in a tone that made him leap a yard from the floor.

“A small portion of your account, now amounting to a hundred pounds odd; I have a large payment to make, and—and hope you—you——”

“Find it convenient to pay—is that what you mean to say, old calfskin?”

“He bowed very low, with an assenting smile.

“I wish I did find it convenient to pay; but be off—vanish! There is the door and *here* is the window; which way suits your convenience?”

“‘The door, Mr. Falshaw,’ said he, and politely withdrew. So my service to you, Sir Henry—adieu, Mr. Lauriston; can I do anything for you, among the green-eyed frauleins in Flanders?—ha! ha!” and he swaggered through the palace arch, with his hat cocked still more over his right eye, his cane in his mouth, and the square buckram skirts of his coat sticking out fanwise on each side; and, undeterred by the place or those about him, we could hear him sing—

“Now little I care for the bailiff or bum,
When I pay all my debts with a roll on drum.”

I had, I know not why, an instinctive aversion to this fellow, and almost a horror of him. In his eyes I read an expression of enmity; and lest the reader be surprised that I waste so much space or paper on him, I may mention that ere long he was fated to work me much mischief, when we went on service.

“So this scoundrel actually goes with the army to Germany!” said Sir Henry Rose, with a scornful smile on his fine face.

“But the first action may rid us of him.”

“Not at all, Godfrey; by a strange chance, it is generally the best fellows who are first knocked on the head. When Drumlanrig and I served the king of Sardinia as

volunteers at the siege of Coni and elsewhere, we always remarked that such was the fate of war."

"I cannot flatter myself that I am either the best or the happiest," said I, thinking of Letty Hyde; "but the direction of a bullet is all chance, and you know the adage, that each has its billet."

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL TO LETTY AND TO LONDON.

WHILE we were speaking, at a few yards from the palace-gate a brawl took place between the driver of a plain-looking hackney coach and the bearers of a sedan, which was gorgeously covered with crimson leather studded with gilt nails, and had on its back and panels a ducal coat of arms. The footmen attending its occupant were liberal in their abuse of the driver, and the blows they bestowed upon him and his cattle with their gold-headed canes. He replied vigorously with his whip, and swore roundly in return, though the equipage belonged to the late king's female friend, old Erangard Elosine, duchess of Kendal and Munster.

Rose had entered the officers' guard-room, and I cared little about interfering in a street row, until the glasses of the coach were let down, and at the window appeared the face of one whom I could not for a moment mistake—Letty Hyde!

In a moment, I was beside her. The appearance of an officer of the Guards in full uniform, at once restored order; the sedan, with its pompous valets and virtuous freight, passed on towards the staircase which opens into the principal court, next to Pall Mall; and then I said

something, I know not what, to soothe Letty, and restore her composure.

A flush was on her cheek ; her eyes of dark violet-blue were sparkling through their tears, and she looked perfectly charming !

Her *coiffure* was most becoming ; all unpowdered, her beautiful hair flowed in natural ringlets down her back and delicate neck ; but her whalebone petticoat, with its innumerable little frills and flounces, filled up the entire vehicle by its amplitude, making her fine person an object of actual mystery ; and she had a small gipsy hat of the newest fashion tied under her dimpled chin.

"Hark you," said I to the driver, "leave the box and take your cattle by the head ; I wish to speak with the lady."

"All right, sir," he responded, as he touched the front of his scratch wig with one hand, and pocketed a crown with the other.

"Then you were *not* sent to Kent, Letty," I whispered.

"No, but I am now on the way to my home," she replied, weeping, "if indeed that can be called *home*, where I shall only find the graves of my father and mother under the yew in the old churchyard."

"Then you have been resident in London since *that* night."

Letty coloured deeply, and said,—

"Drumlanrig has then told you all ?"

"All, and a most painful narrative it was to me."

"The duchess consigned me to the care of a horrible snuff-begrimed old Scotch woman ;—ah, excuse me, Mr. Lauriston !"

"Whatever is odious to you, will be equally so to me, Letty."

"Well, she is a viscountess."

"Old lady Maworm—poor Miss Hyde!"

"Her house is at the corner of Old Burlington Street."

"And you have been there a week, a whole week, unknown to me?"

"I was a species of prisoner on parole; but now a last farewell, sir; a thousand thanks for all your—your polite attention—your very great kindness to me. I shall ever treasure the memory of it in the land of my banishment."

"And Drumlanrig—he who loves you so truly, Letty—ay, as fondly as I, poor wretch, can do."

"Well?" she inquired, as she trembled and became very pale.

"Have you no message for *him*?"

"I have this letter, which I had neither the means to send or post in secret. To your care I will entrust it; and yet perhaps I overtask your——"

"Nay, nay, Miss Hyde," said I, with a gush of bitterness in my heart, as I received the letter; "I will convey it to him—what can it tell that I do not know already?—that you love him unalterably, and are lost to me for ever."

She was silent; but her tears fell fast.

"As for me," I began, scarcely knowing where I was to end.

"Dear Mr. Lauriston, you will get over this wild love for me in time; I know, at least I hope, you will. I—I could not control my heart ——"

"Nor I mine, Letty. Would to Heaven we had never met—that I had never known and never loved you so fondly, so deeply, so vainly!"

"Your words wring my heart! Oh, what shall I—what *can* I say, for now we must separate?"

"Give me your hand to kiss."

"May God bless and preserve you, for you are a good and noble soul, and love me well, I know," she exclaimed, while putting an arm round my neck, and kissing me on the cheek.

Then shrinking back suddenly, she drew up the window. The coach was driven off, and I was left alone, with her letter in my hand, her tears and her sisterly kiss—for such she kindly meant it to be—still lingering on my cheek.

It was the accord of tenderness and pity, but not, alas, of love!

"Palace guard, eyes front!" cried Sir Henry Rose, sharply, rousing me from my day-dream. "Fall in, Lauriston," he added; "the Privy Council is breaking up."

The drum beat, for at that moment the gallant earl of Stair, accompanied by Lord Maworm, was proceeding to his equipage, a gilt coach, drawn by six bay horses; so I hastened to take post, with my spontoon, in front of the palace guard, which presented arms to the first marshal in the British service, as he drove off, with the white powder flying in a cloud about his wig, as he bowed to us in return.

"Now, welcome be the order that sends us to meet the French!" thought I; "but come, come, Godfrey Lauriston, be a man, not an ass, to spend your time in sighing and dying for a woman who loves another."

To say this was very easy; but to put it in practice was something else. It was strange, however, that the knowledge that Drumlanrig would be separated from her by our foreign service, soothed and pleased me; for love in itself is somewhat selfish.

On the 26th of May, 1742, we marched from London

to Woolwich for embarkation. Our brigade consisted of the first battalion of the English Guards; the first battalion of the Coldstream, and the first of the Scots Foot Guards, amounting in all to two thousand two hundred and forty-two men.

A royal standard was displayed on the square tower of St. Mary's church at Woolwich, and laurel branches waved from the windows of the houses. This place had grown to importance since the terrible accident, which, in the duke of Marlborough's time, caused the removal from Upper Moorfields of all the government gun and shot foundries.

On this day of May, sixteen thousand British troops—horse, foot, and artillery—embarked on the Thames for Flanders, to fight for Maria Theresa.

It was a glorious and inspiring scene, and London poured forth its citizens in noisy and joyous tens of thousands to behold our departure.

The Thames was covered by crowded boats, and the shipping were dressed out in their gayest flags; while cheers rang, bells tolled, and military music filled the air, as corps after corps, in heavy marching order—each man with knapsack and haversack, greatcoat, blanket, and canteen—marched to the landing-place, and went off in boat-loads to the transports at anchor in the stream.

Now it was St. Clair's Royal Scots, with St. Andrew's cross on their hats; now it was Howard's regiment, the old Kentish Buffs, in their three-cornered hats and full-bottomed wigs, with Queen Elizabeth's dragon on their colours; now Cope's regiment, with their sugar-loaf-shaped grenadier caps of blue cloth, having the white horse of Hanover in front; now Durourc's, now Battenau's, Pulteney's, or Piers's regiment of foot: all with colours waving, bayonets fixed, swords and spontoons

flashing in the bright glare of the May sunshine—while the music of the shrill fife, the hoarse drum, and the clashing cymbal, filled our hearts with ardour; but louder were the cheers, and greater the enthusiasm, when our Household Brigade, with their grenadier caps and Ramillies wigs, their square skirts looped up, and long black gaiters buttoned over the knee, marched in, in three close columns of subdivisions, each with its field-officers mounted and in front, for we were deemed the true representatives of the “British Grenadiers.”

Panmure, now a lieutenant-colonel, led the Scots battalion, and rode a black horse of great beauty. Even Drumlanrig shared in the general enthusiasm, and forgot his secret sorrow for a time, and that Letty's last letter was next his heart. There was a flush in his cheek, and a sparkle in his eye, which brought the beautiful face of his mother to my mind, for he closely resembled her.

In the narrow spirit of the times, we had been wont to fight duels with the officers of the English Guards and the Coldstreamers; and our men used to cudgel and thrash each other, when, in vile tavern brawls, they cast such reflections on each other's countries, as were only worthy of the anonymous scribblers in the public papers; but *now*, when bound for Flanders, and with the French before us, we would all be friends, countrymen, and good comrades; and in this spirit each regiment greeted the other with loud cheers—the hearty, old hurrah that comes best from an English throat.

As the drums and headquarters of Battereau's Foot passed our flank, I perceived their new acquisition, Ensign George Frederick Falshaw, marching with the regimental colour on his shoulder, his hat cocked very much over the right eye, and evidently he was not quite sober, for he exclaimed—

“Ha, Lauriston, flirting in Piccadilly this week, fighting in Flanders the next—ha! ha! sink me!”

And so while drum and trumpet, fife and cymbal rang till the echoes of the streets gave a thousand reverberations, that mingled with the cheers of the vast throng which accompanied to the shore the departing brigade of Guards, my heart was full of Letty. I could not for a moment forget her, and seemed to see her in the place of her banishment—some secluded little cottage buried among ivy and hops in the Weald of Kent.

I felt alternately full of high military enthusiasm and intense sadness, for nothing softens the heart so much as separation from a beloved object, and in my case a French bullet might make it so, for ever.

For ever! oh how inexpressibly dear she became with the terrible idea, that her future might never be known to me!

And now, when the ships of war began to thunder a salute to our leader, Field-marshal the earl of Stair, who came off in the admiral's barge, for a time the shore, the transports, and river were enveloped in clouds of white smoke, above which nothing was visible save an occasional pennant or flag waving from a mast-head.

I was with the headquarters of the Scots Foot Guards, which were on board the *Royal Oak*, a 70-gun ship, commanded by Captain Smith Collis, an officer who had received a gold medal from George II. for burning and sinking five Spanish galleons in the port of Tropez.

We dropped down the Thames with the evening tide, and when night fell the whole squadron were far upon the sea, with the pale cliffs of the North Foreland glimmering in the moonlight, on our weather bow.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCOTS FOOT GUARDS.

THAT night, our first at sea, I retired early to bed, but found it almost vain to court sleep amid the noise that still reigned on board. By beat of drum our men were all long since abed; but the ship had put to sea with her decks still encumbered by luggage, tents, clothing for German auxiliaries, and military stores of every kind; thus, gangs of seamen, clad in long square skirted coats, wide breeches like kilts, and wearing triangular hats, under which their loose hair flowed upon their shoulders, in what was *then* the true man-o'-war fashion, [worked hard by lantern light, sending all this campaigning *débris* down below.

In the cabin close by me were seated at table a number of our officers, among whom were old James Stuart, of Harewoodlee, now our senior major; Panmure, the lieutenant-colonel; Captain Home; and little Ruthven, the newly joined ensign, all conversing gaily and occasionally singing.

Stuart's family had been ruined by adherence to Viscount Dundee. He had been a soldier of fortune, fighting was with him an instinct, inborn in his old and martial race; thus, before joining the Foot Guards, he had served in various foreign armies, with reminiscences and anecdotes of which his conversation was frequently intermingled, not without some quaintness and old-fashioned prolixity; but he was an officer of great experience and undoubted bravery.

Young Jack Ruthven, of Aber-ruthven, had dropped asleep. It was lucky for him that war had broken out,

for he was a wild fellow, who in his twenty-first year found himself in possession of a handsome fortune, the dispersion of which, as fast as possible, had occupied his entire time, and in London he found plenty of able and willing assistants.

Most of my brother officers were men of the best families in Scotland, and all had seen service somewhere, save Ruthven and myself. Even the earl of Drumlanrig had served in three campaigns under the king of Sardinia, and gave such proofs of bravery and skill at the siege of Coni, that Charles Emanuel ordered his ambassador at the court of St. James to wait upon the duke and duchess of Queensberry, and return them thanks for the services of their son.

"It is time this laddie, Jack Ruthven, was in his bed," said old Captain Home, who was a giant in stature and in constitution, and who before his marriage with Lady Betty Finch had nothing in the world to depend upon but his sword, for it was possible in those days for a man to exist in the Guards without a fortune, when balls, bands, clubs, yachts, &c., had never been thought of.

"A laddie," exclaimed his old friend, Major Stuart; "why, Home, I was a captain of Sardinian Grenadiers before I attained even his years, and taught my men to handle their priming horns and blow their fuses as coolly under fire, as I blow this cloud of tobacco."

"Pass the decanters," said Panmure, "and never mind the Sardinians or the siege of Coni—fill your glasses, gentlemen, and let us drink to the health of the Queen of Hungary!"

"Maria Theresa!" exclaimed all, tossing off their glasses, "and confusion to the French!"

"Zounds, but I do love that woman's cause, and hate the French," added Sir Henry Rose, who having once

got into a scrape in Paris, obtained what he termed "a month's taste of the Bastille."

"In this hate do you include their wives and daughters?" asked Ruthven, waking up with an impudent smile.

"Oh, they are quite another thing."

"Was she—that little brunette—a Frenchman's wife or daughter?"

"Who, Drumlanrig?"

"She who lives in a pretty house outside Temple Bar."

Rose coloured, but laughed and said—

"Find her equal if you can, gentlemen, when we land at Ostend, or cross the French frontier; but come, Ruthven, you and I are for the quarter guard to-morrow morning, so let us follow Lauriston's example and turn in."

"You will see some queer things when you land at Ostend," said old Stuart of Harewoodlee; "I was last there when a lieutenant in the Scots Dutch. Two of our officers, a Cameron and a Macdonald, were about to fight a duel concerning the honour of their respective clans, just before we engaged a body of revolted Walloons.

"My good sir," said Cameron, "let us talk about our duel to-morrow."

"Why wait till to-morrow?" asked Macdonald furiously, "when only *one* of us may be left. To-day is better."

"The smoke of a battle obscures our future—well, to-day be it," the other replied, and drew his sword.

"At that moment a cannon shot came souse from the citadel, and cut them both in two; so there was an end of it."

"And your little belle," said Captain Home, "lived near Temple Bar, Sir Henry? By Jove, I know that quarter well! Many a bottle old Betterton and I have cracked in a tavern there."

"You knew Betterton?" said Drumlanrig.

"As well as I have the honour of knowing you," replied the old captain, filling up his glass with a sigh, "but these memories make an auld carle of me now. I remember his farewell benefit on the 13th of April, 1710, the year of his death, as if 'twere yesterday. It was his last appearance on the stage, after more than fifty years' hard service as an actor, and it took place at the Haymarket, old Sir John Vanburgh's theatre, that everybody laughed at, because it was built *in the fields*! Zounds, yes—all the district round it then, to the north and west, was field and common, coppice, farm land, and hedgerow. All the wits of the time were in the theatre on that night. In one box I saw Nicholas Rowe, the poet-laureate, a manly-looking man; Sir Richard Steele; Grenville who, on the memorable change of ministry in that year, was made Walpole's secretary; Pope, with his little crooked figure in a black velvet suit; and, with many more, there was Joe Addison, sitting *opposite* his wife, the imperious countess of Warwick, whose temper nearly knocked poetry and philosophy out of his head and his heart together."

"Panmure," said Major Stuart, a little impatiently, "the wine stands with you, and now you and Home must join in chorus with me to the old song we learned when with the Scots Brigade in France."

His lordship and all present knew the ditty referred to, and in each alternate line chorused vociferously, for the hour was late, and the floor beneath the table was strewn with empty bottles.

"Here we be, Scots soldiers three,
Pardonnez-moi, je vous en prie—
Lately marched forth from the low countrie,
With never a penny of monie.

"Here, good fellow, I drink to thee!
Pardonnez-moi, je vous en prie—
And to all good fellows, wherever they be,
Who have never a penny of monie.

"And he that will not pledge with me,
Pardonnez-moi, je vous en prie—
Pays for the shot, whate'er it may be,
Though with never a penny of monie.

"Charge it again, boys! charge it again!
Pardonnez-moi, je vous en prie—
As long as there's ink in horn or pen,
With never a penny of monie.

"Here we be, Scots soldiers three,
Pardonnez-moi, je vous en prie—
Lately marched forth from the low countrie,
With never a penny of monie."

With this confounded refrain and its noisy chorus ringing in my ears, I fell asleep to dream of London, of Letty Hyde, and a hop-covered cottage in the Weald of Kent; and now, while we are sailing on the sea, may I, with the reader's permission, give him—pardon me if I say *her*—an account of the gallant old corps in which I had the honour to serve?

It is the mere *esprit de corps* of an old soldier that prompts this historical digression; but that sentiment is one of the soldier's highest incentives to glory and general high bearing; for his regiment is to him, as I once heard a brave old officer term it, "his happy, moveable home."

A long historical record of uniform good conduct before an enemy secures for a regiment a reputation

which every man who joins it is anxious to support and to ensure for the future, as one might do the honour of his country or his father's house. This sentiment produces the true *esprit de corps*.

"The British Foot Guards," says a military writer, "have been remarkable for this quality, particularly when on service. Being necessarily regarded by the line with a jealous eye on account of the privilege which the officers enjoy with respect to rank, it is particularly incumbent upon them to do something more than the rest, to prove that at least they are not unworthy of the precedence they enjoy—Highland corps are remarkable for the same impression." It is this sentiment which has ever made the Household Brigade second at least to none, in the greatest of our battles.

Though ranked unjustly as the *third* Regiment of Guards in Britain, we ought in reality to have been the first, being *nineteen* years older than the Grenadier Guards, and *nine* years older than Monk's Coldstreamers.

The Scots Foot Guards were originally a regiment of fifteen hundred Highlanders (probably Campbells), raised on the 18th of March, 1641, by Archibald, eighth Earl of Argyle, for the service of King Charles I.,* and for the protection of the Scottish colonists in Ireland, where they served in several battles under Lieutenant-Colonel James Wallace of Auchans. Afterwards, they fought against the cavalier armies of Montrose, and as the King's Foot Guards served under Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Lorne at Dunbar against Cromwell, when hard service would seem to have reduced their strength to four companies and only *fifteen* officers.

On the 22nd July, 1650, two months before that dis-

* The original warrant is in my own possession.—J. G.

astrous battle, they received new colours decorated with the arms of Scotland, England, France, and Ireland, all *uncrowned*, in a blue field with the legend,

“COVENANT—FOR RELIGION, KING, AND KINGDOMS.”

The standard of the major bore the Red Lion of Scotland, and each ensign carried a colour with the above motto.

At Worcester the corps was almost cut to pieces with the rest of the Scottish royalist army; and after the interregnum of ten years, when forces were again raised in Scotland for Charles II., the earl of Linlithgow embodied in his Fusilier Regiment of Guards all the survivors of the old battalion of Argyle. At Bothwell they were led by his eldest son, Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Livingstone, against the poor Covenanters; and then it was directed by the Scottish Privy Council that our field-officers “should command in chief, and give orders in field or garrison to all troops whatsoever.”

During the battle of Pentland, where the Covenanters were led by Wallace of Auchans (our old Lieutenant-Colonel, who commanded the corps at the storming of Carrickfergus in 1641), the Scots Foot Guards lay in the deep quarries of Bruntisfield, to protect the city of Edinburgh.

In 1713, the two battalions of the Scots Guards were marched to London, and have never been in Scotland since.

Under Marlborough, they served at the battles of Walcourt and Fleurus, and at the siege of Mons in 1691, when the rank of lieutenant-colonel was conferred on all our captains by William III. At Steenkirke, where that monarch, through his own incapacity, was defeated by the French, at Landen, and at Namur lie the bones

of many of our bravest men ; and in the wars under Lord Peterborough and others, the corps ever served with glory and honour.

In 1709, our battalion went direct from Edinburgh to Spain, and it shared in the bloody battle of Almenara, where the army of Philip, when in full retreat upon Lerida, was cut to pieces by the British under General Stanhope.

In this action the Union Jack was *first* carried by the Scottish regiments.

The corps shared in the dangers of that desperate day before the walls of Zaragosa, when thirty stand of colours and a host of prisoners remained as trophies in our hands.

The union with England was still—in 1742—too recent for silly national prejudices to be overcome ; thus, in the streets of London, our officers and men were long liable to insult and annoyance from the lower class of people, who were easily inflamed by the philippics issued against Scotland by the pamphleteers and anonymous writers of the press. But this will seem less surprising when I mention that frequently orders of the most injurious nature were posted on our barrack-gates by the colonels of the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Guards.*

But now these pettinesses were forgotten, and the Household Brigade was on its way with the great expedition for Flanders, to win fresh laurels under the Marshal Earl of Stair,—a brave old officer who, so long ago as 1702, had been lieutenant-colonel of our regiment.

* See Notes.

CHAPTER XIII.

FLANDERS.

THROUGH a dim yellow haze the spires of Ostend were rising from the morning sea, when a gun from the Admiral's ship was fired, as a signal for the whole squadron to keep together, and to close in towards the flat and sandy shore of Flanders, which we neared two days or so after leaving the coast of England.

The troops landed at various points, but in the same order in which we had embarked, and each battalion formed under its colours in close column of companies.

When standing on the poop of the *Royal Oak*, waiting until my turn for landing came, I thought the scene around me almost more inspiriting than our embarkation at Woolwich, as boat after boat, with its living freight, shot off towards the shore.

Thousands were landing there; their hearts untroubled by care or difficulties, high in hope, in spirit, and ambition—even such vague ambition as inspired the soldier of those days—for *then* he had no medals to wear, no pension to win, and no marshal's baton in his knapsack. Nevertheless the enthusiasm was great, as our horse, foot, and artillery rapidly covered all the beach of Ostend, and drums were beaten and trumpets blown on the old and warlike shore of Flanders.

Our ten drums and fifes (we had no bands in those days), by Lord Paumure's order, struck up the lively old quickstep,

“Byde ye yet, and byde ye yet,
Ye little ken what may betyde ye yet.”

As the boats with our men began to leave the ship, and

as we were pulled through the fleet, loud cheers arose from the transports, where Campbell's Grey Dragoons, the Scots Fusiliers, the Scots Horse Grenadier Guards, and others of our national corps, were seen, with their tall caps, crowding at the gun-ports, or on the hammock-nettings,—for they all greeted "ours" as a favourite regiment; and the air we played spoke to them of our common home, its glens and its mountains; and of the historic and traditionary past, with all its glories and disasters.

I remember on this day being particularly struck with Handasyde's Young English Regiment, which had been raised in 1702, and presented a remarkably brilliant appearance. Their waistcoats, breeches, and belts were buff; their coats were lined and faced with buff; the flaps of their grenadier caps were buff; so were their drums and colours; thus they were not inaptly named "the Young Buffs."

Old Major Stuart of Harewoodlee, with the colours and an escort, formed the point on which the Scots Foot Guards mustered, as each boat landed its living freight upon the sandy beach, the extreme flatness of which surprised me, for Ostend occupies such low ground, that when the sea runs high, one might suppose (as Cardinal Bentivoglio says) that it was swallowed by the ocean, rather than situated by it.

While the battalion was forming, Major Stuart, who knew the place well, having been there when with the Scots brigade in the Dutch service, pointed out to me many remains of that long and memorable siege which began in 1601, and during which one hundred thousand soldiers perished in four years.

"Yonder heap," said he, "is the great Sandhill bulwark. When I was here before, it was still full of shot, even after the lapse of a hundred and twenty years; for

the Spanish cannoniers of Spinola fired so many bullets against it, that it became a veritable *wall of iron*, where the fresh shot were dashed to pieces by those that were imbedded before them. That great earthen mound, whereon the banner of the States General is flying, is the old *Oostende*, from whence the place takes its name—the east-end of Flanders.”

Long ere sunset the whole armament was ashore. Large Flemish wains drawn by great sleek horses, and driven by amply breeched boors, in brown doublets and broad hats, were rapidly chartered for the conveyance of baggage and stores. The cavalry rode with their forage trussed in nets and bags upon their cruppers. The artillery were all in working order, the horses traced, and the guns limbered up.

Guards were detailed, for the advance, for the rear, for the baggage, stores and headquarters; and soon the whole forces began their march for Brussels, passing in successive brigades through the gaudily painted streets of Ostend, which, though not lofty, are straight and clean.

Even in that exciting moment my heart was with her I had left behind me; I treasured in memory her last words, her last glance on that day by St. James's Palace; but the march of men and the crash of drums are but poor aids to pathos or reflection! And now walls were shaking and casements rattling, as the squadrons of cavalry and the batteries of horse artillery thundered past, and as battalion after battalion defiled on the great Belgic highway, by an ancient gate, the date on which I remember was 1583.

The Household Brigade to which we belonged was commanded by Brigadier Charles, Duke of Marlborough, colonel of the Coldstream Guards, a brave officer, who was worthy of the name he bore.

The army which marched with us for Brussels consisted of the following corps:—Of cavalry, we had the third English and fourth Scots troops of Horse Guards, under the earls of Albemarle and Crawford; the second troop of Scots Horse Grenadier Guards, under the earl of Rothes; the King's and Ligonier's regiments of Horse, with the Scots Greys, Honeywood's, Hawley's, Cadogan's, Rich's, and Sir John Cope's Dragoons.

Of infantry, with the three battalions of the Household Brigade, we had the marching regiments of Howard (the old Kentish Buffs), Cornwallis, Durooure, Pulteney, Bligh, Campbell (the Scots Fusiliers), Piers (or the Welsh Fusiliers), Bragg, Handasyde (or the New Buffs), Huske, Johnstone, Ponsonby, and Battereau.*

As captain-lieutenant, Drumlanrig commanded the colonel's company; I was the lieutenant, and young Ruthven was ensign. We had a tent to share among us; the standard-poles were eight feet in height, the ridge-pole seven feet long, and its length from front to rear was fourteen feet, so that in warm weather we were tolerably comfortable, for the tents of subaltern officers were then marquees.

The roads were deep and muddy; the march to Brussels was a severe one, for torrents of rain made all the level country through which we proceeded resemble a marshy sea.

* For the information of the military reader, I may mention that the above-named regiments are now respectively numbered the 3rd, 11th, 12th, 13th, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, and 37th of the line. The Scots troops of Guards were disbanded by George II. in 1746.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MYSTERIOUS STORY.

THE close of our first day's march through a wide and open plain, brought us to the great city of Bruges, in the spacious market-place of which, where six streets centre, the Household Brigade were billeted on the inhabitants.

Drumlanrig and I were quartered in an hotel immediately opposite the house in which Charles II. had resided during a portion of his exile.

In the dusk of the evening we visited the great canal which runs to Sluys, the Church of St. John, and the Palace of La Franche, with all its pictures and statues of emperors, kings, and archdukes; and then the tower of Our Lady's Church, concerning which there is related a strange story, to the effect that the builder thereof, discovering that it leaned somewhat on one side, cast himself from the summit, and was buried where he fell, a mangled heap, and now his grave lies under the pavement of the street.

As we left the palace gate of La Franche, the commander-in-chief, Lord Stair, passed us on foot, attended by one of his aides-de-camp, Captain James Wolfe (the future hero of Quebec), and by several dignitaries of Bruges. He returned our salute in a very gracious manner, and, as he paused for a moment to speak with Drumlanrig, whom he knew, I had a good opportunity for observing him.

He was a tall and handsome man, of a noble presence, and having a singularly soft and pleasing manner; but with a grave expression in his eye, and a sadness in the tone of his voice.

"It is habitual with him, this air of gravity," said Drumlanrig, as we lingered over our wine at the hotel.

"Why is it so?" I asked, carelessly.

"Don't you remember?"

"Yes; I have heard that, when shooting, he had the misfortune to kill his elder brother by a pistol-shot; but that was when both were mere boys."

"But his presence became hateful to his mother, who, in fact, banished him into the army, where he served as a volunteer under the earl of Angus with the Cameronians at the battle of Steinkirke."

"And does the memory of that unintentional fratricide still prey upon his mind?"

"It does, and deeply too; but there is another dark family story, another calamity, if I may term it so, that eats like gall and wormwood into his soul. It is a revelation of which he and I alone are masters."

"You, also!" said I, becoming suddenly interested both by the words and accent of my friend.

"Stair did not bind me down to secrecy," resumed Drumlanrig; "but, from the manner in which I became cognizant of that most mysterious affair, secrecy was implied and expected of me."

"This is a solemn preamble," said I.

"I may depend upon your discretion, Lauriston, and, to while away an hour, I shall tell you this strange story, for strange it is indeed."

The time that has passed since Lord Drumlanrig and I were together on that night in Bruges, and the death some years after of the two principal actors in the following little drama, together with the fact that Monsieur d'Arnaud, in his "*Délassements de l'Homme*," has published another version of it, free me from the imputation of any breach of faith by the insertion of it here.

"Many have observed how pale, how sickly, and how gaue the earl of Stair has become since he left England with us," said Drumlanrig, in his rich, mellow voice.

"True; I have frequently heard it remarked by Panmore and others, who are his particular friends."

"There are few families without some dark spot or painful story in their secre thistory. We ourselves—you know the dreadful story of my uncle Earl James?—are not without one; so neither are the Dalrymples of Stair!"

"You interest me deeply: and this story——"

"I shall now tell you. It is commonly said—indeed, every printed 'Peerage' states—that James, the first Viscount Stair, the eminent lawyer and scholar, who was the author of the 'Institutes' of our law, and was one of the Scottish Commissioners sent to Charles II. at Breda, died in 1695; but this does not seem to have been the case. He disappeared——"

"Disappeared?"

"Thus rumours were spread that he was dead and buried; and so his son John succeeded him in all his titles, but *not* to all his estates, as several parchments relating to family property in Nithsdale had also disappeared. He died on the 8th of January, 1707, when in the act of warmly supporting the 22nd article of the Treaty of Union; and then the present earl, our brave commander-in-chief, succeeded to all the possessions and titles of his father, and most of those of his grandfather, the old commissioner for the Treaty of Breda.

"One evening in the winter of last year, I was dining with Lord Stair at his house in London, when a letter was delivered to him, and after reading it he handed it to me, saying,—

" 'What do you think of this? ' "

"It was an anonymous communication, pressing him in most earnest terms to grant the writer an interview at his residence, in an obscure part of London, as he had a secret of vast importance to reveal; and that it could be told to none but the earl of Stair in person.

"Conceiving it might be the work of some begging impostor, or a snare to entrap him for the purpose of extortion, the intrigue of some woman of rank, or perhaps that it veiled some darker project, the earl was disposed to cast the letter in the fire, and think no more about it; but the urgency of its tenor and the peculiarity of the hand-writing, with which he fancied himself familiar, made him ponder and recur to it again and again.

"The appointed place of meeting was a house up a stair in an obscure alley on the left hand of the arch, at the Southwark end of old London Bridge; and when the night wore on and the wine in the decanters waxed low, the earl became seized with an emotion of curiosity, or a desire for an adventure, and rose from the table, saying that he would probe the affair to the utmost, provided I would accompany him.

"To this I at once assented.

"We put on plain clothes, took our swords, and placed each a brace of loaded pistols in our girdles. We muffled our roquelaures about us, and hailed a hackney coach, and it soon set us down at the end of the bridge, across which we quickly threaded our way to the Southwark gate.

"The night was dark, and, as the tide was ebbing, the Thames rushed rapidly through the narrow and slimy arches of the ancient bridge, and in the lights of the houses the eddies of water round the buttresses seemed to flash like flames amid the blackness of the current.

"The wind came in wild gusts, and moaned drearily about the old wooden gables, the outshots and quaint architecture of the houses on the bridge; and the row of traitors' heads—the skulls of poor fellows who had been cut out with Mar in 1715—on long iron rods above the Southwark arch, had a ghastly effect in the starlight, for no moon was visible; so in every way the night, the time, and the place, seemed suited for a dark and mysterious adventure.

"Passing forth from the archway, we found the alley mentioned in the note; and then the house, to the door of which a narrow external stair gave access. It was of wood, and so aged and worn, that it creaked and actually crumbled beneath our feet. The house seemed the abode of obscurity and poverty, crime, filth, and squalor.

"We knocked repeatedly, and, after a time, the pattering of slipshod feet was heard within; a ray of light streamed through the keyhole, and a shrill and quavering voice inquired who was without.

"'He for whom you sent—John earl of Stair,' replied my friend.

"After much muttering and long delay, the door was unclosed by an old woman, whose appearance betokened extreme misery and poverty, for she was clad almost in rags. She held up a candle, and, shading its light with her hideously shrivelled hand, surveyed us with keen and hawk-like eyes, that were almost savage in expression, and then desired us to pass inward, while she closed the door and locked it with such care, that the earl and I exchanged glances of intelligence, and felt under our cloaks for the butts of the pistols we carried.

"The house was one of extreme antiquity—old, perhaps, as the days of Henry VIII. Wainscot covered all

the walls, which were low in height, and the passages, which were narrow; and damp, dust, and cobwebs obscured and discoloured them in every place.

“‘Lead on,’ said the earl, ‘and we shall follow you.’”

“The hag, for such she really was, conducted us up a creaking stair into a garret of mean and dismal aspect; and there we beheld a very strange sight.

“By the glimmering light of a candle, that guttered and sputtered in the currents of air which came through hundred crannies and crevices into this wretched apartment, we saw an old—a very old man, stretched at full length on a miserable bed, which seemed to be a veritable heap of rags; yet there was something in the appearance of this person which bewildered and fascinated us.

“He seemed aged beyond all measure of the time usually allotted to poor humanity, and attenuated beyond all the attenuation that one might suppose to be possible with life and existence. He was, in fact, a living skeleton! Of beard or whiskers no trace remained; but a few scattered hairs, like gossamer threads or thistle-down, glittered in the light of the candle, on his thin and sunken temples. His bald head was smooth, bony, and shone like a polished ivory-ball. His gums were toothless; but his eyes, though hollow, were keen and bright as those of a hawk or snake.

“He surveyed us alternately, and then spoke in a voice so unearthly that we—even we, who had heard the boom of cannon-shot more than once on the battle-field—started, for it thrilled through us.

“‘Which of you is he I sent for?’ he asked.

“‘I am John earl of Stair,’ said my friend, taking off his hat, in respect for the age of this mysterious questioner, whose whole frame seemed now to vibrate with emotion; and his sunken eyes sparkled with fire, as he

gazed at the earl from head to foot, moaning and muttering the while.

"'And your friend,' he asked, 'who is he?'

"'I am Henry earl of Drumlanrig,' said I.

"'Son of James of Queensberry, who was fined a hundred thousand merks for being the friend of Montrose?' asked the old man, whose voice ascended into a husky scream.

"'Nay, sir,' said I, 'he you speak of was my grandfather.'

"The old man laughed like a jointed mask, and said,—

"'I forget me—I forget me. Ha! ha! I conveyed him a prisoner to the castle of Carlisle, after the battle of Kilsythe was fought, and there he was kept so closely, that he learned the true value of liberty, and vowed yearly to release twelve poor debtors from the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, in commemoration of his own sufferings. But it is with the earl of Stair alone I have to do.'

"'He raves!' whispered the earl, as I drew back a little way; 'Kilsythe was fought *ninety-seven* years ago. Our old friend is clearly mad.'

"'I am *not* mad,' said the old man in a querulous voice; 'but approach me, John of Stair, and let me see you.'

"The earl did so, permitting his roquelaure to drop from one shoulder. Then I could not help reflecting on the strange contrast presented by the forms of these two: one so tall, so erect, so noble, and so soldierly, in the very prime of grace, of strength, and manhood; the other in the last stage of mental and bodily decay, 'a lean and slipped pantaloon,' a tenant for the grave.

"'Is it the case, John of Stair, that for lack of certain parchments, which have been missing since 1695, you are deprived of large estates in Nithsdale?'

“‘I regret to say, sir, that, like my good father before me, I have failed to heir those lands, for lack of certain unrecorded charters and titles to them; and there are other lands, of which, for the same reason, I may yet be deprived, to the ruin perhaps of my family. But why do *you* speak of them?’

“‘Take this key and open yonder box,’ said the old man, whose eyes never wandered from the face of Stair, whom, to use a common phrase, they seemed literally to ‘devour,’ while he mumbled and moaned strangely with his toothless gums, and while his head shook, as if with palsy or emotion.

“Stair unlocked the box, which was a small iron-bound coffer, and took therefrom four large square parchments, to each of which a green seal nearly as large as a saucer was attached.

“‘Scottish crown charters!’ he exclaimed; ‘and what is this—*Charles by the Grace of God, King of Scotland, England, France, and Ireland, to James Viscount of Stair, Lord of Glenluce and Stranraer. And what else is this?—Charter by Macbeth King of Scotland to Hew Dail-Chruim-Puill of the lands and castle of that name, near Saint Valley, on the banks of the Doon, in the shire of Ayr!*’

“‘Ay; and know you, my lord, *why* Macbeth, the murderer of Duncan, granted these lands to one who before he won them was alike landless and nameless?’

“‘No, my good sir. Do you know?’

“‘Right well. Before he came to the crown, Macbeth was forced, after an unsuccessful battle with the Danes from England, to take shelter on the island of the Bass, in the Frith of Forth. Even there they followed him—yea, to the very summit; but the thane of Cawder fought valiantly, while his only surviving attendant

stood in a gap of the rocks and confronted the foe with his battle-axe."

"Fast and fiercely he smote them down, and as he did so, the future king called to him again and again,—

"Hew, Dail-Chruim-Puill, *hew!*" so the word became a Christian name in the family: thus he won his lands on the banks of the Doon in the *Dale of the Crooked Pool*; and hence the crest of your house is a rock—the auld Craig o'Bass in Lothian.'

"These are the long-lost titles to our lands in Nithsdale and Glenluce. But say, who are you, strange old man, and how came these parchments to be in this miserable hovel?"

"The old man smiled with an expression of mockery, and after lying back with his eyes closed, said,—

"You wish to know by what means they came into my possession?"

"I do.'

"And who I am?"

"I do, most earnestly I do!" replied the earl, with increasing vehemence.

"Well—I am that James, viscount of Stair and lord of Glenluce, to whom King Charles II., then at Kensington, granted these lands in Nithsdale and Dumfriesshire.'

"My grandfather—impossible!" exclaimed the earl, starting back with astonishment and incredulity in his face and tone; 'my poor old man, you rave or mock me.'

"I do neither—neither—neither.'

"Sir, in 1695 the viscount my grandfather——'

"Disappeared.'

"What say you?"

"Disappeared—he did not die!"

"This is as absurd as it is strange," said the earl,

turning to me; 'my grandfather, the first viscount of Stair, was born so long ago as 1619.'

" 'Which makes me exactly one hundred and twenty-three years of age,' said the other, as his eyes lighted up with the same strange mocking smile, and his old, hideously old, face became puckered with a hundred wrinkles. 'Listen, listen; come close to me.'

"The earl did so, and then the old man began to whisper and mutter hurriedly in his ear. What he said I know not; but Stair afterwards told me that he related so many secret anecdotes of the family, that if not convinced of his identity, his lordship became more and more bewildered and alarmed.

" 'Now,' exclaimed the old man; 'are you convinced?'

" 'I know not what to think.'

" 'I have led a long and wandering, a hopeless and unhappy life. I have dwelt in many distant lands, and there I have heard of your valour, and the glorious career you have passed—you, like myself, a lord of Stair and the son of my best beloved son.'

"The speaker paused and moaned in mental anguish, and as he writhed on his wretched couch, he resembled a phantom or skeleton rather than a human being; but now in disjointed sentences and querulous mutterings he told us the strangest portion of his story—a portion which overwhelmed my friend Stair with shame and confusion, all the more deep that previous revelations had almost convinced him of the speaker's identity. It was to this effect, but related in a rambling and incoherent manner,—

" 'For years I was the favourite subject of King Charles I. when that too facile monarch was in the zenith of his popularity; but I became his foe, and the motive which ultimately induced me to conceal my exist-

ence from all, and to retire from the world, was the terrible vengeance I inflicted upon him!

“In youth I loved a lady who was a ward of the crown; and the king bestowed her in marriage upon a favourite courtier. It was a hapless marriage, and, in the end, a childless one, as all her little ones went to the grave before her. Ha! she I loved was wedded upon Beltane-eve, and, in Scotland, we have a proverb, that—

“Of marriages in May,
The bairns die o’ decay.”

“True it is, as some one says, that what millions of money cannot purchase, may be bought by the smile or tear of a *woman*—so her tears bought my hatred! I have not time to detail unto you the host of secret agents I employed in the three kingdoms, or the strange and varied means we used to excite discontent and armed revolt in Church and State; but be assured that I had no small share in bringing about the great Civil War, and causing the final and fatal catastrophe before the palace windows of Whitehall.

“So secret and so active was I, that I alone know *who* was the masked man who struck off the head of our unhappy king.

“My loyal attachment had turned to intense hatred; I became a captain in the regiment of Glencairn, and fought as one inspired by the demon of vengeance can alone fight! I was engaged in many a battle with the royalists; and was present at the king’s trial, and heard his condemnation and sentence. I was close by when he stood upon the scaffold, when he gave to Bishop Juxon the insignia of the Garter, and when he whispered that significant word, *Remember!*

“Oh! in my ears, I seem to hear it still, coming, like

an echo, from the far-off land which I shall never reach!

“‘And now, my grandson, hear me. He, the masked man, who, on that disastrous day, struck off that grey discrowned head—he who held it aloft by its long Cavalier locks—locks silvered less by time than early sorrow—was neither the common executioner of London, nor, as others say, Joyce, the rebel lieutenant-colonel, but—but——’

“‘Who—who?’

“‘He who now addresses you—your grandfather, James Viscount Stair!’

“‘Oh! what horrible delusion is this?’ exclaimed the earl, covering his face with his hands, for a story such as this, being told in my presence, seemed to cut him to the soul.

“‘For more than forty years the deed of that day preyed upon my mind; the pale face of my slaughtered king seemed ever before me, and ever in this left hand I seemed to grasp his silken hair! Life grew hateful to me.

“‘I became a voluntary exile and wandered far away to the farthest parts of Europe—even to Asia; and now it would seem as if God, to punish the slayer of His anointed, has lengthened out my weary life beyond the age of man. Who in this withered phantom would recognize that Sir James Dalrymple of Stair, who fought in the battles of the Covenant, and led the regiment of Glencairn to the storming of Carrickfergus—he who was president of the Scottish College of Justice—the first viscount of Stair and of Glenluce?

“‘In those days I was prouder than that proud duke of Somerset, who pitied Adam because he was without ancestry—and what am I now? But take these parch-

ments—they may save the house of Stair from monetary degradation; but what can efface the blood that stains our escutcheon? Now, leave me—leave me—leave me!’

“He sank back exhausted.

“Lord Stair was deeply affected. I hurried him away, and in silence we proceeded through the dark and empty streets, for dawn was nigh before this strange interview was over. He was so agitated by the whole affair, that he begged me not to leave him until together we had thoroughly sifted the adventure.

“About noon next day we returned to the alley near the gloomy old Southwark gate, for the purpose of bringing the old man away with us, that we might endeavour to trace his history further; but judge of our surprise, when we found the squalid hovel tenantless!

“The feeble old man and his slipshod attendant had vanished together. He was gone, no one knew whither, for no one had seen him depart; thus we had no possibility of tracing him; and in spite of every effort we have made during the past year, his fate and his flight have remained alike a mystery—so much so, that were it not for the undeniable existence of the coffer and its charters, which he had left in the hands of Lord Stair, we might have deemed the whole affair a dream; but since that time my good friend the earl has been a grave and somewhat sombre man.

“And now to bed,” said Drumlanrig, concluding this strange story; “in three hours our drums will beat the *générale*, and then ho for the line of march again!”

With this narrative occupying my mind I retired for the night, or, rather, the remainder of the morning.

“These circumstances,” says a writer, with reference to M. d’Arnaud’s account of this affair, “when unsupported by contemporary or referential evidence, and

involved in a romantic cloud, will not bear the touchstone of criticism and scrupulous inquiry ; yet the event it speaks of, which unhinged the form of government in these kingdoms, which shed the best blood and dissipated the fortunes of thousands, has been the frequent subject of ardent and interesting discussion. It was undoubtedly a fearful—a tremendous question ; and I believe that few serious or well-designing men would wish to be placed in the situation of those whose office it was to decide upon the life or death of the king."

CHAPTER XV.

GHENT AND ALOST.

I COMMANDED the baggage-guard of the brigade on the second day's march, which brought us to Ghent, the capital of eastern Flanders, a vast and magnificent city, the burgomaster of which, Mynheer Van Bosch, received the general and staff in great state, at the head of all the civic dignitaries, while the streets were lined by the fifty companies of the trades, with their standards and insignia. The banner of the city waved on the Tower of Bellefort, on the summit of which is a gilded copper dragon, larger than a good-sized bull ; and Roland of Ghent, the great bell of the city, which was tolled in honour of our arrival, seemed to rell a flood of sonorous sound in mid-air over our heads.

Lord Stair, with the staff and the English guards, occupied a portion of the old citadel of Charles V. ; but the Scots Foot Guards and the Coldstreams were quartered in the city.

The windows of my billet faced the bridge of the

Dogebrack, on which there are (or were) two very strange statues of polished brass, representing a son in the act of beheading his father; and Major Stewart, who knew all Flanders as if it had been his own estate of Harewoodlee, informed me that this represented an old legend of the city.

During the barbarous wars waged in the Low Countries by the duke of Alva, two citizens of Ghent, a father and a son, were condemned to die; but one was to be reprieved, on condition that he would become the executioner of the other—life was to be granted, but life embittered with a lasting remorse.

The father refused to become the slayer of his son, and begged that he might be permitted to die; but the son, fearing death, or being less noble in spirit, accepted the dastardly offer of life at the price of that of his parent.

Freshly sharpened, the headsman's sword was given him, and with bared neck and bowed head the father knelt before his son upon the common scaffold. The sword was uplifted and the glittering blade descended, but turned in the hand of the would-be parricide, and broke in fragments on the poor man's shoulder.

On this a shout burst from the thousands of Ghent, who were assembled to behold the revolting scene. It was declared to be the interposition of Heaven! Even the iron heart of Ferdinand of Toledo was moved by the story; he pardoned both, and the brazen group which stood before my windows commemorated the fact.

Rose and Ruthven, of our corps, with some of the English Guards, bent upon amusement or, what is more probable, mischief, visited the convent of English nuns, and asked permission to see the interior. The lady abbess, who came to the gate, said that the edifice was unused to such

visitors ; but being pleased to see the scarlet coats, and to hear the language of her native country, she consented to receive them, if time was given her to make a few preparations.

After a little delay they were all admitted, and in person she conducted them through the chapel, the gardens, the dining-hall, and even the little dormitories, wherein at night the fair recluses reposed ; but to the chagrin and disappointment of the visitors, not a single nun was visible !

“ Where are all the ladies ? ” asked Ruthven

The abbess only smiled and shook her head, as she bowed them out and closed the iron gate ; but at that moment she discovered that Sir Henry Rose, who was a remarkably handsome young man, and, so far as the fair sex were concerned, a very enterprising one, was missing, having found an opportunity for secreting himself in one of the dormitories.

The abbess was justly indignant, and assembling all the ladies, about thirty in number, a search was made and the culprit discovered before one of the mirrors, in the act of arranging his hair in what he considered a very becoming manner.

Armed each with a slipper, the nuns fell simultaneously upon him, and inflicted a castigation so severe that he could scarcely appear on parade when we mustered next morning, near the statue of Charles V., prior to marching for Alost ; and his sorrows and their source formed a fund of amusement for the whole brigade for some weeks after.

On this day a mounted trooper of Ligonier's Horse overtook us with letters for the brigade from England, and the drum-major of each battalion delivered them to the officers at the first halting-place, which I remember

was a little village on the Dender, which was there crossed by a quaint wooden bridge.

Approaching me with an open letter in his hand, and a bright smile on his face, Drumlanrig said,—

“I have news for you, Godfrey.”

“For me?”

“Yes—Letty Hyde is again in London.”

“In London?” I repeated breathlessly.

“Yes; the duchess, my mother, writes to me saying that she has recalled her from Kent to keep her near herself; in fact, she will be now at Queensberry House, in Old Burlington Street. Dearest mother!” exclaimed the young earl, with love and enthusiasm sparkling in his fine dark eyes, “I parted from you in anger, and you do me this great kindness in my absence; but when I write you will forgive me, as you have forgiven my sweet Letty!”

I cannot say that I rejoiced in this new arrangement. The opposition of the duchess to her son's attachment was the last desperate hope to which I clung. That barrier removed, Letty Hyde would be lost to me for ever.

My love for her, what was it but a chivalrous, a poetical, some might say a senseless, devotion, rather than a passion that hope fed or reason fostered; and yet I loved her with a depth and truth known only to Heaven and to myself.

As the earl glanced over his letter again, he knit his brows with impatience.

“What is the matter?”

“Oh—a wasp's sting among the honey, that is all.”

“How?”

“In a postscript, my mother conjures me to write to that little moping thing, Elizabeth Hope, who loves me

so much that she has never ceased to weep since we sailed."

"And will you do so?"

"Why; I suppose I must. Independent as I am of my whole family, Lauriston,—even of the duke, my father,—I might have married Letty six months ago," said Drumlanrig; "but my mother's opposition on one hand, and rumours of the campaign we have just opened, delayed me; then the order to embark came so hurriedly, that I must have left her a widowed bride; yet if I fall, as fall I may, in our first battle perhaps, would it not have been better to have left her the young countess dowager of Drumlanrig, than as the dependent Miss Hyde? I did not think of that. As my widow she would have been secured in position and in ample independence, for in very shame my family dared not neglect her."

"All these reflections come too late now—we are in the lowlands of Holland, and the French are on the Rhine," said I, with an emotion of pique most difficult to conceal.

"True, Godfrey, 'tis too late now. The letter she entrusted with you, for me——"

"Oh—the letter I received when læst on guard at St. James's Palace?"

"Yes."

"What of it now?"

"It assured me of her unalterable affection; and, secure in the possession of that love, I shall continue to look forward to our marriage as the greatest recompense the fortune of war, after all its toils and perils, can award me."

"To your companies, gentlemen—the brigade will advance!" cried Panmure as he rode past, cutting short all this sort of thing, which was the reverse of pleasant for

me to hear; but I could only sigh in secret bitterness, as the march was resumed for Alost.

How little knew either the earl or I, that his politic mother had brought our Letty to London for the express purpose of controlling, rather than guiding, her movements, and for overseeing her correspondence, with the deeper intention of having her entrapped, if possible, into a marriage, she cared but little with whom, so that the poor girl was effectually removed from that position in her son's affections which she wished Lady Elizabeth Hope to occupy.

Ere long we shall see how all these fine schemes ended.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE REGIMENTAL BULLY.

AFTER leaving Alost, we marched through a fertile district covered with corn and hop fields that had been gathered, and soon saw before us the smoke and spires of Brussels, with the two great square towers of St. Gudule rising in dark and sombre mass.

We reached this great city early in October, and the whole army was encamped outside the fortifications, which consisted of a high double wall, very deep ditches, and no less than seventy-four towers, many of which, however, were ruined by time and war. Here we were joined by various other regiments from Britain.

Our household brigade was all under canvas, about a mile from the gate of Anderlicht, among some pleasant green fields.

Strict discipline and order were enforced by strong

guards and patrols of horse and foot; and in the midst of a fertile country and close to a magnificent and populous city, we had plenty of provisions, gaiety, and amusement; and now we learned that we were to pass the winter there; but that with early spring we would advance towards the Rhine.

Save in the letters of the duchess to her son, we never heard of Letty Hyde, as she, for some unaccountable cause, had ceased writing to him. Poor Drumlanrig was in despair at times, and wrote her the most passionate, urgent, and pressing letters; but no replies came now, and, to make the mystery worse, his mother's letters elaborately detailed her gaiety, her heedlessness, and how a certain gentleman, a noted *roué*, whom she would not name, in dread of her son's violence, was now the acknowledged dangler after, and admirer of Letty, whom he accompanied to the theatre, the opera, and all public places.

To me much of this seemed incredible, from my own knowledge of Letty's character; but I knew not how much to believe and how much to doubt. At times I suspected that the correspondence of our fair friend was tampered with; but to hint at such an idea would have been offensive to Drumlanrig. I would have given worlds to have written to Letty; but to have done so might have compromised me with my friend.

Chained as he was to his post with our regiment, the earl's position, though my favoured rival, was not to be envied under the present circumstances; and now came a letter from the duchess which broadly hinted that unless Letty was married by this gentleman, with whom her name was so seriously compromised, it might prove a very unpleasant matter for all concerned.

This did not fail to exasperate me, for it wounded my

self-esteem. I strove to forget—yea, to hate her! At times, I believe, I almost accomplished this; and then as the memory of her gentle face and seductive manner came before me, the bitter emotion would melt into my old tenderness and affection; and I felt that even were she false to us both, I must love her still.

What magic was it that lured me to love this girl; and that made her, who loved another, the life, the hope, and guiding star of *my* existence? But from our youth upwards we live upon illusions.

At last Drumlanrig ceased to write to Letty, for his letters still remained unanswered; and this was the position of our love affairs, when the winter of 1742 covered all our tents with snow, making us think of the ruddy hearths and sea-coal fires at home, and suggesting ideas of the advantage of stone walls over canvas dwellings.

About this time I was separated from the regiment, being sent with a detachment of fifty men to Vilvorde, twelve miles from Brussels.

There we were quartered in the old castle in which the duke of Alva was wont to imprison those whom he supposed to be disaffected, and before the gates of which Tindal, the first English translator of the Bible, suffered martyrdom in 1536. The only officer of the Guards who accompanied me on this duty was Ensign Ruthven. A wing of Battereau's Foot was cantoned in Vilvorde, so, as misfortune would have it, we were not long in getting embroiled with Mr. George Frederick Falshaw, in a manner which cost my poor brother officer his life.

Falshaw had constituted himself the "trier and prover"—in fact, the fighting bully—of his regiment. Wretches such as he existed in almost every corps at this time—men who spent every leisure moment in getting up quarrels, the management of which they took into their

own hands, and thus lured into duels persons who had not the slightest malice against each other.

Hence the summonses of honour became a tyrannical custom, by which officers, to avoid disgrace and being sent to Coventry, were driven into the committal of an action by which their lives were either lost or embittered by the memory of a friend or a comrade slaughtered by their hand.

This ordeal—the fighting of at least one duel—had to be gone through, before a young officer could expect perfect peace after joining his regiment; and if he “paraded,” and winged, or shot dead one of the “triers and provers,” it always cooled the ardour of the rest for a time.

Even our soldiers occasionally fought with their swords, as every private wore one until 1745. Duelling was then one of the institutions of good society, and of course it was carried to excess in the army, though in direct defiance of the Articles of War, which state that “no officer shall presume to send a challenge to any other officer, to fight a duel, upon pain of being cashiered.” But it was a necessity to which men looked forward in life, as they had the certainty of being involved in one or two such encounters at least during their career; hence the advice given to the young officer by the old one, even by those who reprobated the system—*never* refuse a challenge, even from a footman, and be ever ready with your pistol!

My friend young Ruthven, who had made the acquaintance of a pretty *grisette* in Vilvorde, was one day hastening to keep an assignation he had arranged with her. Passing hurriedly through the archway of the old castle in which we were quartered, he was jostled somewhat rudely by an officer of Battereau’s Foot, who was

lounging there. The knot of Ruthven's sword was caught by the sleeve-button of the other so violently that the blade was drawn out and fell on the ground.

Ruthven, who was a very well-bred and polite young man, was about to apologise, when the other gave his fallen sword a violent kick and passed on.

This was done in the presence of a main guard composed of men of Colonel Battereau's regiment. Ruthven saw that the officer was a tall, powerful, and bulky man, for indeed he was no other than Ensign Falshaw, who had been heard to boast that he would get up a quarrel with one of the Scots Foot Guards on the day our party marched in.

Ruthven snatched up his sword, sheathed it, and rushing after Falshaw, confronted him, saying,—

"Sir, you will apologize for this?"

"What—for coming against you?" asked the other with a supercilious smile.

"No—for daring to touch my sword with your foot."

"And I must apologize?"

"Instantly."

"To whom?"

"To me, sir. I am Ensign Ruthven, of the Scots Foot Guards, and no man shall insult me with impunity."

"My little man, if I trod upon your spit, you have your recourse. I am ready at all times, and can be found by all, except my creditors, who are numerous enough to make a regiment; and a fine body of men they would be—very select, at all events."

"S'death, sir!" began Ruthven, choking with passion at the cool insolence of the other.

"Keep your temper, my little ensign, or I may souse you in the wet ditch."

"You shall dearly account to me for all this."

"When? I am quite at leisure now."

"Not now; I have an appointment," said Ruthven, reddening as he remembered his assignation.

"Not now? Bah! I thought so," said the other, with affected contempt, and measuring the poor lad from head to foot with a significant smile of unparalleled insolence as he passed on.

Almost beside himself with rage, Ruthven came to me, and his story filled me with anger and perplexity.

"My dear lad," said I, "you cannot, you *must* not, fight with this fellow."

"Why—how?"

"The man is a notorious bully—a 'trier and prover'—a mere regimental gladiator; one of those fellows who have been the torment of many corps ever since the wars of Queen Anne, and who are alike a curse and disgrace to the service!"

However, reflection showed me that the honour of Ruthven would be lost, and that of our corps would be sullied, if shots were not exchanged at least, as the affront had been a public one, and would be freely canvassed at Battereau's mess. On the other hand, I knew that Falshaw's strength and skill in the use of weapons so far exceeded those of the poor boy he had so wantonly insulted, that no duel could be fair or equal between them; yet, on being visited by Captain Stanhope of his corps about the affair, a meeting was arranged to take place in an hour from that time, in the dry ditch at the back of the old fortress.

John Ruthven had come of a spirited race that never failed their king or country in the dark times of Scottish rebellion or English invasion. Lavish had they been of their blood on many a field, for their history had been one of loyalty and chivalry,—of ever sustaining the weaker

side and losing with them; hence came proscriptions, ruined fortunes, and beggared baronies; and thrice, during the wars for Mary, King Charles, and King James, had fire consumed their roof-tree, and the grass grown on their hearths; but still they were noble, loyal, and true, those Ruthvens of Aberuthven; for their good old name had never been spoiled by a title—too often, in the latter years of Scottish and English history, the reward of corruption in the cabinet, and Heaven knows what in the field.

Poor Ruthven was the only son of his mother and the last of his family; and now, though his heart was bold and fearless, with eyes almost blinded by tears he spent his last hour in writing a farewell letter, which I was to forward to Aberuthven in case he fell. I watched him while he wrote,—watched him with a sick and sinking heart; for I knew well that, so surely as his fingers held the pen and traced those farewell lines upon the paper, so surely would they be stiff and lifeless in an hour.

In the letter he inclosed a lock of his hair and an antique signet ring, and then, starting up with flashing eyes, said,—

“Lauriston, I am ready!”

I pressed his hand kindly, and we proceeded together to the ditch, which was overhung by the bastions of the castle, and there we found Falshaw, Captain Stanhope, and an hospital mate, as we then termed our surgeons. I have mentioned elsewhere that Falshaw had pale and watery eyes: I should have added that they were cunning and suspicious eyes, which always scanned you with a side-long look as if he had a scheme in hand against you.

He was twisting the curls of his wig, twirling the knot of his sword, and almost quarrelling with himself, for want of some one else to brawl with. In this amiable

mood we found him, and he made an ironical bow to Ruthven, who stood proudly and disdainfully erect; so Falshaw tried to get up a quarrel with me also.

"Your servant, Mr. Lauriston," said he.

"This is a most unfortunate affair," said I, gravely.

"Bah! I begin to get sick of my trip to Flanders, and have longed for a little excitement; I am far from being content with a spontoon, and carrying twenty rounds of ball at my back."

I drew him aside, on which he bluntly resumed thus:—

"Do you mean to say you have quite failed with Miss Letty Hyde?"

"To you, sir, I say nothing."

"Not even to a friend?"

"I do not rank you among my friends," said I, with a cutting glance.

"Then beware how you rank me among your enemies! But with regard to Miss Hyde——"

"Sir! are you resolved to fasten a quarrel upon me?"

"Not at all; I know women pretty well, having had some experience of them in my time. Success may satiate, but failure would never damp *me*. S'death, no!"

"Enough of this insolent banter," said I, earnestly; "but say, can we not compromise your present affair by an apology?"

"Perhaps so; but not by one on my part," said he superciliously.

"This boy—you see he is but a boy——"

"Will be food for the worms in ten minutes!" said he, grinding his teeth.

"He is the only son of a widowed lady."

"Only son—then his mother should have had more."

"If he falls, it will break her heart!"

"Sink me! what is all this to me, she will weep and scream, no doubt—

"Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,
When husbands or when lap-dogs breathe their last."

In this world people must be either hammers or anvils; and damme, I prefer being a hammer!"

I could have passed my sword through the bantering villain, so great was my rage; but restraining myself, I asked,—

"Have you never felt remorse?"

"Remorse—why, yes—at times."

"When?"

"When weary of wine, of women, of gaming—of everything and every one; but the emotion never lasted long."

"Is this your idea of remorse?"

"Yes, and a very good one too. With what are we to fight?" he added, turning from me and suddenly raising his voice.

"The pistol," said Ruthven, firmly.

"Why the pistol only?" he asked with a frown.

"Because it will place us on a greater equality; you are a stronger man than I."

"So be it," said Captain Stanhope; "you will stand back to back, and at the word *march*, must step off together, each five paces. At the fifth, you will wheel round, and fire instantly without any word of command."

Coolly as if forming a squad upon parade, the captain placed the parties back to back; and then the slight and graceful, the almost boyish figure of Jack Ruthven formed a contrast to the bulky strength of his antagonist. Each had a pistol cocked in his hand. The face of my friend was pale, but his compressed lips expressed deter-

mination, and his flashing eye the resolution to avenge a wanton insult, together with the hope and courage of youth. He gave me a kind smile too—a smile that went to my heart!

“March!” cried Captain Stanhope.

They stepped off together, and at the fifth pace both wheeled round and fired. Falshaw's pistol exploded almost a second before that of poor Ruthven, who fell on his face, wallowing in blood.

The ball had pierced his breast in a slanting direction near the region of the heart, and he was dying.

“Oh, Lauriston!—my mother—oh, my mother!” he moaned in a low and most touching voice as he turned convulsively on his back and expired.

I was inexpressibly shocked and grieved by this sudden, but not unexpected catastrophe. As for Falshaw he smiled complacently, coolly buttoned his regimentals up to the throat, cocked his hat a little over the right eye, and said,—

“Come, Stanhope, I've got a dozen of rare wine from a confiding but deluded sutler; we'll have a bout after this little affair—shooting the boots of the Scots Guards' mess.”

He was in the act of retiring with his friend, when I, unable longer to repress the wrath that boiled within me, rushed forward and struck him furiously upon the mouth with my clenched hand. The blow was a severe one, and made him reel against the castle wall.

“Villain and coward!” I exclaimed, “you have murdered this poor boy; so defend yourself, lest I kill you bare-handed!”

We drew our swords and engaged with great fury, for Falshaw was enraged by the suddenness and weight of the blow; while I, being determined to kill him, as an

act of retributive justice, drove him back step by step, under a shower of cuts and thrusts, till, fearing that he might be pinned to the wall of the dry fosse, he suddenly shifted his position, fatally for himself.

At the moment when he stumbled backward over the pale and bloody corpse of his victim, I ran him through the body, somewhere under the ribs, with such impetuous force that the shell-guard of my hilt rung on his gilt breast buttons, and then, spurning him off with my foot, I hurled him like a dog into an angle of the ditch.

While the hospital mate applied himself at once to examine into the critical state of Master George Frederrick Falshaw, I approached Captain Stanhope, for my blood was now fairly up, and I perceived that he had drawn *his* sword.

"Sir," said I, still flushed with passion, "am I to understand that you are dissatisfied with the mode in which I have handled your principal?"

"Far from it, sir; I would that every regimental bully in the service was served in the same fashion," he replied, sheathing his sword, which I am convinced he drew with no honest intention; "and now, sir, good evening."

So ended this wretched affair. We buried poor Ruthven with the honours of war, outside one of the churches in Vilvorde.

Some days after I found a chaplet of fresh flowers laid upon his grave, and the sacristan told me that a young girl, closely veiled, came there every second day to leave a newly woven wreath. It was doubtless the last tribute of the little Belgian *grisette*; and when we marched back to headquarters, a chaplet formed of the earliest flowers of spring lay amid the melting snow on the last home of our comrade.

By this time Mr. Falshaw was in a fair way to recovery, and had sent to assure me, that ere long he would do himself the pleasure of letting me hear from him again, by beating up my quarters at an early period.

On rejoining, I found that Drumlanrig had *still* been unable to obtain a single line from Letty Hyde, in answer to a last and most pathetic letter he had written while I was at Vilvorde.

What mystery was involved here ?

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHALLENGE.

IN February, 1743, we struck our tents, and bade adieu to Brussels, when the whole army began its march towards the Rhine.

Lord Stair appointed Hochst-on-the-Maine, as the point at which the Confederates, or Allies, were to concentrate ; but the roads being impassable with deep snow, for a time we halted at Aix-la-Chapelle. Our men, like those of other brigades, were heavily encumbered with their camp equipage, in addition to their arms (the muskets were fourteen pounds weight), accoutrements, and ammunition ; and, by the time we reached Aix, our marching gaiters were completely worn out. On this route I found my long spontoon a nuisance, and would gladly have exchanged it for the light fusil with which the officers of some regiments were armed.

This spontoon, long since disused, was a gilded but very heavy weapon, very much like a halbert ; when the spontoon of the senior officer was planted, the regiment

halted; when pointed to the front, the regiment marched; when to the rear, the regiment retreated.

On this march many soldiers, especially of Battereau's Foot, were severely flogged for imbibing too much brandy; and from the same reason many fell ill of fevers and agues.

We soon found that sharp work was before us, by the frequent inspection of arms and ammunition, of horse-shoes and artillery wheels. The swords of the cavalry were ground and pointed, and all for the benefit of the French, fifty-eight thousand of whom, under the marshal duc de Noailles, awaited us on the banks of the Maine and Rhine.

We remained for two months cantoned in the beautiful old city of Aix-la-Chapelle, in the glorious church of which I saw the sword, the iron crown, and the white marble tomb of Charles the Great, the gospels written in letters of gold, and the cathedral gates, which were cracked and split by the malice of the devil.

One day, when the sky was clear and cloudless, and when the Rhine lay a solid sheet of ice between its snow-clad banks, Drumlanrig and I, after morning parade, rambled to the little town of Burtschied, which stands half a mile eastward of Aix-la-Chapelle, on the slope of a steep hill. There we visited the abbey, which is a fine Gothic edifice.

Talking of the coming conflicts, and of the friends dear to us, whom we had left far away, in London and in Scotland, we passed through the wood of Burtschied into the narrow valley of Wormbach, which is overlooked by hills covered to their summits with trees, all leafless then; and there, amid the snow, we saw the white steaming vapour of several hot springs curling in the sunshine between us and the ruins of the old castle of Frankenberg.

There a horseman, muffled in a military cloak, as he passed us at a rapid trot, suddenly checked his horse, and I could perceive that his eyes glared at me with an intensity of hatred there was no mistaking.

This hostile personage was Mr. Falshaw; he looked very pale, but passed on without further recognition.

"So this worthy gentleman has rejoined from Vilvorde," said Drumlanrig; "he will not be long at headquarters before we hear of some of his pranks again."

"I have taught him a lesson in prudence, however," I replied, "one not easily to be forgotten."

We dined with the abbot of Burtschied, a fine old German priest and highly educated gentleman, who met us in the garden of the abbey, and seeing, by our uniform, that we were British officers, courteously invited us to share his repast, which was in no way of the proverbial parched peas and spring water description, for we had every luxury that both sides of the Rhine could produce; and we were attended by *hebdomadaries*, or monks who waited at table as servants.

The abbot told us a quaint story of how one of his predecessors in the abbacy outwitted the Devil. It was something to this effect:—

"Some time during the five years' reign of the Archduke Rodolph, money was required for the repair and completion of the great cathedral at Aix, of which Charlemagne was a canon, and where he lies buried in a silver coffin; but money was scarce, and in a moment of mingled holiness and impiety, a certain citizen, by some means, known to himself alone, borrowed the required sum from the Evil One, who stipulated that he was to receive in return the *first* soul that passed through the cathedral gates, which are of bronze, of great weight, and magnificently carved; and Satan grinned as the contract

was signed, as he hoped, by an irresistible fatality, the first soul would be that of the borrower.

"The money was given in good gold and silver, all of Rudolph's reign, or of his father, Albert II.; the cathedral was completed therewith; but no one in all Aix could be found daring enough to pass through the cathedral porch, so for years that vast church remained empty; no bell rang in its spires, no mass was said at its altar, no litany chanted, no sermon preached, and so for a time the Devil had decidedly the best of the bargain.

"Matters remained thus until the bishop of Aix, who was in despair for a remedy, consulted with Werner, then abbot of this house of Burtshied, who conceived the idea of having a great black wolf, which had been roused in the adjacent forest by the knight of Frankenberg, hunted through the open gates of the cathedral, pursued by a band of chosen hunters, one of whom blew repeated blasts on the great ivory horn of Charlemagne, which had been taken from the sacristy for the purpose.

"The plan succeeded well. The wolf fled in through a postern and *out* at the great gate; on which Satan, full of rage and fury on finding himself outwitted at last, rent the wolf limb from limb, while a tempest of wind seemed to pass from the great altar through the porch.

"By this the vast bronze gates were dashed together with such violence, that they were split from top to bottom; and in memory of that event you may still see, on your return to Aix, a bronze figure on each side of the cathedral porch—one represents the unfortunate wolf which broke the spell, and the other the condemned soul of the wolf."

"In what form?" I inquired with surprise.

"In the shape of a monstrous pine-cone," replied the abbot, as he burst into a fit of laughter, and proceeded to light his huge German pipe.

We left, promising to visit him again; but on our return to Aix found we had other matters to attend to than studying the legendary sculpture of the cathedral gate.

On reaching my quarters, which were opposite the Barrier of St. James, my batman informed me that an officer had been awaiting me for some time. Batmen were then military servants, who wore the king's livery, but were excused from duty as soldiers. On entering I found, as I anticipated, Captain Stanhope, of Battereau's Foot. He arose, put his regimental cocked-hat under his left arm, bowed low, and with scrupulous politeness presented me with a sealed note.

At first I was about to tear and tread upon it; however, reflection told me that I had no reason to insult the bearer, so I perused it, and found it to be a solemn challenge from Falshaw, to meet him with sword and pistol, at any hour I might appoint, one mile from the south gate of Aix, near the Bernardine convent at Burtshied.

"Captain Stanhope," said I, "once already have I fought and punished your friend, and if I am forced to meet him again, by Heaven he shall not leave the ground alive, if I do! Enough has been done for honour; so, before answering this, I must consult with the officers of my regiment. I am not to be paraded thus at the behest of a mere bully; and I would recommend Colonel Battereau to impress upon you and upon him that portion of the Articles of War which says, 'If any commissioned officer commanding a guard shall willingly

and knowingly suffer any person whatsoever to go forth to fight a duel he shall be punished as a challenger. And likewise all seconds, promoters, and carriers of challenges, in order to duels, shall be deemed as principals, and be punished accordingly.' ”

“Among men of honour these clauses are dead letters,” replied the captain, with a supercilious smile.

“Do not pretend to misunderstand me, sir,” said I, with severity; “after evening parade you shall receive an answer through my friend the Earl of Drumlanrig; and if again I am troubled in this manner, I shall infallibly treat and punish *you* as a principal.”

He bowed and left me, on which I penned an epistle to Mr. Falshaw, who received it from Drumlanrig; and of this epistle our lieutenant-colonel, Lord Panmure, and every officer of the Scots Foot Guards, unanimously approved.

“AIX-LA-CHAPELLE, 16th March, 1743.

“SIR,—I have received your cartel, favoured by a captain of your regiment. Since the time I had the dishonour of first meeting you in London, until now, your conduct has ever convinced me that you were, and are, a scoundrel, hence to accept your challenge would degrade me to your own level.

“I have already severely punished you for the slaughter of Mr. Ruthven, whom you killed like the coward and bully you are; but the life which God has given me I could not, without being guilty of great folly or wickedness, stake against one so worthless as yours in the calm and deliberate duel to which you invite me. If you resort to posting, as 'tis very like you may, I shall at once appeal to the Earl of Stair; if you send me another challenge, I

shall fight the bearer; and if you molest or insult me in any public place, I will kill you without the slightest mercy.

“I am, sir, yours, &c.,

“GODFREY LAURISTON, Lieut.,

“Scots Foot Guards.”

“For Ensign Falshaw, of Battereau’s Regiment.”

This letter, to the immense amusement of our fellows, put Falshaw beside himself with rage; and in public he swore to have some terrible revenge. In fact, rumours concerning our quarrel spread so far that they bade fair to bring the officers of the Household Brigade into collision with those of Battereau’s Foot; but fortunately, about this time, by Lord Stair’s orders, the latter corps was detached to a village some miles distant on the Rhine, relieving the brave old Kentish Buffs, a regiment which has the exclusive right of marching through London with drums beating and colours flying, because they had once been recruited from the train bands of the English capital.

And now, regarding duels, I will close this chapter by an anecdote of William III., which was told to me by old Major Stuart of Harewoodlee.

On the evening of that day, when the King reviewed twenty battalions of Scottish infantry on the plain of Gemappe, the colonel of one of these corps waited upon him, in the name of all his officers, requesting the dismissal of one, a rigid Cameronian, who, on religious grounds, had declined to accept a challenge.

“Sir,” said King William, “tell those Scottish officers from me to attend to their own affairs, and let him of

whom they complain alone. For I have seen him *go* sword in hand where I wish they would be as ready to *follow* as they are now eager to ruin him, for his obedience to my orders and his respect for the Articles of War."

CHAPTER XVIII.

I AM SENT TO THE EMPEROR.

KING GEORGE II., accompanied by the Duke of Cumberland, having quitted London, landed at Helvoetsluys, and reached their capital city of Hanover, after which the princes of the German Confederation began to assemble their forces to join those of Britain, which had about as much interest at stake in this war as she might have in one being waged in the mountains of the moon.

On the 20th April we broke up from our cantonments, and marched from Aix-la-Chapelle—that fine old city so rich in historical associations—and traversed the duchy of Juliers.

I was still a subaltern of the company which Drumlanrig commanded as captain-lieutenant of the corps—the first, or colonel's company—and as his rank is now abolished in our service some explanation may be necessary. When captain-lieutenant, an officer took rank as full captain, and in each corps of horse or foot he led the colonel's own company or troop till he succeeded to the next in succession which lost its captain.

We marched through the Westphalian duchy of Juliers, a land of corn and fine pastures, and from thence through the electorate and city of Cologne, where the echoes of

the vast minster of St. Peter replied to the crash of our drums and cymbals. Proceeding onward, the whole army crossed the Rhine at Neuwied by a bridge of boats. Under Lieutenant-General Ligonier, the leading division, consisting of the Household Brigade and all the grenadiers, were the first to cross, and early in the month of May we reached Hochst, a small town situated in a plain three miles distant from Frankfort. This was the rendezvous of the allied armies. It lies upon the Maine and has the right of levying a toll from all vessels that pass up the river; but it was then a poor and ruinous place, having never recovered from its destruction by the Swedes of Gustavus in the Thirty Years War.

The day after we entered I attended as second Lord Drumlanrig, who went out with a brother officer; but after an exchange of shots the affair ended amicably.

Four days after our arrival and getting under canvas, I was riding alone, on the skirts of our camp, when I saw at a distance, on the other side of the Maine, vast clouds of dust rolling before the wind; and through them came at times the gleam of steel—the steady gleam which announces the advance of troops.

In a few minutes after Captain Wolfe, Stair's principal aide-de-camp, passed me at a rapid trot, accompanied by another mounted officer, who wore a white uniform, with long black boots, a black helmet, and red plume.

"Wolfe," cried I, "what troops are these?"

"The advanced guard of the Austrians, under Marshal Count Neuperg and the Duke d'Aremberg," he replied, as they passed me.

With pleasure and ardour I saw these magnificent forces, twelve thousand strong, led by the two best generals of the empire, pass through our camp, all our guards and

pickets being under arms to receive them. They marched to our extreme right and there pitched their tents.

There were the German cavalry in high helmets, long boots, and black cuirasses; the Uhlans in short blue jackets and red breeches, with sabre, pistol, and lance; Jagers in green and gold, with long rifles and little red caps; Pandours and Croats with fantastic head-dresses, braided pelisses, and strong, fleet, and wiry little horses, which seemed like ponies when beside our sturdy English troopers.

Then came the Hungarian Heyducs armed with long sabres and sharp hatchets; the Croatian hussars, with rough fur caps adorned with cock's feathers, or heron plumes, and wearing green doublets covered with braid, red breeches, and yellow boots, all well mounted and armed, with short carbines, long pistols, and sharp crooked sabres; wild-looking horsemen they were, but smart and dashing withal.

The air was filled with wild and harsh but martial music as corps after corps defiled past. Their banners bore, some the red lion of Bohemia; others were barwise argent and gules of eight pieces, for Hungary; the red flag with the white fesse showed the infantry of Austria. Some regiments had the golden castle of Castile, others the purple lion of Leon; and the cavalry of the guard had the black eagle in its golden field, with one head for the eastern, another for the western empire, and the proud motto, *Uno avulso non defecit alter*—though one be taken. another does not cease.

Our soldiers cheered repeatedly while this well-disciplined and high-spirited army marched through our camp, in all their varied costumes and brilliance of panoply and equipment.

Lord Stair received Marshal Neuperg at the head of his personal staff, with an escort of the English horse guards and Scottish horse grenadier guards, whose trumpets sounded a flourish as the marshal came up at a canter and shook hands with our gallant leader.

Our Scottish troop were what the French call *grenadiers volans*, or flying grenadiers, drilled to fight on foot or horseback, as the case might be.

It was not until the end of the month that the Hanoverians, under General Ilton, arrived and encamped on our left. I observed that all their regiments carried our Union Jack, with a large white horse upon it.

I ought to have mentioned, that two days after our arrival in Höchst I had a most honourable duty to perform, being sent by Marshal Stair with a despatch to no less a personage than his imperial Majesty Francis I., the husband of the beautiful Maria Theresa, into whose territories we had now advanced, and who then resided in the city of Frankfort.

On Lord Panmure being required to send to the staff office an officer "on whose bearing and discretion he could rely," to take a message to Frankfort, he was pleased to select me. I received the missive from the hand of Captain Wolfe, who then belonged to Lieutenant-General William Barrel's regiment, or the King's—so called because it landed with William III.

In full uniform I left the camp on horseback, and soon found myself in the beautiful and well-fortified city of Frankfort, which is here united to Sachsenhausen by a stone bridge of fourteen arches. I inquired for the palace of the Emperor, and found every one willing and anxious to serve me, the scarlet coat being a passport to the favour of all.

I reached the royal residence, which is named Braunfeld, and which once belonged to the knights of the Teutonic order. It was a large and quaint-looking fortified house; and had now around it, and at every avenue, guards of the Emperor's two favourite corps, the 8th Cuirassiers, commanded by Count Gleichen, and the Regiment of Leopold I. The former, by its bravery in the Thirty Years War, has won the honourable privilege that it shall *never* be disbanded,* and the latter having rights so singular that I may be pardoned in mentioning them here.

Whenever this corps passes near the imperial court it has the privilege of encamping there for three days. On its arrival, the colonel, if in uniform, can pass unchallenged to the chamber of the Emperor, and knocks thrice on the door to ask for orders. The Emperor then invites him to remain for three days in the royal apartments, into which the standards and quarter-guard of the corps are brought. This custom dates back to 1683. In that year, sixteen rebellious lords of Austria waited suddenly upon Leopold I., and laid before him a charter granting them absurd privileges, which they were about to force him to sign, when they were suddenly interrupted by the colonel of this regiment, who knocked thrice on the door with the hilt of his sword.

Though the traitors thought they had taken all their measures well, from a secret source this officer had heard what was on the tapis, and on entering he said significantly,—

“I seek your Majesty's orders for my regiment, which is now under arms at the gate.”

* A privilege claimed and granted during the reductions in the Austrian army, in November, 1862.

"My orders are, that you instantly behead those sixteen rebel lords," replied Leopold.

A pioneer was brought in with his axe, and in ten minutes the whole sixteen were headless.

From an outer guard of the cuirassiers, I was passed to an inner guard composed of men of this old regiment. Their uniform was white, without epaulettes or lace, and all wore bearskin caps with the imperial eagle worked upon the front flaps.

Several gentlemen in waiting next received me, and after a delay of about an hour I found myself in the presence of the Emperor Francis I. He was attended only by two officers, whom I afterwards understood to be Prince Charles of Lorraine, and Count Browne, a young Irishman, who was afterwards killed in his service in 1759.

A soldier-like man of pleasing appearance, Francis-Stephen was plainly clad in a green hunting suit, trimmed with black fur; he wore long boots and a *couteau de chasse* with a gold handle. Everything about his court and attendants seemed plain and military.

He received me graciously, and with great suavity. I could not help surveying him with deep interest as he opened and read the despatch of Lord Stair, for he was the husband of that fair empress-queen of Hungary, in whose cause we had come to do battle with France; and in their persons were founded the house of Lorraine-Austria, in which the two principal lines of Hapsburg and Lorraine, after the separation of a thousand years, and thirty-two generations, were *reunited*.

The chief defect of his face was a very thick upper lip.

The apartment in which he received me was a kind of chamber of state. At the upper end was a large gilt

chair, placed upon a dais of crimson cloth, and behind it were several banners disposed in the form of a star. One of these bore, in a blue field, the five golden larks which formed the first arms of the dukes of Austria; another bore a field gules with a fesse argent, in memory of Duke Leopold's valour at Ptolmais, where he was so covered with the blood of the Saracens, that nothing about him remained white, save his waist-belt.

The Emperor asked me in French to what branch of the British service I belonged. I replied, "Sire, the Household Brigade."

"What regiment?"

"The Scots Foot Guards."

"Monseigneur le Prince," he resumed, turning to Charles of Lorraine, "you may be curious to know the contents of the despatch brought me by our comrade—and you also, count."

The count and prince bowed.

"Marshal Stair begs us to be assured that the British troops have marched into the empire with no other view but to procure the means of restoring peace to it: that his Britannic Majesty, in appointing him commander of them," continued the Emperor, reading from the despatch, "has strictly charged him to avoid anything that might in the least affect the dignity of the head of the empire, and, therefore, that we may be assured that the march of the British troops shall be so ordered, that our residence in Frankfort will be in no way disturbed. At the same time, it will be notified to the neighbouring electoral princes, cities, bishoprics, and towns, that the Earl of Stair has no orders to act against *us*, but simply to compel the French, by force of arms, to quit our fatherland of Germany."

"'Tis well," said the prince with a smile; Count Browne smiled too, and looked at me with a kindly eye; and it seemed to me that, perhaps, the Irish soldier of fortune was thinking of *his* fatherland, far away in the West—the green isle from which thirty thousand Catholic soldiers had been banished since the siege of Limerick—to strengthen France and weaken Britain, as we found, to our cost, on the plains of Fontenoy.

"You will do me the favour to inform Marshal Stair," said the Emperor, "that I will send a fitting answer to his most kind assurance. Meanwhile, Count Browne will see that you, his half countryman, are attended to in a proper manner."

"Though he is a Scot and I an Irishman, we are full countrymen here, Sire," replied the count, with a smile, as the Emperor bowed and retired, attended by Charles of Lorraine, leaving me somewhat bewildered by his extreme condescension.

The count, one of the many brave Irish exiles with whom the armies of Europe at that time abounded, took me to his own apartments, where I was treated with the utmost politeness and hospitality. Then my horse was brought by a groom, and just as drum and bugle, cavalry trumpets, and infantry horns, ringing for miles along the tented fields, announced that the sun was setting and casting its farewell rays upon the spires of Hochst and Frankfort, I reached the marquee of Lord Stair and gave him the message of the Emperor.

*

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CAMPAIGN OPENED.

MARSHAL STAIR displayed considerable foresight in selecting Höchst as the centre of his operations, as the banks of the Maine had frequently been chosen during the wars of the empire as a strong *point d'appui* for the muster and camp of armies; for there the river, which rolls from the forests of Franconia, wound so far about as to secure the right flank and rear of our position. He encamped the allies in one long line, which extended so far that he kept open a free communication with Mentz on the right and Frankfort on the left.

He issued strict orders against marauding; but, on the other side, the French foragers pillaged on every hand, while their gastadours (or pioneers) dug up, tore down, or blew to pieces everything that came in their way.

In our rear the inhabitants concealed their provisions, on the principle, I presume, that charity began at home; while the Jews, who followed us in hordes, bought up all they could lay their hands on, and then asked such prices for the merest necessities of life, as put them quite beyond the reach of all—of subalterns and privates, certainly; thus, by the avarice of the Germans and of the “chosen people,” we soon felt in anticipation that famine which so surely follows war.

To so desperate a state did we sink at one time, that, as Voltaire relates, we proposed to hamstring our cavalry horses for want of forage. No supplies or pay reached us. Thus, on one occasion, during that portion of the

campaign, I was actually starving, and gladly exchanged the inner bullion of my epaulettes with a Jew sutler for a small loaf of bread; while Drumlanrig received, with thanks, half of a biscuit from the bugler of our light company, and Sir Henry Rose assured me that he dined most heartily on some oats which a Scots Grey was sharing with his nag, in the most fraternal manner, under the shelter of an old windmill.

The French foragers intercepted all the boats that left Hanau with bread for us; while our horses were reduced to green corn, of which they consumed twelve thousand acres, while we had but bread and water or sour wine.

Sometimes, when in misery such as this, the thought flashed upon me, What the deuce made any man mad enough to be a soldier? For it seemed to me that the poorest cottar on my lands of Lauriston, in Lothian, was better lodged and better fed than I, an officer in the Guards.

However, the King and the Duke of Cumberland having joined us in June, Lord Stair, who had only awaited their arrival in courtesy to their exalted rank, resolved to effect a junction with the division of Prince George of Hesse Cassel, who was advancing to join us.

Amid the earliest operations of the army I ventured on an expedition of great rashness, and narrowly escaped being taken by the enemy—a capture which would have ensured an ignominious death under the circumstances.

The affair occurred thus:—

The French had placed a brigade of thirty pieces of cannon in position on a wooded height above the Maine, thus commanding the Bridge of Selingenstadt, the only avenue by which any junction with Prince George of

Hesse could be effected ; and to force the passage of this bridge under their fire of round and grape-shot would have subjected us to severe loss ; yet arrangements were made for crossing, and these were the precursors to the great battle of Dettingen.

Marshal Noailles, with considerable foresight, suspected these movements *before* they were made, and on the night of the 13th moved his camp further into the dense forests which then covered all the banks of the Maine and its tributary the Aschaff ; at the same time he set on fire vast quantities of straw and wood, which made us believe that he was retreating, while, in fact, his troops were hard at work intrenching themselves.

The position of a subaltern officer seldom affords him an opportunity for winning a brilliant name, as the glory of leading on the masses of an army falls to the lot of colonels of regiments and generals of division. I could only hope by some act of deep strategy or wild daring to make the army hear of me, and particularly *one* who was at home ; and I conceived the idea, that if I could silence those thirty pieces of ordnance which commanded the Bridge of Selingenstadt I should have an opportunity, which might not again occur, of bringing my name before the world.

Attended by his favourite aide-de-camp Wolfe, Lord Stair was reconnoitring the position which the guns occupied on the evening of the 14th of June, when he approached the camp of the Household Brigade (we had not yet seen the King, who was guarded, of course, by his favourite Hanoverians), and Panmure, Drumlanrig, and others of our corps and the English Guards, crowded about the commander-in-chief.

I was standing somewhat apart from this distinguished

group, and was watching with interest the pale and rather sad face of Stair; while the dark story of Drumlanrig, and then my own bold project, occurred to me when I heard the earl say, while shaking the curls of his Ramillies wig, as he gathered up his reins preparatory to moving off, "Yes, yes, Panmure; if I could but silence those guns on the height, the junction which the King wishes us to effect with Prince George might be made, especially in the night, with a very different result as to killed and wounded."

"My lord," said I, pressing forward, "if fifty picked men of our brigade will follow me in the night, I will undertake to silence those guns effectually."

"How, sir?" said the earl, pausing.

"By spiking them."

"Nay, sir," said the earl; "this attempt would be the extreme of rashness; they are posted on a height above the river, and the wood between them and us is so full of troops that a thousand men could not force a passage through it, so that you and your handful of soldiers would be completely swallowed up. I once crossed the river with Wolfe and a few others," he added, laughing, "and have no ambition to do so again, save at the head of the army."

The marshal referred to an affair on the 8th, when, with 300 of the Scots Greys, he and Wolfe had crossed the Maine to reconnoitre, and fell into an ambush of dismounted hussars, who fired briskly on them. Stair received a ball through his hat; Wolfe got a slight wound; three of the Greys were killed, and the whole escaped with great difficulty, very much to the regret of the King and Duke of Cumberland, who viewed with jealousy the skill and popularity of the earl, whom

ultimately they were determined to affront and, if possible, ruin.

"However, sir," he resumed, "I thank you for the brave offer, and it shall not be forgotten."

"Under favour, my lord," I continued, piqued to perceive that some who were about us were exchanging smiles of envy or incredulity, "I conceive it quite possible to spike or take the linchpins out of the enemy's guns, and so render them totally unserviceable, at least, for a time."

"The idea itself is worth promotion to you. But who will undertake a task so desperate?"

"I will, my lord."

"You!"

"I have said so."

"If taken, you will be put to death, so surely as my name is John of Stair!"

"Nevertheless, I shall risk it."

"You are——"

"Lieutenant Lauriston, my lord," said the Earl of Panmure, now formally introducing me.

"Beware, Godfrey," whispered Drumlanrig with great earnestness; "this is a rashness of which I could never have suspected you."

"Lauriston—Lieutenant Lauriston," said Stair ponderingly, as he let his bridle hand rest on his gold-laced holster flap.

"Of that ilk in Lothian," added Sir Henry Rose.

"Ah, true," said Stair, fixing his keen eyes on me, "I knew your father well. The good laird was a true and stout Scotsman of the old school. He was out in the '15, and carried off all my horses, to mount a troop under Lord Kenmure. Many a bottle of claret he has

drunk with me at Newliston. I remember that he was offered a baronetcy——”

“To vote for the Union, in his place in Parliament.”

“But he refused——”

“And from that hour was a marked man,” said I.

“Then you will undertake this daring deed—to spike those guns?”

“With ardour and with hope, my lord. I would, however, prefer to remove the linchpins, lest the clink of a hammer might discover me.”

“Your promotion shall be my future care; but remember, that to reach the French lines by the bridge is impossible, and all the boats have been sunk or burned by their gastadours.”

“Except one, my lord, which is moored on our side of the Maine, near the junction of the Aschaff,” said Captain Wolfe, who had been regarding me with considerable admiration.

“Where an outlying picket is stationed?”

“Yes—the picket has the boat, a mere skiff, in charge.”

“Ah—I remember now; Wolfe, what a memory you have!” said the marshal as he drew forth his note-book, and after writing on one of the leaves, tore it out, and handed me the following order:—

“The officer commanding the outlying picket on the river, near the mouth of the Aschaff, is hereby commanded to give the bearer hereof the use of the skiff which is now moored there in his charge.—14th June.

“STAIR.”

“Will that do, Mr. Lauriston?”—he asked.

“Exactly, my lord.”

"Be wary, be prudent; save yourself if you can, and I shall never forget you!" he exclaimed as he and Wolfe rode off.

"This order is your death warrant!" said several of my brother officers with vehemence, as they gathered round me and became silent, for discussion was worse than useless now.



CHAPTER XX.

TREACHERY.

I CANNOT have the vanity to suppose that Lord Stair fully relied upon the success of my daring scheme; yet it would seem that, consequent thereto, the following orders were issued on that night from head-quarters.

"At morning gunfire to-morrow, every tent shall be struck, and the troops must remain under arms until daybreak, when they will march from the right in two columns, taking the places assigned them in the line of battle.

"The baggage to follow in rear of the artillery.

"It is His Majesty's pleasure, that the three battalions of British guards, and the four of Lunenburg which covered the head-quarters (protecting the royal person), together with twenty-six squadrons of Hanoverian cavalry under General Ilton, with some pieces of artillery, will bring up the rear, as it is upon that point, after the river is crossed, that the French may be expected to attempt anything."

As night closed in I prepared for my solitary and

desperate expedition. Knowing that the clink of a hammer would be distinctly heard by the French sentinels if I attempted to spike the guns which commanded the bridge, I abandoned that idea entirely, and resolved, by withdrawing the linchpins, to render them unserviceable. For this purpose I provided myself with a pair of large pinchers, which I procured from our regimental armourer-sergeant.

I carefully loaded my pistols and placed them in my belt, together with a *couteau de chasse*. For my gay scarlet uniform, I substituted the dress of a German peasant, and after bidding farewell to Panmure, Drumlanrig, old Major Stuart, Rose, and others, who crowded to my tent, as soon as darkness had set completely in I obtained from the adjutant-general the parole and countersign, that there might be no difficulty about my *returning*, and, leaving the camp, set out on my purpose alone.

After passing the outer chain of sentinels which guarded the camp, the loneliness of the country and the desperation of the service on which I had so rashly volunteered, filled my heart with oppressive thoughts for a time.

If discovered—if taken, I should be shot without a moment of respite or mercy. Shot! Might I not suffer a more ignominious death? This thought made my heart stand still. It caused me to pause and waver, but not to return; for the die was cast, my honour pledged, and I was compelled to proceed.

In my rear rose the hum of our far-extended camp; the neigh of a horse or the occasional beat of a drum alone broke sharply the silence of the night, which was clear and starry.

The moon—I could well have spared her—arose in great beauty, but fortunately she was waning, and her light would not last long. I could see the clouds, white as snow, rolling away before a soft west wind, like masses of finely-carded wool. The moon edged them with shining silver, and silver, too, tipped every ripple and wavelet of the Maine.

From an eminence I could see the red lights of the French watchfires, dotting all the level country far beyond the river. On the bosom of the latter I saw the shadow of the long stone bridge inverted, and so clearly that every arch seemed by reflection to form a complete circle; and the old castle, which an archbishop of Mentz built in the twelfth century, towered in sombre mass above the shining stream.

As the pale moon sank low, and from the horizon cast her level light over the far extent of somewhat flat and open country, the shadows deepened and blended; and, when she disappeared, there spread over all the landscape a darkness greater than before, but all the more suited to my purpose, and I hastened towards the post of the out-picket referred to in my order.

Where the Maine was very deep and sixty yards in breadth, I found the picket four miles eastward of Dettingen; there the country is level, but a few leagues farther on it becomes mountainous and woody.

The sudden challenge of a sentinel in English, and the rattle of his musket as he “ported arms,” announced my vicinity to the picket, and on drawing nearer I found the soldiers who composed it all muffled in their great coats, and lounging on the grass near their pile of arms, while their two officers were seated beside a drum, on the head of which, as a substitute for a table, they

were playing with cards by the light of a lantern, and, from what I overheard when approaching, the stakes seemed to be all going *one* way.

But judge of my annoyance when I found the officers of this outlying picket to be Captain Stanhope and Ensign Falshaw of Battereau's Foot. To the former I presented my order which gave me the use of the skiff and permission to pass and repass the river.

"For what purpose?" demanded Stanhope, with a bluntness perhaps warranted by the occasion; "and who are you that wish to approach the enemy's lines?"

"Lauriston of the Scots Foot Guards, by all the devils!" exclaimed Falshaw, as he rudely held the lantern close to my face. "Are you going to a masked ball to-night? I have heard that Madame le Maréchal Noailles was in the French camp with a choice bevy of girls from Paris."

Disdaining to take the slightest notice of the speaker, I still kept my eyes on his senior officer, and said,—

"Captain Stanhope, for my purpose I must refer you to the Earl of Stair; in the meantime I can only insist upon obedience to his orders."

"Insist—damme!" said the captain, angrily; "oh, very well. Mr. Falshaw, see Mr. Lauriston to the boat; at the same time he must do me the favour of permitting me to retain the order——"

"As your warrant?"

"Yes."

"Most certainly," said I, handing him the pencilled scrap of paper. "Have the French any sentinels on the opposite side of the river?"

"Many; but none nearer than half a mile or so."

"Thanks," said I, and descended the bank towards the Maine, accompanied by Falshaw and the sergeant of

the picket. Knowing well the treachery of which the former was capable, I kept a hand upon one of my pistols, which was ready cocked, and with which I would have shot him on the slightest attempt to molest me.

But this worthy had a much deeper object in view. The boat was a small skiff, having two short oars or sculls, which lay across the thwarts. The sergeant unmoored it, and at the moment I stepped on board I saw Falshaw stoop down and place his right hand under the stern seat, as if searching for something; but at that time I took no notice of his doing so. I shoved off, and, as the river was running at some speed, proceeded to scull across at an angle with the current, keeping the head of the skiff somewhat up the stream.

"Bon voyage!" cried Falshaw, mockingly.

The boat seemed leaky, though quite new, and before it was half way across I was more than ankle deep in water.

I pulled with vigour and anxiety; but the water continued to rise so rapidly that the weight of the boat baffled my strength; and now, by a bubbling sound, I discovered the leak to be under the stern sheets, where the water was pouring in through a bilge hole, from which Falshaw had withdrawn *the plug* when he stooped so mysteriously.

Fierce passion swelled my heart on discovering this act of cowardice and treachery, yet there was no course for me but to proceed. With a cocked pistol in my hand I scanned the bank of the river, but all was darkness there, save where the lantern of the picket glimmered among the trees like a glow-worm; and to have fired, even had Falshaw been within a yard of me, would have brought out every picket under arms on both sides of the Maine.

Pulling with all my strength I at last reached the French side, and landed under the shadow of some thick overhanging bushes. These I gladly grasped, for at that moment the boat, which was nearly full of water, seemed to pass from under me, as it sank to the bottom of the stream !

At the same time I could hear the mocking chuckle of Falshaw, as he exclaimed to the sergeant of the picket,—

“ Sink me, if the boat is not gone to the bottom by this time ! ”

My retreat was thus completely cut off, and I found myself hopelessly at the mercy of the enemy if discovered.

In that case, being out of uniform, I should be suspected of espionage and put to death. On the other hand, if by skilful concealment I escaped capture, I should lose all the glory of the next day's general engagement, and this double misfortune I owed to Falshaw.

The bitterness of my soul against this man filled me with fiendish thoughts ; however, no other course was open to me then but to attempt the fulfilment of the task I had undertaken while time and darkness served.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FRENCH CAMP.

So far as I could judge, I had landed about a mile above the bridge of Selingenstadt, on the height near which thirty of the largest guns of the French army were, as already stated, in position. As I leaped ashore all was silent; I heard only the ripple of the Maine, as it chafed against the rocks or the roots of the leafy old chestnut trees; and as my boat was lost, there was no occasion for me to take any marks or bearings of the place, by which to find it again, or even to return that way.

As I crept stealthily up the bank, and proceeded through what appeared to be an orchard, various sounds reached my ear. These were the challenges of the French sentinels; the neighing of the troop and artillery horses, and the occasional sound of hoofs, as a mounted officer or dragoon passed rapidly from one portion of the camp to another on midnight duty.

Of how the enemy were encamped or cantoned I had but a vague idea. I only knew that the country was covered with wood—that it was full of the French. From the summit of a slight eminence above the river I could see innumerable watch-fires glaring redly among the fields, the hedge-rows and thickets; and around these, and between them and me, were the dark and indistinct figures of the soldiers passing to and fro, singly or in groups.

Then at times, a sword, a bayonet, or a bright musket barrel would flash in the wavering gleam; and ever and anon, an order, a challenge, or the scrap of a Parisian

song rang upon the night; and somehow, it seemed to me, that instead of reposing, unfortunately for my scheme, the whole French camp was astir.

The reason of this I will afterwards explain.

Creeping along the side of a hedge that bordered a field on one side, and enclosed a thicket on the other,—a wood, which partly covered the height whereon I knew the guns were posted, I had proceeded nearly half a mile without interruption, when suddenly the rattle of a musket, and the challenge, "*Qui vive?*" made me pause, and shrink flat on the ground.

Close by me, I could see a soldier of the French Foot Guards cocking his musket with unpleasant rapidity, and instantly I grasped a pistol. He was not more than ten paces from me, at the angle of the hedge where it turned abruptly off towards the river, and stooping low, he seemed to be gazing about him with a keenness of scrutiny which showed that he had either heard or seen me.

"Bah!" said he, suddenly, as he half cocked and shouldered his musket, and resumed his monotonous walk upon his post, supposing that his ears had deceived him; and when he was farthest from me I crept through the hedge, and entering the wood proceeded to ascend the height on which the guns stood, and the summit of which was an open plateau.

"If I find there a strong artillery guard," was my next idea; but it had scarcely occurred to me, when between the stems of the chestnuts which covered half of the hill I saw the blaze of two large watch-fires, and around them, muffled in great coats and blankets, were several hundred men, whom by their uniform I knew to be French artillerists of the Guard; and I correctly sur-

mised that the soldier who had challenged me, and whose fire I had so nearly drawn upon myself, was one of their chain of advanced sentinels. Thus I deemed myself safe in proceeding, as these men were evidently attached to the very brigade of guns I was in quest of.

On looking at my watch I found that in two hours day would break, and that I must make quick work with my project or abandon it altogether.

The morning was still dark as night, and cold, singularly so for the month of June; but I felt it not. Anxiety and the toil of creeping so far in a crouching position—at times often on my hands and knees—had bathed me in perspiration, and I was trembling in every limb, when at last I reached the plateau, where the thirty pieces of cannon, all twenty-four pounders, stood in a quarter circle, with their dark muzzles pointed to the long bridge and main street of Selingenstadt—each gun with a tumbril unlimbered in its rear.

I was overpowered with thirst, but found a little runnel of water, and near it a tin *coupelle*, as those shovels by which the French gunners fill their cartridges are named, and with it, I obtained a grateful draught of water.

I could see the Maine as it were at my feet, and its bosom wore a white or milky hue, owing to some peculiarity of the atmosphere; but the old stone bridge looked black and sombre, and far away beyond it stretched for miles the flat and darkened landscape, dotted by the lights and fires of our camp, which was in the midst of rich orchards and full bearing vineyards. Four miles from the camp, Lord Stair and General Sir James Campbell occupied a strong stone château with a troop of the Horse Guards.

Two French sentinels, whose duty it was evidently to watch the path which led from the artillery bivouac below to the impromptu battery above, were conversing together, and laughing merrily at the distance of about one hundred and fifty paces from the guns, under which I crept, and with my pincers set to work.

The task of drawing the linchpin, an iron bolt which passed through the end of the axle-tree, proved easier than I anticipated, as the wheels had evidently been all recently well oiled for active service.

Proceeding from gun to gun, by creeping on my hands and knees underneath them, I drew forth one linchpin from each.

Commencing on the left, in less than ten minutes, I had extracted fourteen, when a sudden sound startled me, and I perceived a company of gunners approaching double-quick from the bivouac below.

Up they came rapidly, and traversing the plateau in threes, took their positions alongside some of the guns on the *right* flank—those which I had not yet touched. Then I heard the words of command given hoarsely by a mounted officer to “limber up, and seize the drag-ropes.” Then the tumbrils were hooked on, the magazines opened, and the guns prepared for service.

Had they taken any of the guns which I had unlinched, on the left flank, the chances are that I could not have escaped discovery; but now, amid the noise and bustle of these preparations, I crept away in safety, gained the wood undiscovered, and cast the linchpins into a bush.

I had succeeded in rendering fourteen of these important cannon unserviceable for the duty of the coming day! I rejoiced in this conviction—but thoughts of Falshaw, of the coming battle from which I might be

absent, and of my desperate situation in the heart of the enemy's camp, now crowded upon me. What was I to do? Attempt to swim the river, at the risk of being shot at by the French sentinels on one side and perhaps by our own on the other. There the Maine was sixty yards broad. I did not feel myself quite a Leander, and mistrusted alike my strength and skill as a swimmer.

Should I wait in concealment until the morning gun was fired, and when, as the orders of the preceding night stated, our troops were to move off from the right, and cross the bridge of Selingenstadt? Then, in the turmoil of the attack, I might have an opportunity of rejoining my regiment.

While these thoughts flashed in succession upon me, I reached the hedgerow through which I had first crept, and found that all the sentinels had been withdrawn; that two large fires, which burned in a field beyond, were now almost extinguished; and that the groups which had been around them were gone.

Scattering the red embers with their hoofs, a squadron of heavy cavalry, all wearing cuirasses, crossed the field at a hard trot; then I heard voices in various directions hoarsely shouting orders and instructions, but not a drum was beaten or a trumpet sounded; and from all these indications I correctly surmised that some secret movements were about to be made by Marshal Noailles.

The heavy tramp of a vast body of troops on the march now assured me of this, and ere long, within twenty paces of where I lurked within the friendly cover of a shrubbery, several battalions in heavy marching order defiled past. The men had their great-coats rolled on the tops of their knapsacks; their skirts were

all buttoned back, and the regimental colours were all uncased and flying. From these three indications, I was certain they expected to be soon engaged, and they moved in such silence and order that scarcely a whisper was heard in their ranks. This was unusual in the French, who, when on the line of march, usually chatter like so many magpies.

When the rear of the last battalion was past I crept forth, and, after a glance at the flints and priming of my pistols, the necessity for doing something by which to achieve my escape and return made me issue into more open ground, and I was turning hopelessly but instinctively towards the bank of the Maine, when suddenly a voice cried,—

“Halte-là! mon ami!”

I turned, and found myself face to face with an officer, who had his sheathed sword in his left hand, and who wore the uniform of the French Foot Guards.



CHAPTER XXII.

AN OLD FRIEND.

AFTER the danger I had dared, the risks I had run, the task I had so nearly completed, was I to fail now—to perish, and chiefly by the duplicity of a slave like Falshaw? I drew a pistol from my belt, on which the Frenchman, who evidently believed me to be a German boor, said with great coolness,—

“Stop, my friend, and leave your little pop-gun where it is. I do not mean to molest you, but merely to beg a favour.”

"What favour? I have none to grant."

"A light for my pipe,—nothing more."

"Excuse me, monsieur; I am no smoker, and have none."

"*Diable!* that is odd for a German; permit me to look at you," added he, seizing me by the collar. "*Tête Dieu!* You are no German, but an Englishman!"

"Etienne d'Anterroche!" I exclaimed, on recognizing my London friend. "Count, you must remember me; we have met before."

I took off my boor's fur cap, on which he withdrew his grasp, and said, in a bewildered and somewhat indignant manner,—

"*Mon Dieu!* what is this? Monsieur Lauriston in the character of an *explorateur!*"

As he said this, the handsome face of the young Frenchman, who had deep, dark eyes, a straight nose, and black moustache, became clouded with doubt and anger.

"For heaven's sake, count, do not think so injuriously of me," I exclaimed; for the offensive term he had used, in the French military sense means a regular spy.

"Then what am I to say—how term you?" he asked, while presenting his hand; "what rashness brings you here, and out of uniform too?"

"Count, I cannot explain," I stammered with shame, irritation, and perplexity in my heart and tone.

"Are you escaping? If so——"

"I have never been a prisoner," said I, hastily, "and I trust you will not seek to make me one."

"Be assured of that, my friend; I have never forgotten the good services you rendered me when in London."

"Services——"

"*Ah, mon Dieu!*—yes. Have you forgotten how you

saved me from the swords of Falshaw and his *coquinaille* in the gaming-house in Drury Lane?"

"That man is my evil genius," said I, bitterly.

"Did you cross the river to reconnoitre?"

"No," I replied, with hesitation.

"Then you must have lost your way?"

"No, count, I have not."

"How, monsieur? You surprise me!" said d'Anterroche, with some coolness of manner.

"I can only tell you, M. le Comte, that, through the perfidy of that rascal Falshaw, who now disgraces our army with his presence and of whom I am the victim, I run the imminent risk of being taken prisoner."

"Not if I can prevent it," replied the count, for what I said was truth, and bore conviction with it; so to the Frenchman's mind, a new idea readily occurred. "Ah, I see—*Tête Dieu!* how dull I have been! 'Tis a little love affair; in what way can I assist you?"

"By getting me across the river," said I, glad of the new construction put upon my presence on the wrong side of the Maine.

"So you have forgotten Mademoiselle Hyde already, and have been following the plump frauleins of Germany, with their snowy skins and pea-green eyes—eh? *Bon!* 'tis the fashion of all services, I suppose. Their fair skins here have made me well nigh forget some very fine eyes that looked sad enough on the morning we marched from Versailles. But there will be a considerable difficulty in getting you across the river; we have no boats, and a picket has possession of the bridge."

"We shall be engaged to-morrow!" said I, with vexation.

"To-day, perhaps—we are but an hour from dawn."

"At such a time, count, could I be absent from my regiment with honour?"

"Such an idea cannot be entertained for a moment," replied the Frenchman; "a general action will be a gay affair!"

"A bloody one, too," said I, gravely.

"Perhaps. My stomach has often digested the tough rations of the most Christian King; but cold iron—ugh! Something must be done—I cannot leave you thus, *mon camarade*, and my own time is precious, as I am the bearer of a most urgent letter from Maréchal Noailles to the Duc de Grammont. Beelzebub! what shall we do? Ouf! what have we here?" he exclaimed, as we both stumbled over a heap of something in the dark.

This something proved to be a soldier, with his wife and child, fast asleep under a blanket beside a hedge.

"A corporal of the Royal Cantabres and his squaw, drunk, both, by the soul of Bacchus! Here, M. Lauriston—help me! Off with his coat and cap; in these you will pass muster well enough till we reach the bridge of Selingenstadt. After that you must shift for yourself, my friend."

The Royal Cantabres were a regiment newly raised by Louis XV. in Biscay and Asturia, the ancient Cantabria; and as the French knew not their language, I might, as D'Anterroche observed, reply in any jargon I chose, if questioned.

"Quick!" said he, "we have not a moment to lose. There are the trumpets of the Mousquetaires, sounding à *cheval*; in half an hour the whole army will be in motion."

"For what purpose?"

"It would be as unfair for me to say, as it is of you to ask," retorted the count, with a polite smile.

"True—pardon me."

By this time we had tumbled the Biscayner out of his great coat—a long and ample garment of coarse grey cloth, having a scarlet tippet and cuffs. It completely enveloped me; and his head-dress, a heavy three-cocked hat, having a tuft of red worsted at each angle, completed my disguise.

"Follow me," said D'Anterroche; "we need not fear now. I can pass you through our men, and luckily the Cantabres are cantoned far in our rear."

My heart was relieved of a load, and I followed D'Anterroche closely, as if I had been his shadow, and reckoned that within an hour at furthest I should be again with my regiment.

At least twenty times within as many minutes I heard the words for the night given and received as we passed the sentinels of different corps and divisions; and I remember that the parole was "St. Louis," the countersign "Bayard."

The whole army was gradually getting under arms and striking their tents, rolling up the canvas, and storing the pegs, cords, and mallets in sacks; unpiling their muskets, taking the hammerstalls from their locks, and forming by companies and battalions—by troops and squadrons; and on all sides I heard the calling of the rolls by lantern light. That some great movement was at hand, was evident; and this added to my anxiety to rejoin—to escape, I might say, as yet.

Guided by D'Anterroche, I passed unquestioned through the centre of the French infantry and all their advanced sentinels, the last of whom was posted within twenty paces of the bridge of Selingenstadt; then, at the moment we reached it, I could hear more than a

hundred French drummers beating their *batterie de tambour* (which is the same as our *generale*) on their side of the Maine, while the boom of the morning gun pealed through the air on *ours*.

Day was breaking!

As stated in Lord Stair's orders of the previous evening, this was the signal on which every tent was to be struck, and when the whole British army should get under arms.

"The game—the great game is beginning," said D'Anterroche; "and with the intercession of those two blessed saints, gunpowder and shot, we Frenchmen are vain enough to hope we shall win it. I have some wine in my flask; drink with me, M. Lauriston, ere we part."

I drank of his flask gratefully.

"Ah," said I, "how delicious this wine is!"

"More so than the lips of the prettiest fraulein in Germany—eh?" said the gay Frenchman.

"To a thirsty dog like me, perhaps it is."

"Farewell, monsieur! The way to your own line is open now; and if ever you have an opportunity, do me the favour to run through the body that rascally *spadassin*, who deceived you, and once so nearly assassinated me."

"Adieu, count, adieu! with heartfelt thanks for all your kindness! We shall meet again——"

"True, *mon ami*," said the Frenchman, with something of pathos in his tone; "we shall meet, with many who never more shall part, yonder, on the plains of Dettingen!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEFORE THE BATTLE.

I RUSHED across the bridge, and gladly threw away the great-coat and hat of the Cantabre (what a frightful odour of garlic and tobacco they had!), but I disrobed only in time to escape being shot by an Irish sentinel of the Old Buffs, who was about to fire *before* demanding the parole. I soon reached the quarters of the Household Brigade and found that my servant had struck my tent; so that I had to change my costume and resume my uniform in an open field, amid all the hurry and bustle of decamping, just as the grey dawn began to steal across the sky, and to cast forward in black outline the dusky windmills and slender spires of Hochst and Frankfort-on-the-Maine.

My heart was full of gratitude to young Etienne the Count d'Anterroche, whose light-hearted gaiety made him so loveable and pleasant a companion; and my desire that *he* at least should escape the dangers of the coming strife was sincere and devout.

I was warmly welcomed by my comrades of all ranks; by none more than Drumlanrig, Panmure, and old Stuart of Harewoodlee, whom I found squatted under a hedge, breakfasting on bread and eggs, broiled on the camp fire, and washed down with Rhine wine, and in the jollity of his heart he was about to sing his favourite

"Here we be, Scots soldiers three," &c.,

when, just as I had finished my toilet, and resumed

my sash, sword and gorget, Lord Stair, followed by Captain Wolfe, came up at a gallop.

"So you have returned, Mr. Lauriston," said the earl, grasping my hand; "returned and in safety, I trust?"

"After great peril, my lord, and after having my retreat cut off by an act of the most foul treachery."

"Treachery!" reiterated the earl with surprise.

"But that I shall relate to your lordship hereafter."

"And the guns above the bridge?"

"I have disabled fourteen of them—the rest I could not accomplish. But be assured, my lord, that the *whole* French army is now in motion, and that some great manœuvre is about to be essayed."

"We are prepared for anything; and from this day, Mr. Lauriston, consider me your friend," replied Stair, as he warmly shook my hand. "What corps is that which is now closing to the front?"

Wolfe gazed steadily into the dusky light of the grey dawn, by which we could see a body of cavalry moving slowly in dense column.

"It is the 8th Imperial Cuirassiers," replied the aide.

"Commanded by Rudiger Count Gleichen."

"Yes, my lord."

"Then I have a special order for him," said the earl, as they galloped off.

To none save Drumlanrig did I speak of Falshaw, and then dismissed him from my mind, with the hope that a stray bullet might rid me of him for ever; but as the out-pickets were withdrawn and rejoined their corps double-quick, he passed our flank, and a flush of astonishment crossed his bloated visage on seeing me with my company, in full uniform and spontoon in hand.

In five minutes after this, the brigade was formed, and

in the excitement of the great day we anticipated, the toil and dangers, the lack of repose, and all the stirring events of the past night were forgotten by me, as I joined the company of Drumlanrig, and we gave a loud hurrah, with the usual ruffle on the drums, on the approach of Charles Duke of Marlborough, who was to lead the household troops into action.

Marshal Noailles anticipated to the fullest extent the proposed movements of our army, and suddenly sent across the river by the bridge of Selingenstadt, a strong column under the Duc de Grammont, to prevent our junction with the Prince of Hesse; while to bar the passage of the Maine against us elsewhere he marched twelve thousand men on Aschaffenburg, by which he calculated on leaving us no retreat, if forced to retire. Among the latter force, was a portion of the Irish Brigade.

It was De Grammont's division, thirty thousand strong, which I had seen on the march down the left bank of the Maine, where they proceeded in profound silence through the woods, and after making a long detour his infantry passed by the bridge, while his cavalry, the cuirassiers, the mousquetaires, and others, crossed by the fords, or by swimming their horses over; while, for greater celerity of movement, all their baggage was left in the rear.

The brigade of guns on the height above the bridge of Selingenstadt began firing to cover the advance of the French into the fields beyond, and sent a few round shot at Battereau's regiment, which was in an exposed situation; but, by our telescopes, we could soon see that the greatest confusion prevailed among the gunners and their ordnance, which were falling down right and left, and to pieces apparently, as the unlinched wheels were shaken

off by the recoil of the carriages or the concussion of the explosion.

Thus fourteen of them soon lay on the ground, impeding the operations of the rest, and exciting the rage and astonishment of the gunners and their officers. So far, at least, my scheme was of service; but ere long the French got into position many other guns, the shot from which came booming across the river, while the pale blue smoke of their discharge was incessantly curling up amid the green summer foliage that covered all the landscape, until it floated upward to melt into the sky.

So it seemed that we would have to fight the French upon our side of the Maine, instead of theirs.

Our regiment and the others of the Household Brigade had an unusually clean and soldierly appearance on this morning, as all the clothing was new. The scarlet coats were broadly lapelled with blue, and had short sleeves, with a wide cuff that came up to the elbow; while the deep skirts were cut square to cover the thigh. The waistcoats were scarlet; the breeches were pale blue, with white gaiters buckled above the knee.

We had tall grenadier caps; but the other two corps had hats that were cocked low, with white lace round the edge; and our hair was worn full, and curled lower than the ear, on each side of the face. Every private had a sword in addition to his bayonet; and every officer and sergeant carried a pike. Such was the aspect of the British Foot Guards at Dettingen.

During the cannonading our army was in full march for that place, by the way of Klein Osten, for there the enemy were forming in order of battle.

The British cavalry led the way, followed by Gleichen's Cuirassiers, and other Austrian horse; then came our

infantry, and then that of the Austrians, while our brigade, with the Lunenburg Guards, and Ilton's Hanoverian Horse, were ordered to make a countermarch to prevent the French from Aschaffenburg attacking the rear of our marching army.

At five o'clock in the morning, and before we had moved, Captain Wolfe came up, with his horse covered with mud and foam, and saluted the Duke of Marlborough. We were then massed in contiguous close columns of regiments.

"The general order of last night remains unaltered," said the young aide-de-camp, who was almost breathless—probably this was the hundredth message he had borne upon the spur during that busy morning—"but my instructions are, that your grace's brigade must form line, and take ground to the right, lest the enemy approach from Aschaffenburg.

"In the usual order?"

"Yes; the English Guards on the right, Scots Guards on the left, Coldstream in the centre; and the *whole* to the right of the Lunenburg Guards."

"Good," said the duke, as Wolfe saluted with his sword and dashed off with some similar message to General Ilton.

We rapidly formed line; then pouches were opened, and the order was passed along from flank to flank.

"Examine your flints, ammunition, and priming."

But no attack was made, and for a time we remained quietly conversing in low tones, or in that silence which so usually pervades an army before a general action, for it is a time of solemnity even to the most thoughtless and heedless.

Meanwhile the summer sun came forth in all his

morning splendour; the wide blue sky was without a cloud, and the green foliage of the woods of Lower Franconia was rustling pleasantly in the soft west wind. Few that looked on the sweet face of nature, on the fertility of the landscape that was smiling under that bright summer sun, could imagine what dire work was about to ensue amid those waving yellow cornfields and fruitful orchards, where the red apples were turning mellow, and where the merry birds were singing; and that so surely as the clocks struck in the quaint old spires of Aschaffenburg and Selingenstadt, ere nightfall—yea, long ere sunset—many a human soul would have learned the dread secret of death and immortality!

An hour passed slowly; we saw nothing of the enemy; and now some of our more heedless subalterns planted their spontoons in the turf, and betook them to leapfrog and other frivolities in rear of the line, exciting the men to laughter.

I was in rear of my company while Drumlanrig was at its head. I looked frequently at him, for there occurred to me an idea that would not be thrust aside—Should we *both* be alive and untouched at the close of this eventful day?

The excitement of the scene around us, the martial array and formation of a vast army into brigades and divisions, had developed to the full the excitability of his somewhat nervous temperament; thus his dark eye was unusually bright and keen, his olive cheek had an unwonted flush, and his manner was by turns over gay and over serious.

The dreadful episode which had happened in his family, and which has been related elsewhere, cast a shade over his mind, and caused him to dread anything

that might excite his spirit or temper; and thus often when at dinner I have pressed him to take more wine, he has shaken his head with a sad smile and wisely refrained.

The booming of the cannon across the river now became louder.

"Hah," said I, "that is the voice of the enemy."

"Well, Godfrey," he observed, "this is your maiden battle, but I have had the good luck to see the ranks of an enemy before this, and know that in an hour or less many a fine fellow who stands beside us, erect and fearless, will be a stiff and mangled corpse; but this foreknowledge has no gloom for me, my friend."

"Because you are a tried soldier," said I, somewhat surprised by the gravity of his manner.

"Nay," he replied, "it is because my now total separation from Letty deprives life of half its charms, and war of all its terrors."

"But you have her still to live for and to win," said I, in a voice that became almost broken, as I felt, that whether I lived or not, she would never be won by me; "but here comes Captain Wolfe again, and mounted on a fresh horse, too!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

DETTINGEN.

THE aide-de-camp came to acquaint us that the enemy was in position, and that the whole of the allied cavalry had passed the river.

"Where?" I heard Marlborough and Panmure inquire.

"At Klein (or little) Osten, by a narrow bridge which Marshal Noailles has forgotten either to secure or to blow up; but being too far in advance of our infantry they have received orders to halt and let them pass to the front. Your grace will therefore fall back, and, after crossing the river, get your brigade into position on the right of the first line. Marshal Stair having made *all* his dispositions," added Wolfe with a peculiar smile, "his Majesty the King will *now* take command of the army."

"His Majesty?" reiterated the duke and Panmure, with ill-concealed surprise and annoyance as they glanced at each other inquiringly.

"Yes; for such is his royal will and pleasure," replied the aide-de-camp, as he wheeled round his horse, and galloped off at his usual break-neck pace.

Marching in all haste, we soon crossed the Maine by the quaint old bridge of Klein Osten, and in doing so were at times so near some of the French, that we actually conversed with them, and much good-humoured banter was exchanged; but, as yet, not a musket-shot fired.

We rapidly cleared the bridge, and some cavalry having been seen hovering on our right flank, we formed

close column, and advanced through the fields, treading down the ripening corn, no doubt to the dismay of its poor owners; while galloping squadrons of horse and rattling brigades of artillery burst through the green hedgerows and teeming vineyards, trampling everything to ruin, and furrowing up the soil as they pressed to the front.

Our hearts now became inspired by ardour and impatience, when, on advancing into the open plain, we could see the whole of the French army, 58,000 strong, extending in two lines between Dettingen and Welsheim, and far away towards the mountains of Franconia, with all their gay white uniforms, and all their bayonets, pikes, sabres, and bright appointments, glittering in the clear sunshine; while the many standards that waved on the wind by pairs marked at intervals the centres of the various corps.

They were a mile distant, and the music of their bands playing various lively airs came floating towards us through the orchards and waving cornfields.

The household troops of King Louis were in the centre. Those were the fine old French Guards, the most select men of the army—corps in which no native of Piedmont, Strasbourg, Savoy, or Alsace could hold a commission.

There was a small third line, or rear-guard, where the field artillery was posted.

They presented a glorious spectacle; but our army could not have appeared less so to them, as Lord Stair marshalled us in two such lines as the broken and woody nature of the ground over which we marched would admit.

We were still advancing in close columns of regiments,

when that fine old officer, the Earl of Crawford-Lindsay, who had once served as a soldier of fortune with the Imperialists against the Turks, and who was now our adjutant-general and colonel of the Scottish Horse Guards, said to the Duke of Marlborough, as he galloped past, "It is his Majesty's orders that the brigade of Guards shall deploy from close column into line, with the Coldstreams in the centre. We shall be engaged in ten minutes!"

On this the bugle sounded a *halt*.

"Stand fast, the Grenadiers," cried the Earl of Panmure, making his horse curvet, while he faced us as coolly as if we had been on parade in Pall Mall; "remaining companies to the left face" (our ranks were then, and for long after, three deep); "quick, march!"

"Front, turn—forward, gentlemen; halt—dress up!" were the words given by each captain in succession.

"Dress by the colours; officers, dress the ranks with your spontoons!" cried Lord Panmure.

Immediately after this we advanced again. Then the drums of the First Guards commenced to beat the English March, while ours struck up the Scottish; and thus, with each drummer rattling away on the flank of his company, we rapidly advanced into action.

Marshal Stair, who wore a plain red coat, with the dark-green ribbon of the Thistle over his left shoulder; Count Neuperg and the Duc d'Aremberg, who were glittering with stars and crosses, accompanied each by a splendid staff of mounted officers, galloped from flank to flank; and when all was in order, his Majesty George II., who had hitherto secluded himself among his favourite Lunenburgers, also passed along the lines, and we could not fail to receive him with a hearty British cheer.

He had on an old red coat which he had worn at the battle of Oudenarde, in 1708; his features expressed neither dignity nor intelligence, for his forehead was low and receding, while his under-lip projected so far as to impart a sulkiness to his face; but he brandished his sword repeatedly, and exclaimed in broken English—

“Now, my braave boys—now vor ze gloree of alt England—advance boldly and vire!”

“There’s such a divinity doth hedge a king,” that at such a moment I could not behold him without respect and admiration; yet, on the other side, as we advanced into a woody ravine, one, who seemed to us a fair-haired young French officer, was seen to caracole his bay horse along the line of the Irish Brigade, to join the staff of Marshal Noailles, and a wild Irish cheer, that rang from the echoing hollow up to heaven, was wafted towards us on the wind.

We saw the young officer bend low to his horse’s mane, as he acknowledged with a bow the greeting; but it was not till long after that the French gazettes informed us, that he was the future hero of the great insurrection—Prince Charles Edward Stuart!

Fortunately we were not opposed to the Irish, as a change of position brought us in front of the Regiment de Catinat, over which waved the same old colours that had been consecrated by Jean Baptiste Massillon, as we may read in his works.

The cannon had been dealing death on both sides for some time, and loading the air with heavy sounds; but now as regiment after regiment became engaged, and the roar of musketry grew general along the lines, all became seemingly a wilderness of white smoke, confusion, and bloodshed, to those involved in it.

The Comte de Boufflers, a boy in his tenth year, ensign of a French regiment, was mortally wounded by our *first* cannon ball.

By noon every man on both sides was hotly engaged.

"Level low, give in your fire steadily, gentlemen of the Scots Foot Guards!" I heard Panmure shout repeatedly to our soldiers, who, until 1750, were always addressed as *gentlemen* by their officers.

Closing up steadily and deliberately, we were at last within half musket-range of the Regiment de Catinat, whose fire was telling severely on our ranks, as doubtless ours did on theirs; we paused now, and a line of dead and wounded lay among our feet in a moment. The screams and groans of the falling, amid the smoke, and the ceaseless whizzing of the balls, almost unnerved me for a time—but a time only; for as my blood grew hot, I felt a fierce longing to rush on and grapple with the enemy.

One bullet pierced my cap; a second my left sleeve, and a third indented my gorget. Panmure was wounded by a *balle-machée*—that is, a shot which the soldier had bitten and jagged with his teeth, a custom so contrary to all the rules of war, and so unlike the gallant French, that we knew not what to think.

So dense was the smoke that I could scarcely see beyond my company; but as our men fell—and, poor fellows, they fell fast enough, rolling over each other in their agony, choking or wallowing in their blood, beating the ground convulsively with their hands—our quartermaster-sergeant, with misplaced economy, was slashing open their knapsacks with a knife, and casting shoes to one, a shirt to another, and so on, till old Stuart of Harewoodlee lost all patience at a proceeding which

drew our soldiers from the ranks and from their duty at such a perilous time, and struck the sergeant over the head with the shaft of a spontoon, which a shot had shattered in his hand.

"Cease this folly," said he; "but if you *will* work under fire, turn the dead on their faces, and take the ammunition from their pouches."

"For what purpose, sir?"

"Ass! for those who may require it—quick—pass the word along the line!"

The sergeant turned to obey the order; but at that moment a shot pierced his chest and killed him on the spot.

During a pause in the firing, a body of cavalry suddenly threatened our flank; but the English Guards threw back a portion of their right wing, and swept them away in rout and confusion.

"These were grenadiers *à cheval* of the French Guard," said Major Stuart; "a species of force between dragoons and cuirassiers."

And now, when the firing in our front was resumed, and became more heavy than ever, I received a blow on the breast from a half-spent ball, which struck me to the earth, breathless and sick. At the moment, I thought it had gone through me. For long after I was unable to stand upright, and crept away towards the rear, over dead and wounded men and slippery pools of blood that were curdling and encrusting in the sunshine—expecting every instant, as I crept, to be struck by the bullets, which were sowing thick as hailstones all the turf about me.

It would appear that about the same time, a French troop-horse, maddened by the noise of the battle and the pain of a wound, dashed through the smoke and through

our ranks, hurling Drumlanrig to the ground with such force that he was believed to be killed, and was left senseless on the field, while the brigade moved on.

The dull pain in my chest and the consequent difficulty of respiration rendered me useless during the remainder of the action, which, though of brief duration, was a desperate one, and became somewhat confused in its details, as our inexperienced King was now in command; yet it was distinguished by many dashing feats of arms.

Singling out Hawley's Dragoons, the Black Mousquetaires passed between a cross fire of infantry, and with heroic rashness attacked them sword in hand. These mousquetaires were all high spirited gentlemen of noble families; but vain was all their chivalry, for they were literally *cut to pieces*, and had their white standard taken by an Irish corporal.

It was finely embroidered in gold and silver, and bore a thunderbolt in a blue and white field. The Prince de Montbelliard, the Marquis de Merinville, the Chevalier de Reville and many other noble French officers, all of whom had the cross of St. Louis on their breasts, perished in this wild charge.

About the same time Ligonier's Regiment, which was principally composed of Irishmen of good family, made a furious charge upon the French Horse Guards, who were heavily armed in helmets and corslets of proof.

The Irish fired a volley with their pistols and then fell on, sword in hand, but were repulsed; not, however, before the Duke de Richelieu had three aides-de-camp killed by his side, and the Count de Noailles had two horses shot under him, one by the pistol of Count Gleichen, the Austrian, who had lost his cuirassiers in the confusion of the battle.

Pursuing this advantage, the French horse-guards rushed on till a flank fire from the Welsh fusiliers nearly unhorsed them all; and then a terrible scene ensued; for our infantry mingled with them in a wild *mêlée*—shooting and bayoneting the horses, and with the butts of their muskets, beating out the riders' brains, as fast as they fell from their saddles.

One of the most brilliant onsets was made by our brigade of Life Guards, led by the venerable Earl of Crawford-Lindsay, who, on this day was Gold Stick in waiting.

"Hark you, my dear lads," said he as they advanced from a trot to a gallop; "never mind your pistols, *but handle your swords well. Charge!*"

They rushed on at full speed and cut their way right into the heart of a dense French column.

Then as the foe gave way, says the despatch, "the trumpeter of his lordship's troop, the Fourth or Scots Horse Guard, sounded *Britons strike home!* On which the courteous old Earl politely turned and thanked him;" but scarcely had he done so ere a stray shot silenced the poor musician for ever.

By two o'clock the whole French army had given way, and left us in possession of the field.

"*Sauve qui peut!*" was the cry of the regiment de Puysegur, as it fled, though some of the soldiers were actually cut down by its commander, the marquis of that name, in his fierce attempts to rally them.

"*Vive le Roi! Avancez! Bonne fortune, mes camarades!*" cried he in vain. "*Courage, soldats! Mes camarades, suivez moi!*"

But the Marquis de Puysegur might as well have shouted to the winds.

Our victory was complete, and so great was the confusion of the French, that had the advice of Marshal Stair been followed, and had *not* the King and the Duke of Cumberland, to deprive him of the glory of the day, usurped the command from him after all his plans had been matured, *the whole army of Marshal Noailles had been taken or destroyed, and the war had been ended on the plains of Dettingen.*

CHAPTER XXV

AFTER THE BATTLE.

OVERCOME by the weariness consequent on the adventures of the preceding night, I had been lying on the field asleep or partly unconscious for some hours. This state of lethargy restored my strength; but while it lasted, the din and noises of the battle had been in my ears; and thus it seemed as if I had been engaged in a series of conflicts, charging with my sword or spontoon at the head of my company, storming gun-batteries, and then being trod down by squadrons of hussars, cuirassiers, and dragoons as they were rushing in line to the attack.

All these were but dreams, for on consciousness returning, I found myself lying near the fragments of a tree, the stem of which had been shattered by a large cannon shot, and within a few yards of me were scores of our men, lying in every variety of attitude.

Some were feebly calling for succour, and others were still and mute—white and ghastly. These were the dead!

But for these grim objects, the early events of the

morning, the muster, the march across the Maine, the hurry and confusion of the conflict, would have seemed all a dream. Gradually however, these events became embodied before me, and I staggered up, weak, giddy, stupefied ; thus, for a time, I respired with difficulty.

Then I could perceive all the carnage of the morning ; the long *rows* and the ghastly piles of the dead, in red, blue, or white uniforms, lying across each other just as they had fallen ; with the wounded crawling or staggering among them, vainly calling for aid and for water—*rows* which marked the partial haltings of the lines, as they had moved on under fire, till they had come to the bayonet charge at last, and then the carnage deepened there.

I thought the horrors of that picture would be for ever impressed upon my memory ; yet such is the consequence of familiarity with such scenes, that though I have sorrowed deeply over *one* comrade who has died in camp or quarters, I have viewed with stoical indifference a thousand dead bodies in the field or the trenches.

It is strange how the human mind is liable to strong impressions from external objects. You leave the sick-bed of a loved or valued friend, and with indifference meet a man bearing a trunk or a tea-box ; but to meet a coffin being borne home under cloud of night at such a crisis produces a very different emotion.

I leant for a time against the shattered tree, and using my spontoon as a support, though half dead with heat, thirst, and weariness, I was about to seek for my regiment (not a shot was to be heard now, and I could see only killed and wounded men and horses), when a splendidly-accoutred officer of the Imperial Cuirassiers came riding past, leisurely picking his horse's steps among

the bodies that lay thick as sheaves in an English harvest-field.

He was Rudiger, Count Gleichen, of the emperor's favourite cavalry regiment. His coat and saddlecloth by many a rent and hole bore evidence of the past day's work; and his sword-hilt and white gauntlet gloves were spotted with blood. He saw that I appeared feeble, and politely inquired if I was wounded.

I explained that I had received a severe contusion from a half-spent ball. He then informed me that we had won the battle, and that he believed the household troops were about two miles distant in advance, and on the Welsheim road. He gave me a mouthful of brandy from a metal flask which hung at his holster, and, bowing, rode on.

Near me lay the body of a French officer, in the uniform of the Regiment de Catinat. A bayonet was still in his breast, where it had been thrust almost to the socket, by a private of ours, who also lay beside him, but shot dead, and still grasping his musket as if in the act of charging. The white uniform of the officer was deluged by the crimson torrent which flowed from his death-wound; but his features were calm and placid.

Just as these two unfortunates caught my eye, I saw a woman, evidently a French lady, young, pretty, and pale—pale even as the dead around us—approach. She was searching for what she too evidently did not wish to find, for wildness, grief, and horror were expressed in her fine dark eyes; and suddenly she exclaimed, in a piercing voice that went to my heart, "*C'est mon mari! Emile—mon mari!*" and cast herself in all the passionate abandonment of sorrow upon the body of the dead officer.

I was too feeble either to assist or attempt to console her, and, turning, left the spot, though I afterwards reproached myself for doing so, as she ran no small risk from the Jews and death-hunters, who were soon at work in plundering and stripping the living as well as the dead.

The day had been hot. Myriads of black flies buzzed about, and as I walked onward they rose in obnoxious swarms from the pools of blood formed by the gashes of the wounded men and horses, and from the pale faces and hard, glazed eyeballs of the dead that were glaring upward into the sunny sky.

"*Hola! mon capitaine*—a draught of water, for the love of God!" cried a poor Mousquetaire Noir, whose left leg was shattered by a grape-shot, and whose right lay wedged under his dying charger. He was evidently a gentleman of distinction, and wore a white silk scarf embroidered with *nonpareille*, a narrow ribbon then much in fashion, and doubtless it was the work of some dear female hand, for he had a lady's glove at his hatband.

I gave him the last of the contents of my canteen, for which he seemed very grateful; and with a confidence of assertion that was perfectly French, he informed me that our army was totally defeated, and that both King George and the Duke of Cumberland had been taken prisoners by the Mousquetaires du Roi, who had cut our Household Brigade to pieces!

It was where he lay that those brave mousquetaires had made their most furious charge; and now they were lying in heaps, dead and dying, riders and horses, all splendidly caparisoned, and among them were hundreds of our unfortunate men, belonging to many regiments. Some of these had fallen in the act of loading, and had yet the cartridges lying unbitten in their relaxed jaws,

while one hand grasped the firelock and the other the steel ramrod.

Amid these piles of bloody corpses lay a silver trumpet and a white French standard, embroidered with gold and silver. It represented a sheaf of nine arrows tied with a wreath; and there, too, lay the magnificent kettle-drums of the Black Mousquetaires, slung one on each side of a dead charger, and adorned each with a purple banner.

Fatigue parties, under officers and sergeants, were now coming with litters formed of pikes, with blankets tied to them, to bear off the wounded, and I soon fell in with a mixed party of our corps and of the English Guards, under Sir Henry Rose, sent on this service. They all expressed joy to see me, for they supposed that I had been slain. Rose said that he had special orders from the Earl of Panmure to look for the body of Lord Drumlanrig, who was believed to have been killed just before the regiment advanced to the charge.

I was greatly shocked on hearing this, and though weak resolved to accompany them and to seek for my friend.

The sun was setting now, and his yellow light shone brightly on that scene of death and agony. Hundreds of soldiers, in every variety of uniform, British, French and Austrian, Hanoverian, Croatian, and Hungarian, were seen creeping or limping about, with their heads, legs, or arms, in bloody bandages, seeking the runnels of water that bordered the fields, to assuage their burning thirst—and there many of them drooped and died.

Some were being supported by their comrades; many were borne off in litters, faint and senseless, with their dark blood dripping heavily through the blankets.

During this search, our men more than once took

muskets from the field, and fired at the Uhlans, Croats, and German peasants, who were stripping the dead and maltreating the wounded who resisted.

At last we reached the hollow, where so many fine fellows of the Household Brigade were lying thick—a sickening scene to me, who knew them well. Many had gone to their last account, and others were slowly passing away—all to find their graves, far from home, in a foreign land—dying with no beloved voice in their ear, no tender hand to soothe the bed of death or close their glazing eyes—dying as only the poor soldier dies, ere he is swept, God help him! with hundreds into the battle trench, unknown, and it may be unwept for.

And this is glory!

A little way apart from the terrible *debris* in the hollow, I saw a wretch in a foreign uniform kneeling upon the breast of a British officer, whom he was evidently rifling.

Casting aside my spontoon, I drew my sword, and hurrying forward, found my friend Drumlanrig, lying at the mercy of a Pandour, who had a knife upraised, and was about to plunge it in his breast, when I dealt him a backhanded stroke upon the head, that tumbled him to the earth. Some of the English Guards came hastily up, and after despatching the Pandour with the butt-end of a musket, they raised up the Earl, whose right leg had been nearly broken by a kick from the runaway horse, and who would inevitably have been slain but for my timely succour, and he could only thank me by a pressure of my hand as he was borne away. Close by, we found the bodies of Lieutenant-General Clayton and his aid-de-camp, Major Campbell, mangled by shot and stripped to the skin.

"Come this way Lauriston," exclaimed Rose; "look, whom have we here?"

"Falshaw, by heaven—and dead too!" I added, as we came upon the extended body of that valuable personage, who lay with a horse killed over him.

"Nay, damme, not dead," he moaned out; "but, zounds, very nearly so!"

My first impulse was to pass on; but a better spirit prevailed within me, and taking a brandy bottle from an English sergeant, I raised the head of Falshaw and poured some of the liquor between his baked lips, while the soldiers extricated him. He had not a single wound, but seemed stupefied and half suffocated by the weight of the dead horse, deep in the chest of which a cannon-shot was buried.

He gave us no thanks, but gazed at me with a kind of insane glare in his eyes, and muttered,

"Whiz! damme—Lauriston!"

On this I ordered the soldiers to convey him to the rear in a litter which he had to share with a private of the Coldstream Guards.

"*Mon capitaine*," implored a Frenchman, who had a bullet in his hip, grasping the leg of our sergeant, a testy John Bull.

"Well?"

"*Ah! mon colonel.*"

"Monsieur, I am neither captain nor colonel."

"*Aha! mon général.*"

"Monsieur, for the last time, I tell you, I am nothing of the kind, but only a sergeant; and if you insult me, zounds! I'll knock your head off!"

"Come—don't be harsh with the poor fellow—but bear him to the rear," said Sir Henry Rose; and as he was

carried off the wounded man poured forth such a torrent of thanks as can only come from a French tongue.

"A sad day's work this has been, with all its glory," said Rose, as we moved off the field with our first freight of human suffering; "the Duke of Cumberland had a Turkish horse shot under him, and is wounded; so are the Duke D'Aremberg, old Lord Crawford-Lindsay, and Colonel Ligonier. I met Wolfe not an hour since, hurrying to Lord Stair with the returns—"

"The slaughter, I suppose, has been frightful?"

"We have lost two thousand five hundred officers and men in killed, wounded, and taken."

"And the French?"

"As yet, we know not their losses."

We learned soon after, however, that they were above six thousand, with twelve standards; while a vast proportion of noblesse of the highest rank, who served as officers, mousquetaires, and volunteers, were killed, wounded, or drowned in the Maine.

That night the rain fell in torrents, and continued to fall without intermission until eight o'clock next morning, thus adding greatly to the sufferings of the wounded, numbers of whom perished of cold, exhaustion, and misery.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HANAU.

AMID the rain which fell in blinding sheets, and the darkness, which, save when the red sheet lightning flashed at the horizon, was beyond description dense, Sir Henry Rose of our corps, accompanied by a troop of the English Horse Guards, had to pilot his way across the corpse-strewn field, bearer of a message from the humane Earl of Stair to the Marshal duc de Noailles, who received him graciously in a small farmhouse, in which he had his headquarters.

Sir Henry, who spoke French with fluency, informed him "that his Britannic Majesty, having resolved on marching to Hanau, would leave an independent company under arms on the field to take care of the wounded, with strict orders to commit no act of hostility. Therefore the French were at liberty, when day broke, to send working parties to bury the slain; and these parties, it was hoped, would treat with humanity the allied wounded, who would thus be left behind."

Marshal Noailles assured Sir Henry that all our wounded would be conveyed to the French hospitals, and for this purpose he sent a chosen party of horse from Aschaffenburg, who treated them with the greatest care and generosity.

Sir Henry was escorted back to our camp by twelve gentlemen of the *Gens d'armes Ecossais*.

Great dissatisfaction existed in the minds of the army, in consequence of our victory over the French not being

followed up—a measure which Marshal Stair urged should be executed with vigour; and all knew, though none dared to say it aloud, that the cause of the now worse than inactive movements, was the utter military incapacity of the King with the interference of the Duke of Cumberland.

Drumlanrig and I had so far recovered from our bruises, that on the 17th of June, when the Allies began their singular march for Hanau, we were able to accompany the brigade, but on horseback. Panmure rode also, with his leg securely bandaged after the extraction of the ball.

On this day's march we missed many a voice and many a well-known face from the ranks; and the field where we had lost them formed, with its thousand episodes, an endless subject for conversation.

In the evening we reached Hanau, a well-built town, divided by a river and surrounded by strong walls and barriers; and there we were reinforced by twelve thousand Hanoverians, which made Stair's united army forty-six thousand strong.

As the march of Prince Charles of Lorraine with a strong Austrian force, on one hand, and certain movements made by Lord Stair on the other, threatened to enclose Marshal Noailles in his camp at Offenbach, the French blew up their magazines, and retired with precipitation on the night of the 2nd July, and passing the Rhine, continued their march into Alsace, where they took possession of the famous Lines of Lauterberg, which were formed by the Germans to defend their country against France after the fall of Landau.

Still they were not pursued, and *still* the Allies remained inactive at Hanau!

Lord Stair found himself so unjustly controlled by the King, and so paralysed by the interference of the Duke of Cumberland, that he resigned his command, to the great regret of the whole army, and after modestly recapitulating his many services rendered to the British throne, concluded his memorial by adding, "I hope your majesty will now give me leave to return to my plough, without any mark of your displeasure."

Aware of his own incapacity, the king, who had no objection to wear any laurels his general might win, repeatedly declined to accept Stair's resignation; but ultimately it was received, and he quitted the army on the 4th of September, when we were retiring into winter quarters, and when the affronts put upon us and the open favour shown to Hanoverian officers had nearly brought the disgust of the British army to a culminating point.

By the state of affairs between Lord Stair and the king, from whom he now disdained to ask the slightest favour, and by his resignation, I lost my promised promotion, as it was worse than needless to urge in person my services to a monarch who abhorred the very name of a Scotsman.

But I am anticipating.

We remained nearly two months under canvass at Hanau in perfect tranquillity; the French had marched off, and all idea of following them up had been abandoned. The weather was rainy and stormy; but we were in quiet quarters and well provisioned.

Hanoverian marauders were permitted to escape with impunity or with very slight punishments, when, for the same offences, British soldiers were treated with the utmost rigour. I remember seeing two men in the

uniform of Battereau's Foot hanging by the neck, on a tree near the bank of the Kinzig, which flows through Hanau.

"What does this mean, Wolfe?" I enquired of the aide-de-camp, who was with me.

"Oh, merely some of the Provost Marshal's work; the men were caught robbing a hen-roost."

"A small crime to merit death!"

"But our Provost is a veritable Tamerlane," said he, "especially if the marauder happens to wear a red coat."

"How a Tamerlane?"

"History tells us, that one of his soldiers having drunk a poor woman's pail of milk, on her complaining to the barbarian he ordered the thirsty soldier to be ripped up, that the stolen milk might be restored to her; and I believe that if any man, *not* a Hanoverian, were to steal milk here, he would be treated in the same way. But I mean to give up my English and to take to the German language," added Wolfe, as he laughed and rode off.

While we were encamped at Hanau the army had the good fortune to get rid of Mr. Falshaw; and the mode of his expulsion, with the reason thereof, made some noise at the time, though both are forgotten now.

In those days, swearing at the soldiers, even when under arms, and batoning or beating them, even when in the ranks, were too much permitted, and these severities Falshaw carried to an excess which rendered him so much abhorred in Battereau's Regiment, that he ran a double risk of death if we were again engaged. As a proof of this, when the corps was being exercised in a field near Hanau, and were firing by companies and

platoons, Falshaw caned an old grenadier, whose piece exploded before the proper time.

At the next round, a musket-shot carried off his left epaulette, and slightly wounded his shoulder.

"I have been wounded by that villain!" he exclaimed.

On this, the grenadier left the ranks, with his musket "recovered," and said to the adjutant, "Sir, I beg that you will examine this piece, to assure yourself that it has *missed fire*."

The ramrod was dropped into the barrel, and the unexploded cartridge actually found there; had it been otherwise the poor grenadier would have assuredly been brought to the drum-head, and then flogged or shot.

Tying a culprit neck and heels, by placing a musket under the hams, and forcing neck, knees, and heels together by canteen straps or musket slings till the blood gushed from his nostrils; picketing, with the bare foot on a sharply-pointed stake; and riding the wooden horse, with four firelocks, each of fourteen pounds weight, tied to each ankle, were then common punishments, which our soldiers had to undergo at any officer's behest, and frequently before or after a march. So strict a disciplinarian was Mr. Falshaw, especially in his cups or after he had lost much in a gambling-tent, that there was scarcely a man in his company who had not been tied, picketed, or flogged by his orders.

The reader may marvel that such a wretch was tolerated in the service; but it must be remembered that it was then full of abuses, and that Falshaw had the most powerful interest at court and in camp to cloak his misdeeds.

"In our own time," says Bruce, in his "Military Law," which was published in 1717, "we have often

seen infants made colonels and captains in regiments which were then on actual service;" and through the *foreign* element which then pervaded every department of the State, the army and navy were full of vile tyrannies and absurdities, to give them no harsher name.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A GAME AT PIQUET.

WHILE Mr. Falshaw was in the full plenitude of his power and prerogative to maltreat the poor fellows of Battereau's Corps, he and Herr Holzermann, a German hospital-mate, attached to the Hanoverian Dragoons, became involved in a very serious affair. This officer, having lost three fingers of his left hand by a sabre-cut at Dettingen, was known as "Five-fingered Hans," and his propensity for gambling, drinking, and other little excitements, had made him and Falshaw sworn comrades.

It chanced that at Hanau they were both billeted in the house of a wealthy manufacturer of silk, who treated them with great hospitality; but as he was somewhat advanced in years, and his wife was young, thoughtless, and pretty, to the plotting brains of their guests the idea at once occurred of turning this disparity in years to an account which might amuse them during our sojourn in Hanau.

It was resolved to make love to Madame Augusta Fahrenkohl; a dice-box was produced, and as the ivories were Falshaw's, the lady fell to *him*, and Five-fingered Hans retired from the field.

Falshaw now paid the most flattering attentions to madame, who inherited an *espièglerie* and wonderful charm of manner from her grandmother (one of the many French who had fled to Hanau in the time of Louis XIV.) and who thus became an amusing and delightful companion to our ensign of Battereau's Foot. He suddenly conceived a great desire for studying the entire topography of the city, with its various manufactures of watches, jewellery, camlets, and hats, for all of which a cicerone was required—and where could one more charming be found than the gay and witty Madame Fahrenkohl, whose husband was deeply immersed all day in the mysteries of his silk factory, or with his spectacled nose buried deep among ledgers and cash-books?

They extended their rambles, and conceiving a taste for antiquities and arboriculture, the old castles and ruined chapels, the woods and gardens around Hanau were next visited. Then madame complained of being in ill health, and as Herr Holzermann recommended her to visit the famous mineral well at Wilhelmstadt, as it was just in the neighbourhood, or at most only a mile or two distant, Falshaw and she were wont to drive there in a pretty little covered *caleche*, and so forth, until our worthy manufacturer of silk was the last to discover, what all Battereau's Foot, and certainly all the gossips in Hanau, had known for some time—that the bulky English ensign had been making open love to his laughing and black-eyed wife.

One day, after dinner, when Herr Holzermann had discreetly retired, and Herr Fahrenkohl had, as was his wont, extended his paunchy form upon a sofa, spread a handkerchief over his sleek visage, and was supposed to be asleep, Falshaw and Madame Augusta were having,

as was *their* wont, their game of piquet at a little table which occupied the curtained recess of a drawing-room window.

They played piquet very often there, and Herr Fahrenkohl had never taken note thereof, further than thinking that the ensign always had an unusual run of luck, and a great facility for the acquisition of his wife's florins; on this afternoon, however, as the master of mischief would have it, he did not doze right off to sleep at once, but lay very much awake.

"Does your old man——" Falshaw was beginning, when, under the table, a slight pressure from the prettiest foot in Hanau warned him to be silent.

On this afternoon Madame looked very charming, and was most becomingly dressed in rose-coloured silk, which well became her purity of complexion, her fine dark eyes, and her well-powdered hair, which she had in great abundance.

A prolonged snore from their friend on the sofa made them exchange glances, and again there was a gentle pressure from the pretty foot.

"At last!" said the lady, impatiently; "you were about to say something."

"Only to remark that you do not look well this afternoon," said Falshaw, in a tender tone.

"Not well?" whispered madame, in a tone of pique.

"Pardon me—only a little weary."

"And should be revived by a trip to the well at Wilhelmstadt?" said she, with a smile of intelligence.

"Exactly—and so Holzermann thinks."

"Ah, rogue—I thought that was your meaning."

"Shall we be driven there to-morrow?" urged Falshaw.

"If you please," said the lady, demurely.

"Old Fahrenkohl is so kind to me, that I cannot do less than be very careful of you," said Falshaw. "I shall despatch my man to the hotel after parade to-morrow morning to secure a little cabinet for us, and also to order dinner. What would you prefer?"

"Whatever you choose," said the lady smiling.

"*Cotelettes à la Maintenon*, broiled in buttered note-paper; calves' ears, *à la braise*, served up with a ragout of mushrooms, forced meats, asparagus tops, and eggs."

"Mein herr, you are quite an epicure."

"We will then have a little champagne—and then—and then—"

"A game at piquet," said the lady, laughing aloud, as her husband uttered a very prolonged snore indeed.

"With all my heart," rejoined the gallant ensign of Battereau's, kissing the fair lady's hand, which was very beautiful and delicately small, as they resumed the game.

"Shame, sir!" said she, holding up her cards fanwise.

"'Tis a kiss half lost. Were it on your dear little cheek what would you say?"

"That if such impertinence were done by any one else than you I would make a great fuss about it."

"What—you? challenge me?" said Falshaw, as he started up, and kissed the lady from ear to ear.

In the midst of this a violent kick from some one's foot overturned the table; and, lo! Herr Fahrenkohl, with his huge wig awry, and wrath very palpably expressed on his visage, stood before them.

"My dear herr!" began Falshaw.

"My husband!" exclaimed the lady, in consternation.

"Herr Falshaw," said the paunchy German, quietly; "you may spare your man the trouble of ordering the

cabinet and the little dinner at Wilhelmstadt, as Madame Fahrenkohl will *not* be there to-morrow; and, in the meantime, thou ungrateful rascal, leave my house!"

"What—you cannot mean it; my dear herr, you forget yourself—leave this house?"

"Instantly! I do not forget myself!"

"But please to remember that I am billeted here, my most irascible Teuton—billeted by order of the quartermaster general."

"You have insulted Madame Fahrenkohl."

"I would rather die than do so," said Falshaw, who, aware that he was in error, now resorted to his habitual bullying and insolence. "But do you imagine, you miserable compound of sour beer and bad tobacco, that you are to seclude this pretty wife from every one, when I can say, as Cæsar should have said, I came—I saw—I kissed—eh?"

The little German was now ready to explode with rage; but the towering figure of Falshaw, and his thundering tone, abashed him.

"I will appeal to the *Ober-gericht* of the province," said the poor silk manufacturer, shrinking back step by step, as the tall bully advanced after him also step by step, in all the dignity of his superior feet and inches.

"Herr Fahrenkohl, you may appeal to the devil if you please!" said he, as he stuck his cocked hat fiercely over his right eye, kissed his hand to madame, and left the house in a passion.

Madame was locked up; her husband applied to the burgomaster, and when the unabashed Falshaw returned, he found at the door an official in the livery of the town, with a written intimation that he must seek quarters

elsewhere, if he did not wish to find them in the castle of Hanau.

But the worst part of this story is its sequel.

As this order of expulsion comprehended Holzermann, the Hanoverian hospital mate, he and Falshaw retired to a tavern to scheme vengeance together. How they laid their plans no one knew; but that night the unfortunate Herr Fahrenkohl was found, a few yards from the gate of his silk factory, senseless, bleeding, and stabbed in three places by a sword.

He was borne to his house, where the grief and distraction—it may be, the repentance—of his wife seemed genuine enough; as in her coquetry and heedlessness she probably did not foresee a catastrophe so horrible as this.

Two surgeons arrived promptly; one was a doctor of Hanau, the other was the hospital-mate, Hans Holzermann. Their opinions differed, of course. The first declared the wounds were mortal; the second asserted that they were *not* so, but that it would be necessary to dilate or *enlarge* one which was in the breast, and near the region of the heart; and before any one could interfere in a proceeding so strange, he had thrust a sharp surgical instrument into the bleeding orifice, on which the poor man uttered a cry, and expired.

But as the blood gushed forth there came with it the sharp point of a sword, which had been broken off when the wound was given.

Suspicion was instantly directed to Falshaw. His sword was taken from his quarters, and the fragment exactly *fitted his blade*, which was found to be minus its point by half an inch; and throughout Hanau the outcry against him became general.

A court-martial, of which the earl of Crawford was president and Wolfe was judge-advocate, assembled in the quaint gothic hall of the old castle of Hanau, to try him and Hans Holzermann on this and minor charges of cruelty and dishonourable conduct. In neither case was murder proven; but Falshaw was sentenced to be dismissed from the British service with *degradation*, and from this humiliating ceremony all his secret influence failed to secure him; for he had in some way become identified with that Hanoverian interest which caused such dissension in the army and such disgust at headquarters; so the sentence of the court was put in execution with every detail and formality on the 1st of August, while the hospital mate, Hans Holzermann, was sentenced also to dismissal, after one month's confinement on bread and water in the dungeon of the castle of Hanau.

As the ceremony of degrading an officer on parade is so unusual in our service, I may be excused in referring to it briefly here.

The whole division of the army to which Battereau's Foot belonged, were placed in a hollow square of close columns, facing inwards; this was on a misty morning, when the first gleams of the rising sun were tipping with light the spires and steep gables of Hanau.

Into that square Falshaw, divested of sword, of belt and gorget, but in his full uniform, was conducted by the provost-marshal-general; and then a brief extract from the proceedings of the court was read.

I shall never forget the dark and ferocious expression of Falshaw's face on this occasion, and as the officer read the sentence the wicked and sinister eyes of the culprit glared along the front ranks, unabashed, as if

seeking an enemy or an object for the exercise of his future wrath. At that moment, in his bitterness of heart and boiling fury, I believe he would, with pleasure, have annihilated the whole British army.

At last his eye fell on *me*, and he started and turned away as if a wasp had stung him.

His sword was brought upon parade by the adjutant of Battereau's, and was then broken in three pieces, above his head, by the provost, who next took off his sash, cut it to pieces, and cast it on the ground.

The ten drummers of the regiment were then brought into the centre; Falshaw and they were faced to the right, and thus he was drummed off the parade, after which we saw no more of him while the army was in Hesse Cassel.

Notwithstanding his character and his crimes, and the murder—for such I deemed it—of poor Ruthven, I felt for the humiliation of this unfortunate wretch, and for the degradation offered to the whole service by a ceremony so peculiarly foreign, when applied to one bearing the rank of an officer.*

* In 1802, a quarter-master of the Guards was dismissed the service, by a similar ceremony, at the Horse Guards.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WINTER QUARTERS.

ON the 4th of August the army crossed the Rhine above the strong city of Mentz—that place so famed of old for the arts of war and peace. From thence, following the course of the river, we reached Worms, where King George took up his quarters, while the army were encamped near the old city, which was in a very dilapidated condition, having not yet recovered from its destruction by the French in 1693, when they burned in three hours the work of more than six centuries.

Here we were to await the arrival of the Dutch; so we were likely to remain long enough.

There were now ten different armies engaged in this dispute concerning the queen of Hungary, and already 90,000 French soldiers had perished in it. The war bade fair to be a most protracted one, though Marshal Stair's bold idea of following up the Duc de Noailles, and afterwards marching *on Paris*, might have brought it to a speedy conclusion.

It was at Worms that the Earl of Stair left us to return home, and deeply and heartily we drank "to his health and long life" in our tents that night, though we dared do him no greater honour; for we felt that the jealousy of the king and his Hanoverian generals had reduced his authority among the Allies to the condition of a mere cypher. Resigning all his posts, he retained only the colonelcy of a regiment, and the nominal government of Minorca.

There also returned with him to Scotland the aged and now infirm Earl of Balcarras, who had borne a commission in our army for forty years, with honour and without reproach; but having been in his youth a cavalier, and George II. having sworn with a German oath "that none who had ever served the House of Stuart should rise to command," this high-spirited old peer, disdained to remain longer in an army where everything British gave place to everything Hanoverian; for in choice of posts, honours, quarters, and authority, the officers of that electorate were ever preferred before us; thus many more would have followed Stair and Balcarras, but that we expected to fight another battle or so before the stirring game was over. A knowledge of the existence of this foreign bias against us, made our men more than ever attached to their officers; thus an admirable feeling prevailed throughout the service. This was always evinced by the fraternal manner in which rations of wine or provisions were shared in the bivouac or during a halt, and on the march, when officers and men joined in merry choruses to lessen the tedium of each day's monotonous tramp through mud and mire, when the rains of the German autumn, made deep the execrable roads on the banks of the Rhine, or in the dense primeval forests of Thuringia.

From the Germans, particularly the Austrian Kaizerlicks, as we named the Imperialists, our men acquired this cheerful habit of singing when on the march, and the following is a ballad which was a great favourite with the Household Brigade.

The English guards always commenced it first, and gradually it passed rearward along the whole line of march.

“Come, gentlemen,” Panmure would say; “strike up ‘Bergen-op-Zoom,’ and chorus it well!”

This ballad had been composed on the capture of the famous Dutch fortress by Count Lowendahl, and at the word *flam*, every drummer gave a stroke on his drum, while hundreds of voices joined in the chorus and made the welkin ring.

“Have you heard of a fortress, renowned in fame,
Possessed by a lady, Batavia hy name?
She’s the pride of all Flanders for beauty and bloom,
And none can compare with sweet Bergen-op-Zoom!
When the count first advanced, he with rapture heheld
Her breastworks so white that looked down on the Scheldt;
So he thrice kissed his hand and shook his red plume,
At the thought of subduing sweet Bergen-op-Zoom.

With a flam on the drum, and a tan ta ra ra!

“Though firm as a rock, and by Nature befriended,
With ravelins and bastions and coehorns defended,
He began his approaches, and forced the great boom,
In hope to be master of Bergen-op-Zoom.
In vain her round breastworks the count did assail,
And though roughly repulsed yet he scorned to turn tail,
But still pushed the trenches, and still did resume,
His attempts to prevail o’er sweet Bergen-op-Zoom.

With a flam on the drum, and a tan ta ra ra!

“When he found the soft art of persuasion was vain,
He strove by deceit the fair fortress to gain;
So he swore to retire, and bewailing his doom,
Would relinquish all hope of sweet Bergen-op-Zoom.
The fair one believed him, yet kept her bright eyes
On all his manœuvres, and feared a surprise;
While inactive, a passion his heart did consume,
So faint seemed his hopes with fair Bergen-op-Zoom.

With a flam on the drum, and a tan ta ra ra!

“ One morning at length, as the walls he surveyed,
 He espied a small postern, and by escalade,
 Rushing in with his stormers, he quickly made room,
 And won full possession of Bergen-op-Zoom.
 The fair one, surprised, now to weep did begin,
 But alas! 'twas too late, for the foeman was in ;
 And rejoicing, he said, while he shook his red plume,
 ‘ How I love and adore thee, sweet Bergen-op-Zoom !’
 With a flam on the drum, and a tau ta ra ra !

“ So great was her flutter in that fatal hour,
 To resist or repent, she had neither the power ;
 But low, like a lover, the count bent his plume.
 As thus he addressed his dear Bergen-op-Zoom :—
 ‘ Fair dame of the Scheldt, though by art I have gained
 What, perhaps, from your coyness, I ne’er had obtained ;
 The love that I bear I shall bear to my tomb,
 And never forget thee, sweet Bergen-op-Zoom !’
 With a flam on the drum, and a tan ta ra ra !”

On the 15th September, we marched to the quaint old wooden episcopal city of Spire. There the allied armies separated for winter quarters, and during their march for various points there was concluded at Worms, by Britain, Hungary, and Sardinia, a treaty, termed a definitive one, for peace, union, friendship, and mutual defence, between the sovereigns of those three countries.

We were now fairly broken up for the winter.

The British, with all Austrians and Hanoverians in our pay, marched into Flanders, while the Dutch proceeded to Brabant.

The King and Duke of Cumberland visited Hanover, of course ; while the Household Brigade was quartered at Brussels, where our favourite brigadier, the Duke of Marlborough, left us, disgusted by the general insolence of the Hanoverian troops, whose conduct towards our

officers formed the subject of some very acrimonious debates when Parliament met.

At Brussels our letters overtook us. Many of these were addressed to poor fellows above whom the grass was growing green at Dettingen; and while in that city I became involved in an adventure, the recollection of which is even now the reverse of agreeable.



CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DOUBLE DUCAT.

WE had not been long at Brussels when I was sent with a detachment, consisting of three serjeants, a drum, and sixty rank-and-file, to Nivelles, a town about twenty-five miles distant, to suppress, by our presence, various outrages which had been committed in the neighbourhood by footpads and robbers.

My orders were to have my men billeted upon the inhabitants; to form a small quarter-guard in any house which might be given to me for that purpose; and to have upon the highways patrols, which were to stop all persons who were abroad after nightfall, and to detain them until examined by myself or some other competent authority.

It was the middle of winter now; the snow lay deep on the Belgian highways, and the vast forest of Soignies, through which we marched, resembled a fairy scene, for silver frost rime covered every stem and branch with crystal; and when the sun shone down the long and leafless vistas, they glittered with myriads of prisms.

We reached Nivelles, after a long and bitter day's march; I gave my instructions to the chief magistrate, and reported myself to the commandant, an old major of Walloons. The town was fortified, but was garrisoned only by a few invalids.

The place was dull and monotonous. I soon missed the society of my brother officers, the gaieties of Brussels, and the bustle consequent to the presence of our army in and around it.

I missed particularly the quiet, earnest, and gentlemanly companionship of Panmure, Drumlanrig, Rose, and others. Even old Stuart's after-dinner song—

“Here we be, Scots soldiers three,” &c.

though voted tedious at mess, or a joke, to *encore*, according to the mood we were in, I would now have highly esteemed.

The intense dullness of Nivelles, though a quaint old place (being one of the four cities which constituted the marquisate of the empire) wearied me; for there was no amusement, save to lounge on the little bridge which spanned the Thienne, and to see the amply breeched Netherlanders skating on the frozen river; or, to listen to the monotonous and incessant tolling of bells in the convent and church of St. Gertrude, the patroness of Nivelles and daughter of King Pepin.

My detachment shared with the Walloon invalids the duty of guarding the place; but no outrages occurred now; no one was robbed in the streets or killed on the highway; even a good conflagration, especially by night, would have been a little variety; but for an entire month nothing occurred to disturb the tranquil monotony of Nivelles.

As an additional vexation, I was billeted on an unpleasant couple. The wife was a veritable Xantippe, with a husband who had not quite the patience of the philosophical spouse of that scold of classical antiquity, and to hear them storming at each other in high Dutch was certainly not amusing.

After the excitement of the past year's brief campaign I could endure this kind of life no longer; the craving for amusement could not be withstood. So one day, when the clear winter sky was without a cloud, and the sun shone with unusual brilliance on the wide snowy waste of the Flemish landscape, I doffed my uniform, put on plain clothes, placed pistols in my holsters, and mounting a good nag galloped off to Brussels. Though it was quite at variance with the rules of the service to leave my detachment, I trusted to fate that nothing would occur by which my temporary absence might be discovered.

On reaching the capital about nightfall I found that all the officers of the Household Brigade were departing to a grand ball, given by Count Gleichen and the officers of that portion of the Austrian army which was in cantonments with ours. Thus I was cast on my own resources for amusement, as I could neither have appeared at the ball in nor out of regimentals, when supposed to be on duty more than five-and-twenty miles off.

Chagrined and annoyed on finding that I had quitted my post to so little purpose, after dining at a hotel I put on my sword and sallied forth to ramble in the streets before returning to my seclusion at Nivelles. Attached to this hotel, and forming in fact a portion of it, was a gaming-house, the elegant portal of which stood invitingly open and gaily decorated with coloured lamps.

Though I seldom or never played, by some chance, of which idleness and *ennui* were doubtless the cause, I was about to enter, but without the slightest intention of gambling, when a coin, glittering on the pavement, arrested my intention.

I picked it up and it proved to be a Flemish double ducat, a coin which was worth about a guinea.

"There can be no harm in risking *this*," thought I; "a coin of chance is just the thing for a game of hazard, and if I win the first poor devil I meet shall share my winnings."

Entering the room, I staked it at the *rouge-et-noir* table. There seemed to be magic in this coin of chance, for it speedily become a *rouleau* of gold!

I become interested. I doubled my stakes with a recklessness which drew the attention of all towards me; and though careless at first, I became heated and then flushed with triumph, the more so, that I cared little whether I lost or won.

Fortune favoured me, and in less than twenty minutes I left the table master of a thousand double ducats of Flanders and Brabant. Securing them in my breast pocket, I put my left hand in the hilt of my sword, and looked carefully round, to see whether any of the dark and sinister-looking fellows who were hazarding their all about the table were following me, and left the room.

On issuing into the street, I stumbled against a man who was stooping low and searching on the pavement as if he had lost something.

"Your pardon, my friend," said I in German; "have you lost anything?"

"Yes," replied he, sulkily, and without deigning to look up; "I have lost all the money I had in this

treacherous world—here it must have dropped from my pocket—a double ducat.”

“I found your double ducat, and it has now become a thousand,” said I.

“A thousand——”

“Which I shall gladly yield to you.”

“Yield to me, mein herr?—Lauriston again—sink me!” added Falshaw in English, for it was he, and as he looked up the light of the street door lamp fell full upon his face, which was crimsoned with anger and mortification.

For a few minutes we eyed each other in silence, I remembered the humiliation to which I had seen him subjected in the presence of more than eight thousand men; but I also remembered his character, his many crimes, the death of Jack Ruthven, and the vile trick he had played me on the night before Dettingen. His features were bloated as ever, but indications of want and hardship were visible in his face and in his costume, which was threadbare and tawdry with tarnished lace. He wore a waistbelt, at which hung a brass-hilted hanger, and a pair of long horse-pistols. He had cuts and patches on his nose and right cheek, and altogether had very much the air of such a personage as one would not wish to meet at that hour on either Hounslow Heath or Wimbledon Common.

“You don’t mean what you say?” he stammered, with something of confusion in his manner.

“As it is *you*, sir, my intentions are changed,” I replied sternly.

“But you found my double ducat!” he began, in a bullying tone.

“Not more than twenty minutes ago——”

"'Twas then I dropped it."

"With that double ducat I have won a thousand at *rouge-et-noir*—a thousand which I promised mentally to share with the first unfortunate person whom I met in the street."

"Then sink me if you will meet a more unfortunate fellow than I in all Brussels!"

"I owe you but little gratitude for past favours, Mr. Falshaw," said I, gravely; "so five hundred of the ducats I have won shall go to the soldiers of the Household Brigade, the other five hundred I shall hand over to you; and beware that at the same place where I won them they are not again reduced to *one*."

A strange gleam came into the eyes of Falshaw as I said this, and an expression which it was impossible to analyze crossed his face; but lifting his battered hat with an air that was, I thought, somewhat ironical, he said,—

"You are most generous, Mr. Lauriston. Zounds! sir, 'tis more than I deserve; but Hans Holzermann—you remember Five-fingered Hans—and I have been at low water ever since that rascally misuse to which we were subjected at Hanau; but these five hundred double ducats will be quite a fortune to us at present—a fortune which we shall have the honour of owing to you."

There was a glare in his light-grey eyes and a spasmodic twitching about his large coarse mouth as he gasped out this polite speech with unmistakable unwillingness; but he held forth his left hand, into which I proceeded to count the ducats.

I had paid him about one hundred and fifty, when the villain struck me to the earth by a tremendous blow of his clenched *right* hand, dealt full, with all his strength,

between my eyes. I was completely stupified, and on recovering consciousness, found myself minus every ducat, and also my gold watch !

I was supported by the waiters of the hotel, who had heard the sound of the scuffle or of my fall, and had seen a man with a drawn sword in his hand rush into the darkness of the street and disappear.

My face was severely cut and bruised, and my brain reeled with the severity of the blow, for Falschaw possessed the strength of a bullock. The affront, the stroke, and his base ingratitude filled me with a transport of rage, and I resolved to kill him whenever I met him, as doubtless he had intended to kill me, after obtaining his plunder.

Wherefore else would he have drawn his sword ? Thus, probably, I owed my life only to the timely arrival of the servants of the hotel, as his intention was, no doubt, to have passed the blade through my heart !

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WOODMAN'S HUT.

AN hour after this affair, I bethought me of returning to my post, and ordered my horse. The master of the hotel, on perceiving that I was somewhat stunned by the blow I had received, urged me to remain with him till next day; but as I knew not what might occur at Nivelles in my absence, I declined, and asked for a mounted guide to accompany me, lest I might lose my way in the forest of Soignies, which, in that season—though the snow was gone,—would have been the reverse of pleasant.

The offer of paying well soon procured a guide. He was a young fellow of very unprepossessing aspect, named Peer Baas, who was employed in some sort of way at the gaming-house—a native, as he told me, of the town of Soignies, and well acquainted with the whole country. So we set forth at an easy pace, as my head still spun from the weight of Falshaw's hand.

The season was opening now, and the snow, which so long covered the country, had entirely disappeared. The night was almost mild, but moonless and dark—intensely so; a general blackness seemed to envelop all the scenery, and the ruddy lights, which shone from the windows of wayside cottages or in farm houses, disappeared as we entered the forest of Soignies, which then extended from the southern gate of Brussels nearly to Gemappe; and from Hal to Wavre, about twenty miles each way.

The road we travelled was narrow, rough, and deep;

thus we proceeded slowly and with caution. I was full of busy thoughts, and resolved to write to Drumlanrig a relation of my late adventure, and urge him to take measures for having Falshaw hunted out of Brussels, or otherwise punished. Committing myself entirely to the guidance of my worthy Peer Baas, I rode silently on till he reined up his horse in a part of the forest, where the still leafless trees seemed unusually dense and thick.

"Do you hear anything?" said I.

"No, monsieur," he replied in French, and with hesitation; "you must excuse me—but—but I fear—"

"Fear what?"

"That we have lost our way."

"My way was yours, and if you have lost it you must be but an indifferent guide, though boasting yourself a native of the district."

"Monsieur must pardon me," whined the fellow; "but since the snow has melted, the appearance of the country has changed."

"Well?" said I, impatiently.

"Had we been pursuing the direct road, we must, ere this, have passed the path which branches off to the right and leads to Alseberg and Hal."

"How far may this branch road be from Brussels?"

"About ten miles, monsieur."

"We have ridden at least fifteen; and, if on the right way, must ere this hour have reached Mont St. Jean."

"True, and I am overwhelmed with confusion, monsieur."

"Fool!" I exclaimed, with irritation; "have you taken the road to Wavre?"

"I do not think so; but let us return a little way."

I was now fully roused from my reverie, the more so,

that a cold sleety rain was beginning to fall. We evidently were not on any of the four great diverging roads that run southward from Brussels; but were on a narrow path that went tortuously through the forest; so narrow, indeed, that it could only be used in general by woodcutters or peasants on foot. Ere long, the sleety rain descended in bitter and driving showers, that bade fair to drench us to the skin.

"Monsieur must pardon me; but I have completely lost my way!" said Peer Baas, reining in his horse again.

"Day will not break for several hours," I replied with growing impatience; "so we are likely to have a pleasant time of it, while passing the night in the forest."

"Matters are not quite so bad as that, monsieur," said the guide.

"What do you mean?"

"I know that there is not far from this an old ruin—"

"A cheerful shelter!"

"But it is now the hut of a woodcutter, who will gladly afford us shelter.

"Indeed," said I, while certain undefinable suspicions crossed my mind; "but did you not mention a moment ago, that you had completely *lost* yourself?"

"Yes, monsieur—yes," stammered the fellow.

"Then if so, by what mark, amid the darkness, do you know we are near the residence of your friend the woodcutter?"

"By these two lights on the left; they shone out brightly—yes, monsieur—yes—I assure you, just at the instant I mentioned his place."

"A strange coincidence, but a fortunate one! Lead on however," said I; for though the whole affair might

be, as it afterwards proved, a snare, I remembered that I had my sword and pistols, which were equal to the lives of three, if mine was assailed.

In a few minutes we reached the forester's mansion, which was somewhat singular in aspect. It was two stories in height, with small windows which were grated, as it had been constructed on the remains of an old building, of great antiquity, for masses of fallen masonry and heaps of stones, covered with ivy, lay near it. In the olden time it had been a hunting lodge of Louis, surnamed de Male, count of Flanders, who is said to have been crushed to death at St. Omers, by order of John Duc de Berri.

"And how about our horses, Peer?" I inquired.

"Close by this is an outhouse, in which I can stable them, monsieur," replied the guide, as he knocked on the door, and whistled shrilly.

A similar whistle replied soon after from within, and then we heard the voices of a man and woman in violent altercation.

"It is Konrada, the woodman's wife—she has a bad temper," observed Peer Baas.

This signalling I disliked and suspected; but the sharp sleet was falling in blinding showers, and hissing through the leafless trees upon the rising blast; and when the door was opened by a man who was dressed like a Flemish peasant, and bore a candle in his hand, I gladly alighted.

In doing so, a giddiness seized me. It was still the effect of Falshaw's blow; I reeled and would have fallen, had not the woodman caught me by an arm.

He then accosted my guide in some patois of the Flemish, which I did not understand; and after a few

sentences had passed rapidly between them, Peer Baas added in French,

"Yes, monsieur has lost his way——"

"Say rather that you, to whom he trusted, have done so," said the forester.

"Exactly—I have led monsieur astray, but you, mon ami, will make all the amends in your power."

"Enter Mynheer," said the woodman; "all whom Peer Baas may bring, are welcome here. Peer, take the horses round—you know to where."

"You will first give me the pistols from the saddle of mine," said I, taking care, however, to unbutton the holsterflaps myself, and to transfer the weapons to my girdle.

On this, I saw, or thought I saw, a dark smile of intelligence pass between my guide and host, as I entered the dwelling, and its door was shut behind me.



CHAPTER XXXI.

THE UPPER CHAMBER.

I SHOOK the sleet from my hat and cloak, before being ushered into the only sitting apartment, which was on the ground floor. It was vaulted with stone, and had an antique arched chimney-piece, within which a fire of wood was blazing and diffusing a dull red glare on everything around.

Seated on a tripod stool before its cheerful glow, a woman was knitting. It was she whose voice I had heard in altercation before the door was opened.

Two men, who were sleeping on a wooden bench in a corner, awoke, and raising their heads they gazed at me with a kind of sullen surprise, and then seemed to doze off to sleep again. Their aspect was far from prepossessing. Their weatherbeaten faces were savage in expression. Their shaggy black hair fell in dirty volume about their ears; and in the calfskin belts which girt their tattered red woollen gaberdines, they had knives and pistols stuck somewhat ostentatiously. In short, they resembled the bravoos of old Spanish and Walloon pictures much too closely, to be pleasant companions for a solitary and belated traveller such as I.

For a few minutes the woman at the fire neither moved nor looked up; but suddenly, when unobserved by her husband, she gazed at me with expressive eyes that seemed full of alarm, of warning, and compassion. There was no mistaking all her full and flashing glance was intended to convey; but what did it all mean?

Though mature in years, she was remarkably fair in complexion, and her pale yellow hair was mingled thickly with grey; while her face had many deep wrinkles, the result rather apparently of remorse, or crime and care, than age.

"My wife, Konrada, is a Dutch woman, and does not understand our Walloon ways," observed the woodcutter sullenly.

The woman looked down, sighed bitterly, and continued her knitting. Her face spoke of secret sorrows and of hesitations, unknown to those with whom she consorted.

The heat and light of the fire caused my eyes to ache, after my long ride in the dark and cold without. I felt strangely weak and confused, for at times the four corners of

the chamber seemed to be in pursuit of each other. Three or four hours ago I would have been well worth robbing ; now I had only my clothes, arms, and a few English guineas to lose ; but the idea *did* occur to me, that if molested in this secluded part of a vast and wintry forest, in my present nervous state, I could offer but a poor resistance. Resolving, however, to husband the strength that remained, I inquired if there was any place in which I could sleep until day dawned.

"Yes, mynheer ; there is our own room up-stairs," replied the woodcutter who had a sleek but weatherbeaten visage, with such an unfortunate cast in both his eyes as to render it impossible for those whom he addressed to know whether he looked at their faces or their shoes, the ceiling or the floor, and this imparted to his coarse countenance a more than usually sinister expression.

"Your own chamber !" said I, "that I cannot think of appropriating—how about madame ? Remember that I am a soldier, and used to hard fare and rough quarters."

"A soldier ?" he reiterated, surveying me sharply.

"An officer of the British army."

"Then mynheer has come from Nivelles ?"

"From Brussels last, my friend ; but I was *en route* for Nivelles, when Peer lost his way."

"So mynheer commands the troops who came to assist the commandant of the Invalids in keeping the country quiet about Soignies ?"

"Exactly."

"We have much reason to be grateful for the comfort and peace that have existed during the past month. (Here one of the sleepers gave a loud snort, and Peer Baas, who had now come in, laughed as he wrung his soaked cap at the fire.) All the rogues who haunted

the highways about Gemappe, St. Guilbert, and Mont St. Jean have quite disappeared, and poor folks, such as we, can sleep in peace at night."

As he said this in a whining tone, his wife gave him a rapid glance that expressed contempt and hate.

"A strange woman!" thought I, and said, "I have need of rest, my good fellow, and will accept your apartment, but the offer shall not be unrewarded."

"This way then, mynheer; follow me."

Taking the candle he led me from the room, but a current of air extinguished the light.

"Konrada," cried he, "a match—come here."

Instinctively I was putting my hand to my sword, when the woman came into the passage, and while grasping an arm, whispered in my ear—

"*Gott bewahr! ver van huis, dicht by zijn schade!*"
(Far from home and nigh to danger.)

Though she spoke in her native Dutch, I understood the warning, and pressed her hand. Then I heard her sigh bitterly as she withdrew, and her repulsive helpmate returned with his candle lighted to conduct me up a narrow stone stair, which was formed in the centre of the thick wall, and from thence a little arched doorway gave access to a small square chamber, which had two narrow windows. The walls seemed of enormous strength, the building being, as I have stated, the fragment of a hunting lodge of the middle ages; for it was in that very edifice that Louis de Male, the twenty-fourth count of Flanders, the same who swam the Scheldt at Ghent rather than marry the daughter of Edward III. of England, dwelt with Violette, his beautiful mistress; and it was from this hunting lodge that she was taken in the night by his countess, Margaret of Brabant, to the

castle of Male, and barbarously mutilated, so that she expired in the act of giving birth to two stillborn children, who were buried with her in the same tomb.

With a bow my host pointed to a couch of very humble aspect, which stood in a corner, and after placing the candle on a little oak table, he withdrew and closed the door.

Was I right, or did my ears deceive me? There was a sound as of its being barred and otherwise secured on the *outside*! I sprang to it, seized the handle, and strove to open it, but strove in vain, for the door was fastened upon me, while *within* it had neither bolt nor bar.

"I am snared here," was my bitter and unavailing reflection; "snared by that villanous Walloon, Peer Baas, who is in league with these robbers."

And now, with soldier-like instinct, I proceeded at once to look about me, and inspect my means of defence or retreat. The candle would last me an hour yet; but, alas, its light soon revealed to me, that retreat there was none!

The windows—two narrow loop-holes of the old hunting-lodge—were only a foot broad by about two in length, and were secured by massive iron gratings, covered with the rust of ages.

The floor and walls were solid stone; the roof, however, had wooden rafters, and I remembered that the dwelling was thatched. The arched door was of very hard wood, studded, like that of a prison, with round iron-headed nails, all rusty, discoloured, or black with time and damp. The idea of placing the candle against this door and setting it on fire occurred to me, but the flame was too small and too weak to ignite a mass so solid.

All hope of escape or rescue seemed vain until day dawned, so, to prevent surprise, I drew the truckle bedstead *across* the door, that it might not be opened without disturbing me.

I next looked at the pistols in my girdle. Heaven and earth, what were my emotions, and how cold was the perspiration that burst over me on finding that the priming had been blown from the pan of each—doubtless by Peer Baas, ere we left the hotel at Brussels, and being without more powder they were quite useless to me! However, I had my sword.

It seemed as if the noise made by dragging the bedstead across the floor had attracted the attention of the inmates below, for I now heard their voices under the bottom of the door. By the removal of the bed I discovered two accessories to defence and escape, which proved ultimately of great use to me; one was a coil of rope, the other a plank of wood about ten feet long.

By laying the latter athwart the chamber I contrived to barricade the door in such a fashion that no external power could force it, otherwise than by beating it to pieces; and after this preparation for a siege was completed I seated myself on the hideous truckle bed to consider what was to be done next.

I surveyed the old, damp, and discoloured walls, and the hopelessly barred little windows again and again; but their strength seemed to bid defiance to my ingenuity. I might make good the chamber door against all assailants for days, in hope of rescue; but then I might be starved like a rat in a trap ere rescue came.

My candle was burning fast, and as there was a necessity for saving it, lest any emergency should occur, I extinguished it, before remembering that I was totally

without the means of relighting it. A new idea occurred to me. I might not be molested in any way; my suspicions, or fears, might all be without reason; these woodcutters might be peaceful and honest people; but if so, why did the woman give me these dark hints and stolen glances; and why was I locked in my chamber?

Giddy, weary, and weak with the blow I had received at Brussels, notwithstanding the perils of my situation—lulled by the wind of that dark and tempestuous night, as it waved the tree-tops, and roared through the leafless vistas of the vast old forest of Soignies—I ultimately dropped asleep; and this repose, by restoring my strength, proved in the end the means of saving me from a disastrous fate.



CHAPTER XXXII.

FIVE-FINGERED HANS.

I MUST have slept for more than two hours, when a considerable noise awoke me.

Starting up, for a moment I could scarcely recollect where I was. All was darkness around me; but through the dull obscurity beyond the little window, I could see the branches of the trees waving, and one cold blue star twinkling with diamond-like lustre.

I was chilled and benumbed—but this strange noise—what was it?

Violent efforts were being made to force my door; but, thanks to my precautions, it was as firm as if it

had been the gate of Bergen-op-Zoom, and the blows showered upon its solid and ancient structure were as futile as the oaths and orders addressed to me in Flemish and French by these assailants, among whose voices I recognised those of the rascally woodcutter, of Peer Baas, of Hans Holzermann, and of *Falshaw* !

Light—I instantly required light—that if they actually succeeded in forcing the door, I should be able to strike a few gallant blows in defence of the life they sought !

I had neither match, steel, nor tinderbox ; but a fortunate idea, fashioned by the very desperation of the moment, occurred to me. Though the apartment was so dark that I could scarcely see my own fingers, I carefully extracted the charge from one of my pistols, and used a portion of the cartridge to prime the other, which I placed in my belt to be used in case of emergency, while by flashing some powder in the pan of the empty weapon, I ignited a piece of paper, with which to light the candle.

So intent had I been in this occupation, and so much did I exult in the consciousness that one bullet still remained at my disposal, that until the candle was fairly lighted, I did not perceive that my assailants, who were six in number, were deliberately cutting a hole in the door, by which perhaps to fire through at me, or to remove any barrier I had placed against it. But the door being massive, at least three inches thick, and of very hard wood, toughly resisted the knives at work upon it.

While in their drunken ferocity—for it was evident, by the voices of *Falshaw* and others, that they were intoxicated—all were intent on forcing the sturdy door, this

seemed a critical moment to attempt an escape, could an avenue be found elsewhere.

Madly I wrenched with both hands at the gratings of the windows, but I might as well have striven to shake the solid stone wall into which they had been built when Louis de Male and Margaret of Brabant hunted the wild boars in the surrounding forest.

I have said the roof was only rafters and thatch. By standing on the bed, I could reach both with ease, and quick as the thought occurred to me, I was up among the rafters, and at work with my swordblade, forcing a passage through the dense and dusty thatch.

It descended in fragments and showers upon me; but, though half choked thereby, in less than five minutes I had made an aperture wide enough to force my head and shoulders through. My heart leaped with joy and with fierce exultation on beholding this sudden avenue for escape, and I descended to the truckle bed once more, to get the coil of rope.

By this time much of the noise and vociferation in the passage outside had subsided; and all there seemed intent on working by turns at the hole, which they were laboriously cutting with a knife. Already it was so large, that I saw a hand thrust through, and then a whole arm above the elbow, as a man daringly seemed to grope or search about, as if endeavouring to discover or remove the barrier which obstructed their entrance.

My first thought was to slash off his hand by a stroke of my sword; my second, to shoot the fellow—he might be Falshaw—through the aperture with my pistol, or, smash his fingers with the butt; but a better idea than any occurred to me—one that would serve to perplex them all, and give me more time to escape.

I cut off a few yards of the rope, and forming a noose thereon, cast it over the intruder's wrist, which I lashed hard and fast to the stock of the truckle bed; and thus secured him a prisoner; his hand and arm being within, and his whole body without the door.

In vain he struggled, and like his companions swore and blasphemed; he could no more release himself than fly into the air, and I laughed, almost aloud, while clambering again into the rafters, and tying the end of my rope thereto, passed through the thatch, and felt the cold air of the dark and cheerless morning blowing on my hot and flushed face.

I lost no time in lowering myself over the thatch and down the wall, which was about twelve feet or so in height—by permitting the rope to slip through my hands; but at the moment I touched the ground, a thrill of rage ran through me, when a hand was laid on my shoulder!

Drawing my pistol, I turned furiously, and was confronted by Konrada, the Dutch wife of the woodcutter.

The poor woman was weeping bitterly, as she had evidently shrunk from the house to avoid being a witness to the scene of butchery she anticipated. I know not what she said, but in a few hurried words she indicated where I would find horses, ready saddled, in a miserable shed which adjoined the dwelling, and in less than a minute I was on the back of one, which luckily proved to be my own.

Standing up in my stirrups, I thrust the loaded pistol to the lock, in the thatch of this diabolical place, and discharged it, for the purpose of setting the roof in flames. Being old and dry straw it at once ignited, and the light of its conflagration glared redly through the leafless trees

behind me, as I galloped my horse furiously along the narrow path, careless of whither it led, if it only conducted me to some outlet from the forest of Soignies.

A few hours after sunrise, I reached the town of Hal, a small place about ten miles from Brussels, where Count von Gleichen's Cuirassiers were quartered. I reported my adventure to the officer who commanded the inlying picket, and in five minutes after, he, with a sergeant, and a patrol of twelve troopers, departed with me in search of the hut in the forest.

The ruined hunting lodge was pretty well known, and the odour of the burned thatch led us directly to it. We found the roof entirely consumed; but the building was otherwise uninjured and totally deserted by all its inmates—all at least save *one*.

In the narrow and stone vaulted passage that led to the room from which I had escaped, lay the dead body of a man, whose left hand and arm were inserted through the aperture in the door, and firmly secured by a cord to the bed within—thus corroborating my report to the Austrian officer; but the dead body was headless!

Finding the impossibility of releasing him, without severing his arm, the robbers had strangely decapitated their companion and abstracted his head, to the end that either his features should not be recognized, or his silence ensured as to their number, lurking places, and other secrets, if he survived and was made prisoner.

"Can this be Falshaw?" said I to the Austrian.

"Nay, Herr Lieutenant," said he, lifting up the dead man's right hand, which was mutilated, and which I at once recognized; "this is the body of Hans Holzermann, who was degraded when we were all at Hanau."

Such was the fate of "Five-fingered Hans."

Two days after this affair I was recalled to headquarters; a company under old Captain Home, Lieutenant Ross, and Ensign Murray, all of our corps, being sent to relieve me and my party, at the head of which I gladly marched back to Brussels.

Rumour now spoke busily of another campaign; but our gaieties in the capital of the Netherlands continued without interruption, though a turn of the wheel of fortune might bring Louis XV., with his army, to the gates.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

A KISS IN THE DARK.

ONE night I was at a ball, which had been given by the municipality of Brussels to the officers of that division of which the Household Brigade formed a part; consequently the two consuls, the seven eschevins, the six common councilmen or chief artificers, with their wives and families, and the seven old nobles of the city, were present, with all the unnumbered counts and countesses, barons and baronesses who dwelt in and around the capital of the Netherlands.

The hall was gaily decorated with the banners of seventeen provinces, wreathed with gilded branches of oak and laurel, while around the walls were mirrors, lamps, and jets of perfumed waters. In places of honour there hung the long toledo with which Charles the Bold dubbed the Knights of the Golden Fleece, and the gilded armour in which the Archduke Albert made such a rapid retreat from the battle of Neuport.

The music was enchanting, and the scene was beyond description gay, for the vast hall was crowded with blooming women, gay uniforms, and varied costumes, particularly among the Austrians.

I had come off duty somewhat late, having been cutting wood with twenty rank and file in the forest of Soignies, and arrived when the ball was more than half over—when the sets of dancers were all arranged.

A stranger almost in Brussels, I had a difficulty in procuring partners, and consequently wandered about somewhat listlessly, for we of the Household Brigade had an absurd idea that we could not, perhaps, dance with every woman merely because she happened to be young or pretty, or a good figurante, as men in the mere line might do. Then there was a foreign dance *La Volta*,* which the bearded Croats and white-coated Austrians had brought from the north of Italy to Brussels, where it became the rage, and very few of the British officers had as yet acquired it—and at home, where it would have filled our staid matrons with dismay, it was totally unknown even by name.

At this ball a very lovely young woman of most distinguished appearance, who seemed to excite the admiration of many, if not of all, attracted my attention almost immediately on entering.

She was dazzlingly fair, with dark blue eyes that possessed great brilliance, and were ever sparkling with drollery; her nose was somewhat *retroussé*, and her lips were like those of a chubby child, while masses of golden hair floated upon her pure white neck and shoulders. When she paused, all flushed and palpitating, after the

* The Waltz.

whirls of the volta, she seemed radiantly beautiful and happy with the scene around her.

She was the centre of all eyes, and I hovered near her in genuine admiration of her loveliness, as I might have hovered near a picture. I had no other idea, unless it was to contrast her fairness in memory with the piquant darkness of Letty Hyde. Her dress was admirably suited to her blonde complexion, being light blue satin with white lace, while her ornaments were opals and diamonds.

Drumlanrig, who had acquired the foreign dance when he was in the Sardinian army, had just handed this lady to a seat, when I begged him to introduce me for the next minuet.

"You have no hope, Godfrey," he whispered; "her engagements for the ball are quite full—a dozen deep at least—so do not——"

"Subject myself to the mortification of a polite refusal—is that what you would say?"

"Yes."

"Who is she?"

"The Countess von Gleichen."

"What—old Gleichen's wife—of the 8th Cuirassiers?"

"The same; all in Brussels are mad about her. There, she disappears in the dance again!" added Drumlanrig, as a Hungarian hussar, all yellow braid and brass buttons, led her off; "she has certainly turned the heads of half our household fellows."

"While I was rustivating among robbers and lace workers at Nivelles."

"You have not picked up this last new thing from Italy?"

"La volta—no."

"The countess dances it divinely."

"So I perceive."

"But I am glad I have done my devoir, and got quietly rid of her."

"Rid—how? This remark seems rather at variance with your admiration of her beauty."

"The countess is a sad coquette, and the grim old cuirassier is very jealous of her."

"Of others, you should say."

"'Trifles light as air,' are sufficient to drive him wild. He has already paraded three men, and winged two of them, merely for looking at her."

"I should like to try this new dance with her, even were the old cuirassier to have me out to-morrow."

"Zounds, Godfrey," said Drumlanrig, in a bantering tone, "you don't think she would surrender her waist to a lieutenant, even were he the first *beau sabreur* in the Regiment of Leopold I., or in the 8th Cuirassiers, all beard and boots?"

Unless a subaltern had a title, I knew that his mere military rank availed him little on the Continent, so I bit my lip at my friend's jest, and passed into the refreshment saloon, where, in pure pique, or thirst, or both, I drained a long glass or two of sparkling champagne, a wine to which I found old Major Stuart, and others whose dancing days were past, paying their addresses with considerable assiduity.

There was a prevailing idea among the Germans, high and low (we had a saying then in the service that Europe was *all* Germany from Hanover to —), that a subaltern, if not quite a *parvenu*, was at least a very poor gentleman, with nothing but his pay, probably a deep drinker and a high player, "always in debt and

often in liquor," consequently counts and barons, with names that seemed a combination of snorts and sneezes, were always at a premium wherever the allies marched; and with the prospect of a new campaign to enliven the opening year, the fair-skinned matrons of Brussels had no idea of their daughters marrying into camp or barracks, and hence very few of the unwedded were at this municipal ball.

The severe bruise I had received from Falshaw's hand was concealed by the art of a Frenchman, to whom I had paid a visit; his shop was opposite the palace of the Emperor Charles V., and he styled himself "a repairer of the human visage;" in fact he was a fellow who painted and patched ladies' faces; but I still suffered from the effects of the blow, thus the fumes of the wine soon mounted to my head.

On becoming sensible of this I resolved to retreat at once, and sought the vestibule, which was blazing with variegated lamps, and crowded by lacqueys in splendid liveries, and orderlies in all fashions and colours of uniforms, who were in waiting with their masters' horses.

Having come in a *fiacre* from my billet, which was situated beyond the Louvain Gate, I sought a similar vehicle amid the mass of carriages, and, as the night was cold, wrapped my cloak about me.

"Mein herr, mein herr," cried a man, who held open the door of a smart *calèche*, "we await you."

"All right," said I, stepping in; "drive on—the Louvain Gate."

"Of course, mein herr—we always pass it," he replied, shutting the door with a bang, and in a moment more I was being driven through the dark or ill-lighted

streets of Brussels at a spanking pace, though compelled to pause at times, till the chains which closed them at an hour so late were unlocked by the watch.

I fell fast asleep in a corner—the champagne of the municipality had done its duty.

Something awoke me; I looked out; how was this? The carriage lights were flashing in quick succession on trees as we passed them by the wayside; the pavement no more rang under the horses' feet, and by the darkness, the silence, and the muffled sound of the hoofs and wheels, I knew that we were in the country.

In the open country, thought I; now where on earth are the fellows going to? We must have left the Louvain Gate far behind!

So, indeed, we had, and Louvain itself, though I knew it not. On consulting my watch, it would seem that an hour must have elapsed since I had left the ball. An hour! and the carriage was still being driven rapidly on. It jolted fearfully, for the roads in Flanders, like those in France, were so rough, and had wheel-ruts so deep, that the authorities were wont to bury suicides and criminals in them.

I became alarmed, and thought immediately of Falshaw—of robbery and outrage. Believing myself to be the victim of another snare, I was about to open one of the glasses, when I discovered a person seated by my side—a female—a lady evidently by the softness of her hands, and the rich texture of her rustling dress. The idea of an intrigue flashed at once upon me; but before I could speak or act in this new cause for perplexity, a gentle voice said in German,—

“I knew that you were angry with me, Rudiger, when

you came into the carriage, so I feared to speak then; and when you dropped asleep I was loth to waken you; but tell me now, my love," she continued creeping close, and throwing her arms round my neck, while I felt her lips and the masses of her soft perfumed hair approach my cheek, "tell me that you are no longer angry with your little Clara."

Perplexing though it was, the situation, it was not without its charm; and while pondering what to say to avert the outcry and dismay that were pretty certain to follow her discovery of the mistake, she spoke again,—

"How have you slept? I kissed you no less than three times, and could not wake you. Did you enjoy the ball, dearest? I fear not, as you have given over dancing. You won't speak! Surely you are not angry with me still, because I coquetted a little — just a very little—with that long-legged English guardsman. Say that you are not, and that by this kiss—and this—that you forgive me."

The affair was getting now beyond a joke. I drew my companion to the carriage window, so that the light of one of the lamps fell on her face, and in all her beauty, with her golden hair, her opals and diamonds, her blue satin and white lace, to my dismay I recognized the Countess von Gleichen!

The same lamp revealed my scarlet uniform; she uttered a cry, and shrunk to the other side of the carriage, while I—remembering the words of Drumlanrig—felt assured there was a duel in prospect for me on the morrow.

"I crave your pardon, madame," said I, hurriedly, while I kissed her hand; "there is a sad mistake here—

a mistake for which I am entirely to blame. But do not be alarmed—I am an officer in the British service, as my uniform may show you.”

“A mistake,” she exclaimed with irritation. “Oh, I shall never hear the end of it! How came you, sir, to enter my carriage?”

“I mistook it for a *fiacre*; and why did you permit me?”

“Because I thought you in that long cloak to be my husband,” she replied, bursting into a fit of merry laughter which completely reassured me; “and yet,” she added, “this may prove no laughing matter, after all. We have left the count at Brussels, a-foot, nearly twelve miles off, to follow us as best he may.”

“Twelve miles, madame!”

“Yes, for here we are just entering the gates of our Chateau de Marimont, which lies two miles beyond Louvain.”

As she spoke, the carriage entered a long avenue of stately poplars, and stopped under an antique *porte cochère* of carved stone, which was lighted by four lamps that hung from the mouths of four grotesque stone faces.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CHATEAU MARIMONT.

"HERR COUNT, supper waits," said an aiguilleted valet throwing down the steps, and I almost laughed at the fellow's blank stare of perplexity when I alighted from the carriage, although my embarrassment was increasing.

"Keep the horses to the carriage for a time," said the countess, as I assisted her to alight, and then she passed her hand through my proffered arm; "this gentleman has accompanied me from Brussels, the count will follow."

A group of valets in livery fell back respectfully as we passed through the vestibule, and were ushered into an old-fashioned library, where a little supper, with everything—the plate, china, crystal, fruit and wine—in exquisite taste, was arrayed for two. I was compelled to remain silent lest I should compromise the beautiful countess before her servants.

"Place a cover for a third," said she; "I expect the count every moment."

I devoutly hoped that warlike individual might find it conducive to his ease to pass the night—or what remained of it—in Brussels.

"May I ask your name?" said she, with a sweet smile.

"Lieutenant Lauriston, of the Guards."

"Herr Lieutenant, then pray seat yourself."

"Madam, I can no longer permit myself to intrude upon you. This mistake has gone too far already. You

have kindly accepted my apologies ; and now allow me to retire."

" Whither ? "

" To Brussels."

She burst into a merry laugh that rang like a silver bell, and, laying her pretty hand on my arm, said,—

" You must not leave this until you have seen my husband, and explained to him how this affair came about. What I deem but a joke he may view very differently. Thus, were you to disappear, or were I to send the carriage back with you, I know not what he might think."

" How, madam ? "

She blushed, and said,—

" His ideas are strict, even to peculiarity."

" True ; I have heard——"

" What ? " she asked, turning her clear eyes full upon mine.

" That the count is stern."

" Very ; so we must explain to him everything that occurred in the carriage."

" Everything ? "

" So far as we may with prudence," said she, with a coquettish smile and another blush which heightened her pure and delicate beauty ; and while surveying her, with an admiration difficult to conceal, I could not help thinking, as she sat there in her rich ball dress and sparkling jewels, with the subdued light of the library lamp falling on her sweet young face, her dazzling skin, her golden hair, and faultless outline, that Herr Count von Gleichen, of his Imperial Majesty's 8th Cuirassiers, was the most fortunate man in the allied army.

And those fair arms had been around my neck, and

this beautiful woman had kissed me again and again ! True, it had been a mistake—the fumes of the champagne were quite evaporated now, and the whole adventure became more perplexing than gratifying, as I felt certain that a severe sequel would follow it.

There ensued a little awkward pause, during which I affected to examine a large square picture that hung above the fireplace. It represented a knight in armour, with a lady on each side of him—one wondrously fair, the other dark as a Moor. In the background there was represented a marble tomb, whereon lay the effigies of the three ; and I was about to inquire the meaning of this remarkable picture, when the clatter of a horse's hoofs rang under the *porte cochère*, and then spurs were heard to jingle in the vestibule as the rider approached.

"My husband!" said the lady, as her colour heightened, and she shrunk from my side. In a moment after the library door was thrown open, and Rudiger Count Gleichen, in his white uniform, radiant with orders and the gold cords of his massive aiguillettes, entered, but with a dark expression on his long moustached and formidable visage.

"Clara—countess, you drove off and left me in a manner most unaccountable——" he began, when his eye suddenly fell upon me, and an expression of mingled astonishment and rage passed over his features.

"Here it comes," thought I ; "we are in for it now, at ten paces—a daybreak parade."

But the countess hastened forward, and taking his hands caressingly in hers, burst into one of her merry ringing laughs, and told him how the mistake had occurred, and that we had never discovered it until the moment when the carriage drew up at the gate of the chateau, when we *both* awoke for the first time, and that

it was all the fault of that stupid fellow Fritz, the valet: how terrified she was—oh, how terrified! That, to prevent any misconception, she had told the servants their master would follow, as she was sure he would; that I had wished to return, but she would not permit me, as she was certain her husband would be so happy to extend the hospitality of his house to a comrade.

Still the grim visage of the count did not relax, and he surveyed us with a very dubious expression of eye.

"I think you danced frequently with the countess at the ball?" said he.

"Nay, count, I was not so fortunate," I replied; "I did not dance even once to-night."

"This is strange," said he, gnawing his moustache.

"I was on duty, and came late."

"Then, one in your uniform resembles you closely?"

"Sir Henry Rose, perhaps."

"Your features are not unfamiliar to me."

"Perhaps so, count. I had the honour to see you in the palace of the Emperor at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, when I came there with a special despatch from Marshal Stair; and again I had the honour of seeing you on the field of Dettingen, when, half stunned by a spent ball, you gave me your flask——"

"Ah, true—I remember," said he, as he gave me his hand, and his frigid manner suddenly thawed; "but this has been an odd mistake. The idea of your stumbling into my carriage instead of a common *fiacre*—and you and the countess sleeping all the way hither! We shall talk of the battle over our supper. To Brussels you cannot return to-night, and so are welcome to your quarters in my Chateau of Marimont."

When seated at supper the conversation became gay

and unrestrained. The countess felt that she had got rid of a serious difficulty, and had, moreover, escaped a lecture on her bearing at the ball, where she and Sir Henry Rose had made themselves somewhat conspicuous; but the gaieties of the past night, with their incidents, formed our staple topics, and the toilettes and absurd mistakes of the citizens and their wives formed happy subjects for the wit and raillery of our fair hostess.

The morning was far advanced when we separated, and when I retired to bed, to dream that I was again travelling in the dark and jolting carriage, with the lovely Clara's cheek close to mine; but anon she changed to the fair woman of the strange picture; then the count took the form of the man in armour, and then he became Falshaw, while the dark beauty turned to Letty Hyde; and so, with all kinds of absurdities thronging on my fancy, I slept till the morning sun was gilding the turret vanes and the tall poplar groves of Marimont.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BREAKFAST.

THOUGH I had soldiered long enough neither to be incommoded by changing quarters or awaking in strange places, I quitted the luxurious couch assigned me at Marimont as readily as I have done a wet blanket in an open bivouac. I was up betimes next day, and, after a most careful toilette, was conducted by Fritz the valet to the library, where breakfast was to be served.

The grim cuirassier had not yet appeared; but the countess laid aside a book she had been reading, and advanced to receive me with a smile of welcome, not unmingled with archness; for the adventure of last night, and the kisses so freely given and received in the depths of the carriage, were yet too recent to be forgotten.

She was very simply and becomingly attired in white muslin, without ornament of any kind, and her golden hair shone in the light of the morning sun as it streamed through the old mullioned window, in a recess of which the breakfast table was placed; and now, by day, I could perceive that my fair friend seemed nearly thirty, though by night she had all the appearance of a girl.

I know not whether it was her coquettish and natural manner, or our adventure of the preceding night, that seemed to make us familiar, but we proceeded to chat away quite like old friends.

"I shall ever consider the blunder of last night a most fortunate one," said I, "since it has procured me the honour of an introduction here."

"Say no more of the blunder, or to what it led," she replied, laughing, and glancing furtively at the door; "at your time of life people often make sad ones; but what, may I ask, is your age, Herr Lauriston; ah, pray don't think me rude."

"I am just twenty-three, madam."

"Twenty-three! at that age, ah, heavens! the heart is stronger than the brain—we listen more to the dictates of love than reason."

"True," said I, thinking of Letty Hyde, and then, remembering the disparity of years between the count and the fair Clara, I wondered to whose dictates *she* had listened.

"Would that we could always remain at the age of twenty—with its pure aspirations, its honest impulses, and ignorance of the world!" she exclaimed.

"Surely, madam, the world must be yet unchanged to you?" said I, gazing into her clear blue eyes with growing interest.

"I don't know. 'Tis not as I would wish it, or the people that are in it weary me; at least, some of them do," she added, with that air of languor which pretty women can, at times, so well assume. "I perceive that you look frequently at that large picture?"

"The man in armour with the two ladies—yes."

"The fair one——"

"What a lovely face she has!"

"'Tis said to resemble—whom think you does it resemble?"

"Yourself, madame—I could not be mistaken."

"It is a strange coincidence, for that fair lady was my ancestress."

"How?"

"The count and I are cousins."

"And she lived so long ago as when armour of that quaint fashion was worn?"

"In the time of Frederick II."

"That is fully five hundred years ago."

"You may see," said Clara, putting her white hand on the dark canvas, "that by the black cross on his white surcoat, this count of Gleichen was a German crusader."

"And had *two* handsome wives at once—so he was a luckier dog than his descendant, who contents himself with one," said the count, joining us suddenly.

"Fie, Rudiger!" said the countess, reddening slightly.

"Yes; a Christian, fair as you, my own Clara, and a Mohammedan lovely as a houri, says the legend, and with them *both* he lived in terms of the greatest happiness."

"In the East?" said I.

"Nay, in our own castle of Gleichen, in this Christian land of Germany—strange, was it not, and in those rigid old Catholic times?"

"The Scripture says a bishop shall be the husband of one wife, so perhaps there was nothing to prevent a crusader from having *two*," said the countess, laughing, as we seated ourselves at table, and Fritz proceeded to give us our coffee.

"But that picture cannot be so old as the days even of the last crusade?" said I.

"Oh no," replied the count; "it was painted by Gerard Honthorst of Utrecht, about a hundred and twenty years ago, and by a singular coincidence the fair countess of the picture closely resembles her who now presides over our breakfast-table. Gerard died in 1660.

but this effort of his pencil was merely the fanciful embodiment of a legend of our family, which, if you have any interest in such matters—a curiosity I could scarcely expect to find in a young soldier—I have no doubt Clara will be happy to relate to you after we have had our coffee, and while I write my letters for Brussels.”

“I would prefer to read it,” said the countess; “the whole story is written on vellum in that large volume, and if you will kindly hand it down, the Herr and I will decipher it together.”

The volume was soon produced. It was a thick folio history of the Counts of Gleichen, in manuscript, with deep red edges, bound in white vellum, stamped with a coat of arms in gold on each side, and clasped and mounted with antique brass.

Breakfast over, the count retired to his writing-table; the countess soon found the legend of her ancestor, and together we proceeded to peruse it.

There were many difficult words to be deciphered in the contracted German of the old Benedictine monk of Erfurt who had recorded the narrative in his cell on the Petersberg; and as we sat side by side with our faces bent over his quaint pages my eyes wandered often and insensibly to the snow-white hands and golden hair of my fair companion, as she read—as nearly as I can remember it—the following legend of the picture.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LEFT-HANDED MARRIAGE.

IN the days when Jane of Constantinople was Countess of Flanders, among the German crusaders who followed her father Baldwin to the Holy Land was Rudiger, Count of Gleichen, one of the most accomplished warriors of the house of Swartzburg.

In those days of chivalry, of romance, of song, and of religious enthusiasm, many assumed the Cross from a mere love of wandering and adventure, others to have their debts handsomely cancelled, and many, let us hope, to fight faithfully and manfully for the recovery of the holy places from the profanation of the Infidels; but the Count of Gleichen left his family and his home, inspired purely by friendship for Baldwin, who had bestowed upon him a chateau called Marimont, near Louvaine, and under whose banner he led fifty men-at-arms on horseback and a hundred crossbowmen, in that great army of preaching warriors and fighting monks who bent their way towards the plains of Judea.

It was on Lammas day, in the year 1236, when he departed from his castle of Gleichen, which stands by the river On in Swartzburg, and a vast number of spectators accompanied him far on his way; for Rudiger, who was bailiff of Frankenhauseu and lord of Keula, was beloved by all whom he ruled; but none loved him more than his wife, who was Ulrica, a daughter of the Landgrave of Thuringia—known as Ulrica the Golden-haired, from the colour of her tresses and by the fairness of her beauty, of which the minnesingers or love-singers (espe-

cially Conrad of Wurtzburg), were never tired of celebrating in their ballads and songs.

For three years and three days he was to be absent from Ulrica and their two little sons, serving in the arid East; and it seemed as if ages must elapse before that term of probation would pass, and he might turn his face and his footsteps towards the West.

The ways by which he and his companions marched to the shore of the Mediterranean were wild and dangerous; the voyage by sea, in small and crowded galleys, to the land of Palestine, was full of real danger and invested with many fabulous perils; but the Germans had stout hearts and strong hands, and they landed joyously on the yellow strand where whilom the Apostles fished and preached; and from thence they began their march to join the knights of the Temple and of St. John, who were hemmed by the Saracens in several small cities and fortresses.

But it would seem in those days and wars, as if the hand of God was upraised against the men who fought in His name; for the sublime enthusiasm, which, in twelve crusades, led two millions of Christians to seek the rescue of the Holy City and of the fair land of Judæa from the enemies of Christianity availed them nothing; for they perished by the sabres of the Saracens, by disease and famine, and by the hot winds and burning sands; and, in the end, the Crescent triumphed above the Cross, as a verification of what our Lord said of old, that His kingdom was not of the sword.

One year of Rudiger's probation had been passed in the East, when, in a battle fought near Damascus, all his followers perished. Of the fifty men-at-arms on horseback, and of the hundred sturdy crossbowmen, whom he

had brought from his county of Gleichen and the woods of Thuringia, and who bore his crest upon their breasts, not one survived ; and when the red flaming sun of Judæa sank behind the vine-clad hills that overlook the Orontes, leaving a plain covered with corpses, Rudiger found himself, with many other unfortunate Christians, a prisoner and a—slave !

One year had passed, I have said, but *how many* now must pass before he might again be free ? For nearly another year the poor count was kept in chains, with hundreds of other Christians from various countries, in the fortress of Damascus or within the walls of the city ; and, clashing his fetters, he often writhed in mental torture as he thought of the hopeless fate to which he was destined, and the dread that never more would he see the faces, or hear the voices of his wife and children whom he so tenderly loved.

But when two years and two days had elapsed the count was unchained, and led forth into a garden of the castle of Damascus ; a spade was placed in his hands, and, by a Nubian taskmaster, he was commanded “to work, and work well, if he would save his infidel back from the bastinado or his neck from the bowstring.”

Even this change brought some happiness, for with it came the hope of escape, and with it came health too ; for the oriental summer was lovely, and the soft aromatic breeze that came over the mountains of Damascus—mountains that are covered with vines, with olive and mulberry groves—made the captive's heart expand as he thought of his old grey castle by the brawling river and the dark oak woods of Swartzburg and Thuringia ; and then he sighed forth secret hopes and secret prayers, as he toiled daily under the eye and lash of a severe task-

master—the black Nubian—who abhorred the whites and would cheerfully have slain every slave committed to his care, but that they were the property of his master the sultan.

A little observation convinced Rudiger that all chance of escape from the high-walled and closely guarded castle and its garden was vain, and then his heart and his hopes sunk together.

It chanced, however, that about the time when the great caravan departs from Damascus to Mecca, under the guidance of the sacred Emir Hadjee, the sultan came to the city with a vast retinue, and took up his residence in the castle; and as the ladies of his household had the privilege of walking in the garden, all the slaves were withdrawn save the count, who, by some strange freak of his Nubian tyrant, was permitted still to attend to the cultivation of his rose-trees and tulip-beds.

While thus occupied he observed that a lady, veiled in the oriental fashion so completely that no part of her person was visible save her eyes, frequently passed near, and hovered about the place where he worked, and she seemed to regard him with attention; for the count was handsome, and in the prime of manhood, and now his dark beard, long untrimmed and uncombed, flowed over his breast, adding a dignity to features that were singularly noble and pleasing, but were saddened by thought and by adversity.

His graceful figure was now fully developed by toil, and the sun of Judæa had embrowned him, for he was compelled to work, like other slaves, with no other clothing than a pair of loose cotton breeches, girt at the waist by a leathern girdle.

One day this lady appeared to take courage, and when

no one was near she addressed a few words of compassion and condolence to the Christian, who beheld her advances with dread, for he knew well that to speak with a woman of the sultan's household was to ensure a dreadful death by torture, and he besought her to leave him, nor lure him into danger.

"Fear not," said she, "for I am Zoleikha."

"And how can that name protect me, lady?"

"Have you never heard of me?" asked the Oriental, her large dark eyes seeming to dilate with wonder, and to flash with light through the aperture in her veil; "is it possible that you have never heard of Zoleikha, the favourite daughter of the sultan?"

Count Rudiger bowed low and knelt on one knee, and felt but slightly reassured, though certainly the danger was less than if his veiled friend had been the sultan's favourite wife.

Three days in succession the young princess visited the count by stealth in the garden. She was pleased with his grace and courtly air, which even his present miserable plight could not conceal, and she praised that which certainly he valued little, his skill in training and trimming the rose-trees, which grew there thick and luxuriant as those in the fabled garden of Irem, and her glorious dark eyes sparkled with unmistakeable pleasure and joy whenever he addressed her; though he never omitted to beg that she would retire and leave him, lest her pity and compassion, if known, might be the means of adding to his misery, and, perhaps, of more hopelessly separating him from his wife and children, who dwelt far away in Frangistan.

And each day that the lady came dread of discovery

made Rudiger seek a more and more secluded part of the garden.

"But what says the Koran?" asked the princess, winningly, as she drew up the loose flowing sleeve of her dress, and laid upon the count's bare arm a hand that was faultless in form and beauty, though the pink nails were slightly tinted with henna.

"I know not what the Koran says," replied the prisoner, gloomily; "and have no wish to know."

"Why?"

"Because the priests of God at Erfurt," replied Rudiger, devoutly signing the cross upon his bare breast, "they by whom I was taught the blessed faith of my forefathers, told me—told me that your Koran was but the coinage of hell, and thither it must return with all its lies."

"Yet *I* believe in it," said she, reproachfully.

"Pardon me, lady; but all I endure here leads me to hate the book and its upholders."

"Listen——"

"I must not."

"You shall listen to me," continued the princess, grasping his arm firmly in her soft little hand, while her dark eyes seemed to pierce his soul; "in its fourth chapter the Koran saith, 'if ye hate women, it may happen that ye hate a thing wherein God hath placed much good.'"

"But I do not hate you. Oh, no, lady! Since I left my own home no voice save yours has fallen in kindness on my ear."

"'Tis well," replied Zoleikha, her eyes flashing with joy and triumph; "but hush—to-morrow I will tell you

more;" and, perceiving the Nubian approaching, she retired in haste.

Next morning early, when the count was on his knees in the garden, clearing away, with reverence, the weeds that grew around the roots of a Spini Christi—the shrub which is said to have formed the crown of thorns worn by our Saviour at His crucifixion—he was again approached by Zoleikha, whose presence had now become to him a source of mingled fear and pleasure—fear lest it might bring him to premature disgrace and death, and pleasure in having the society of one so lovely, so gentle, and so exalted in station. She laid her small and trembling hand lightly on his shoulder, and he made her a reverence so low that her cheek blushed and her heart leaped with pleasure.

"Christian," said she, "we spoke of the Koran yesterday."

The face of the count darkened again.

"Listen," she resumed in a soft whisper, while the perfume of her breath and hair crossed his face; "you have a wife and children?"

Tears started to the eyes of Rudiger as he said,

"Alas, God help me! I may never see them more, and at this moment, lady, their beloved faces are before me, their voices in my ears and in my heart!"

"The Koran says, 'If ye be desirous to exchange a wife for *another wife*, take not away anything therefrom, lest you do her a manifest injustice;' which implies that a man may lawfully leave one wife for another."

"Another!—oh, Ulrica!" exclaimed Rudiger, clasping his hands, as he became bewildered by the bold words of the impulsive Saracen, while his heart swelled with emotion, as he seemed to see in fancy his castle by

the waters of the On, his fair-haired wife sitting lonely in the hall and their children at her knee, reckoning that but a short period remained now of the three years and three days he had promised to be absent from Gleichen.

"If your wife loves you as I do, to what cruelty do I counsel you!" exclaimed Zoleikha, casting herself, in a passion of tears, upon the bosom of Rudiger. "Love me, Christian, love me, and you will become as the Koran saith and the moollahs teach, 'a possessor of the Garden of Eden, through which floweth rivers of milk and wine; a possessor adorned with bracelets of gold, clothed in green garments woven of silk and of gold, and there, resplendent with glory, you shall repose for ever on a couch, the happy reward of the abode of delights.'"

But Rudiger heard her quote the words of the Prophet unmoved.

"Alas!" said he, "it was not in language such as this that He preached, whose sepulchre I came to rescue with my sword, and who wore a crown of these sharp thorns on Calvary."

"How dull, how blind you are!" exclaimed Zoleikha, starting back, with anger flashing in her beautiful eyes; for the love of an oriental girl is bold as it is tender and true.

"I am not blind to your beauty, lovely lady. You strive to teach me your Koran: oh, that in return, I could teach you how low it seeks to degrade your sex."

"I do not understand you."

"Learn, that it holds them to be without honour or virtue, or even a human soul! The very seclusion to which you—unwedded though you be—are condemned, daring only to speak to me, a slave, by stealth, proves

yourself *a slave*! The Mahommedan depends upon the prevention of all intrigues and opportunities by condemning his women to a life of such seclusion as the Koran of the false Prophet ordained. Hence he makes you a slave, to be immured in harems and zenanas—a thing of pleasure or of profit, that may be bought or bartered, like a horse or a camel, for so many pieces of gold. Ah, how unlike the women of knightly Christendom, who hold their high places in Church and State, at home and at the altar, and in the hearts of kings and soldiers, of brave and good and loving men, by that pre-eminence which the mother of God gave to all the women of the Christian world.”

The Crusader’s eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, but the Moslemah answered timidly.

“Zoleikha does not understand all this.”

“How should you—how can you, a poor captive like myself?”

“Zoleikha is no captive,” she replied proudly; “but if you think so let us fly together.”

“Aid me, lady, that I may escape to the desert, and from thence, perhaps, reach my wife and children.”

“Speak not of them,” said the fair Moslemah, as she smote the ground with her foot, which was small and bare, or, at least, cased only in a golden sandal; “for the mention of them makes my blood to curdle, and my heart almost to hate you! And you would seek the desert?” she added, with pity and mockery glittering in her eyes; “the desert, a sea of sand—a sea without water.”

“Yea, lady, once free of this now accursed Damascus—for such it is to the Christians—though St. John

Damiensis lies under yonder dome—I might meet those in the desert who would aid or protect me.”

“Foolish Christian, you would perish there, even as those perished whom the Khalif Moawiyah sent into the Cavern of the Seven Sleepers—by a maddening thirst and a burning wind.”

“I care not—I care not; ’tis better to die there than pine in slavery here.”

“I pity you, as I love you, deeply,” whispered Zoleikha, softly and in tears.

“How dare I listen to you—how dare I speak of love,” said Rudiger, “I who have a wife—a dear and loving wife, far away in the free land of the Christians.” And as he spoke he turned his eyes and stretched his arms to the west, where the sun was setting; but there rose in blue distance the vast hills of Lebanon.

“Love me and I will lead you to her,” said Zoleikha, passionately; “your having only one wife matters nothing to me, whose father has so many! Love me and we shall escape together; for *alone* you can never do so.”

These words sank deep into the soul of Rudiger. Not that, as yet, he loved this impetuous Moslemah, but that he longed to behold Ulrica, and their fair-haired little ones—his home and their native land; so his heart yearned within him, till at times he was in an ecstasy of despair.

And yet this Moslem girl might have lured any man to love her, for she was as darkly beautiful as Ulrica was brilliantly fair. Wondrously black were her eyes, but their long lashes imparted a charming softness to their expression; her features seemed perfect, though partly concealed by the thin gauze folds of her headdress; and

her skin was delicate as the skin of an infant, for her mother had been a woman of Georgia, and, veiled and secluded as Zoleikha had been, the hot sun of Syria had shone in vain for her.

The temptations were great, and who can wonder that Rudiger yielded? Their arrangements for flight were soon perfected by the love, the address, and activity of Zoleikha; and the bustle incident to the approaching pilgrimage greatly furthered their designs, for so great was the caravan that not less than twenty thousand camels were a portion of it.

The attire of a pilgrim for Mecca—one in immediate attendance on the Emir Hadjee and the Holy Sheiks—was procured by the princess, and concealed in the garden of Damascus, among the rose-trees, where Rudiger usually worked. Zoleikha possessed herself of the keys of the seraglio, by which to escape in the evening, when all the household of the Sultan were engrossed by the departure of the caravan with the holy camel, which was to bear on his back the golden chest which contained the Law of the Prophet.

How joyously beat the heart of Rudiger, when the sun of that evening, setting redly in the west, cast its farewell rays on the shining cupolas, on the red granite minarets and grotesque columns of the mosque of Zekia, and on the loopholed towers and white embattled ramparts of Damascus! Secretly, amid the dense bower of roses, which his own hands had reared and woven, he assumed the flowing robes of an Asiatic, with a green turban—the holy colour; and he was in the act of placing in his sash a rich dagger, which Zoleikha had also procured him, when a large hand was heavily laid on his shoulder!

Turning, he found himself face to face with the hideous and colossal Nubian. The black, shining visage, the yellow eyes, and thick scarlet lips of the latter wore a malicious smile, as he surveyed Rudiger from head to foot, and the grasp of his large and muscular left hand tightened as he gradually upraised a heavy bastinado with the other

"Now, by the seven hundred sins of Ebn Abbas," said he, grinning, "but here is a transformation!"

Ere the blow could descend, the dagger of the count—to whom the moment was one of slavery or freedom—of life or death—was buried in his heart. Then Rudiger dragged the body of the Nubian to a secret place, and covered it with green branches.

This terrible episode was scarcely over, ere Zoleikha stood by his side, simply attired as a female slave. Her emotions, whatever they were at this momentous crisis, were completely concealed by her veil.

"Come," said she, "follow me; but be silent, and, as if you were a tongueless mute, reply to no one."

She gave Rudiger a large basket to carry, as if they were going to the bazaar where fruit and vegetables were sold, and together they left the great castle of Damascus—not by stealth or by any secret door (for surrounded as it was by lofty walls, deep ditches, and watchful guards, such a mode of egress was impossible), but by the grand entrance—boldly, quietly, and unquestioned,—and fled into the open country.

They lurked long in a copse near the vast morass of Behaïret-el-Merdi (or the Lake of the Meadow), which lies near Damascus, until the search and pursuit were abandoned and until they found means to cross the wooded hills of Lebanon, where they were hunted from

place to place by the ferocious Druses, who were the enemies alike of the Christian Crusaders, the Ottomans, and the sultans of Aleppo; but the love of Zoleikha seemed to shield Rudiger from every danger, and after many miles of a toilsome and perilous journey they reached the sea-shore at Sidon.

There they seized a skiff and put off to sea, and on the following day were happily picked up by a Cypriot galley, which, after a long and boisterous voyage, landed them at Venice, where the doge, James Tiepolo—the same brave soldier who raised the siege of Constantinople and stormed Padua from the tyrant Ezzelin—received and protected them in his palace.

The count's friendship for Zoleikha, and his deep gratitude to her, had long ere this ripened into love—a glowing and passionate love,—for she was beautiful, tender, and gentle; yet the soft delight of this new passion was ever marred and clouded by the pangs of a remorse which *she* could in no way comprehend, when he thought of Ulrica and his children, and the once pure and spotless love he bore them.

What will Ulrica, and what will the Church say? were the questions ever on his lips and in his soul.

The three years and the three days had long since elapsed, and Rudiger knew that Ulrica's grief would be great. Of this he was soon assured by the arrival of a faithful friend and follower, the seneschal of Frankenhauseu, who had been sent by Ulrica towards the East to make inquiries for the count among the many pilgrims, soldiers, and ransomed prisoners who were daily returning from the Holy Land, and on the high and narrow bridge of the Rialto, which had been built about sixty years before, the messenger of Ulrica, to his

joy, met his master, who instantly knew him by the coat of arms embroidered on the breast of his green tunic.

The seneschal informed him that the countess and his children were well, but sorely mourned his absence as a living death.

Now it was that the count felt his heart lacerated by doubt and fear— by love for both his wives, and by duty to both, and by remorse for an early and wedded love so nearly supplanted by another. To that other he owed a debt of gratitude and affection; she trusted to him wholly and sincerely, and could he now cast her from him in a far and foreign land? And so, with much that was truth and much that was sophistry, did Rudiger seek to console himself, until the wary seneschal advised him, before returning to Gleichen, to visit Rome and confess his fears and his predicament to the Holy Father in person.

Gregory IX., then in the last year of his stormy pontificate, is stated to have given him permission to wed Zoleikha with his left hand, and to keep both his wives, and a document "*Datum Romae, die 7 Maji, anno 1240,*" to that effect was issued under the seal of the Fisherman.

If his holiness was thus indulgent on hearing the strange story of Rudiger, the Lady Ulrica (continues the legend) was not less so, for, in transports of joy on the return of her husband, she embraced and kissed the beautiful Moslemah who had restored that husband to her, and but for whom he had too probably ended his days in captivity at Damascus.

The count and his two wives lived long and happily at his castle of Gleichen—all the more happily, doubtless (adds the old Benedictine), because Zoleikha, as she

never had any children, loved with great tenderness those of Ulrica, and so their years passed away without discord or jealousy.

In the old feudal fortress of Gleichen, which overlooks the On, there is still preserved the antique carved bed of oak whereon the count and his two countesses reposed, and after death they were all interred together in one large altar tomb in the church of the Petersberg Benedictines at Erfurt, wherein this history was written.

On that tomb the effigy of the crusader lies cross-legged in mail, with a shield on his arm and a sword at his girdle; Ulrica lies on his right side, and Zoleikha, the wife of the left hand, on his left, all three with their hands clasped as if in prayer, while a plate of brass bears the following epitaph:—

“Here lie the bodies of Rudiger count of Gleichen lord of Keula, and of his two wives, Ulrica of Thuringia, and Zoleikha a Saracen, who loved each other as sisters, and him devotedly.

“United by the ties of love, when living they had but one nuptial bed, and in death one marble covers them.

“*Dominus det nobis suam pacem.*” *

“The Lord give us His peace.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DUCHESS'S LETTER.

SUCH was the quaint and, in some points, rather improbable story (though the tomb in Erfurt remains to this day in attestation of its truth) which the charming young countess read to me, and ere we had concluded, Count Gleichen had finished his letters and rejoined us.

The carriage was ordered to the porte-cochere, and we set out for Brussels. The countess and I occupied the vehicle, while the count rode his charger alongside, and when I surveyed his tall, gaunt and soldierly figure from time to time, I thought he might very well have passed for his ancestor, Count Rudiger of the crusading story.

He rode stiffly erect, seated well back on his saddle, with long stirrups, the toes pointed up, and the spurred heels downward; the right hand hanging behind the right hip-joint, and the thumb of the left firmly planted on the gathered reins, while his long moustaches, his black helmet and cuirass, studded with gilt nails, and his white coat, profusely laced with silver, were all quaint, and in tone with his general bearing.

On this occasion I was *not* asleep when we passed through Louvain, which is traditionally said in Flanders to take its name from Louve, a Scottish soldier of fortune, who served Liderick du Buck; and the countess drew my attention to the old tower of Verloren Kost and the gorgeous spire of St. Peter.

At the Louvain gate of Brussels my new friends set me down, according to my request, near my billet, and I

left them, receiving a warm invitation to visit the chateau again ; this, however, I never had an opportunity of doing, as the few days that remained to me in the capital of the Netherlands were amply occupied otherwise.

I hastened in search of Drumlanrig, inspired by emotions of pleasure in having acquired a friend so pleasing as the young Countess of Gleichen, and anticipating much happiness in her society ; but these ideas were speedily put to flight by the tidings which came with the mail from London.

My servant informed me that the earl had been repeatedly inquiring for me, and had left word that he would be found at his hotel, near the palace of Charles V., whither I at once repaired.

"Glad you have come at last, Godfrey," said he, starting from a sofa on which he had been lounging, beside a tripod table, whereon were two decanters of wine, glasses, fruit, and a number of open letters ; "welcome, old friend," he added, raising a glass to his lips.

"Do you refer to your Moselle, or to me ?" I asked, laughing.

"To you, of course — though the wine and I are old comrades, and have often been under fire together. I have more than once gone into action with a bottle of it, either under my belt, or in my havresack ; but, somehow, I always considered the former the safest place. Where have you buried yourself since the ball last night ?"

"In the Chateau de Marimont."

"What—at old Gleichen's ?"

"Yes."

"Egad—all night ?"

"Till within the last hour." I then proceeded to relate what had occurred after the ball, and a bright smile passed over his usually grave and pale face.

"Zounds, Godfrey, 'tis well you escaped being called out—and *out* you would infallibly be, if the count knew all. But you have heard the news, I presume."

"Of what?"

"Ah—I forgot, the mail only arrived this morning. We break up from here, and take the field almost immediately."

"Well, we have long expected to do so."

"But, what is of more personal interest to me is a letter from my mother—a very brief one, however—in which she encloses another for you, and writes that it contains information of the deepest interest to *me*, and to you she refers me."

I felt the blood flushing to my temples as the earl spoke. The idea that the epistle referred to Letty Hyde instantly occurred to me, and I could scarcely conceal my confusion. About what else, who else, could the duchess write to me, to whom she had never written before?

Breaking the seal (a ducal coronet with a winged heart), I withdrew to a window and perused the letter, which was dated from Queensberry House, Burlington-street, London, about seven weeks back.

The duchess began by relating the alarm and sorrow she had felt on first perceiving the names of her son and myself among those of the wounded at Dettingen; but that dear Mr. Horace Walpole had, by some means ascertained that we were only severely bruised, one by a spent shot and the other by an odious French horse that had run away, otherwise that her health would never

have survived the shock. Indeed, she had remained away from her Majesty's drawing-room on the day that horrid Gazette was published, and her maid had to bathe her temples every half hour with Hungary water, &c.

Her beloved boy Drumlanrig had written to relate how, when lying helpless on the field, he would inevitably have been slain by a plundering ruffian in a foreign uniform, but for my timely aid and rescue; and that to me the duke and herself must owe an eternal debt of gratitude. For the present, she enclosed a diamond ring, of which she begged my acceptance as a little token from herself—

"Tush!" exclaimed Drumlanrig when I had read thus far; "is that all? Surely she might have written this to me herself."

"It is *not* all," said I, while the next paragraph made my colour change, and my heart leap with a vengeance!

"*Miss Letty Hyde is married!* The conduct of that young jilt has been very shameful, but pray break the matter gently to my poor deluded boy, as I dread a shock to his nervous system quite as much as one to my own."

When I read this Drumlanrig became deadly pale. "Permit me," said he, and passing an arm through mine he looked over my shoulder, and we read on together what follows:

"I have told Drumlanrig in previous letters that she had a dangler in London—a fellow whom she had picked up at Vauxhall or Ranelagh, with whom her name was too much associated—a dissipated gambler and *roué*, whom she was wont to meet at the old oak-tree in Hyde Park; you know the tree I mean; it was one of

two that were planted by his Majesty Charles II. from acorns of the Boscobel oak in Somersetshire. Here she used to meet her lover, with whom she has at last eloped ! Perhaps you may know something of him. He is a Mr. Falshaw, and has or had a brother in Battereau's Foot. Of this unfortunate I shall say no more, but beg of you to reveal this story gently to your friend, my son, and let this teach him that there are no limits to the treachery of the human heart."

The letter then gave us several paragraphs of London gossip : Mr. Horace Walpole's last *bon mot* ; that Lord Stair had retired in disgust to his estate in Linlithgowshire ; that the sweet and pale girl, Lady Elizabeth Hope, was residing permanently at Queensberry House, in London, and was universally admired, but had refused several very eligible offers (Drumlanrig would well know *why*), and that she, the Duchess, was about to visit Scotland again, but would travel more lightly than on her first visit, as on that occasion she took with her several waggons laden with provisions, especially game, as Mr. Walpole had assured her the people there lived chiefly on oatmeal and onions ; and she had been *so* agreeably surprised to find both trees and cattle in Drumlanrig Park.

"I don't like the prospect of the journey—excuse me, my dear Mr. Lauriston ; but except a few of the Guards, such as Panmure, Sir Harry Rose and yourself, I never could bear your morose countrymen ; and as for the wild Highlanders, I never saw one, save John Duke of Argyle, and he seemed very tolerable."

So ended Kitty Hyde's characteristic epistle, on finishing which, we each took a glass of wine, and quietly surveyed each other.

"This sequel to Letty's long silence is an impossibility" exclaimed Drumlanrig through his clenched teeth; "there must be some mistake!"

"It must be true, the details are too circumstantial," I replied; "and Falshaw's brother, too—always that infernal name! We have no means of verifying your mother's letter, even did we presume to doubt it; for Falshaw is now cashiered, and gone no one knows where."

Drumlanrig seated himself at the table, with his hands upon his temples, looking crushed, miserable, hating himself and all mankind.

"Oh Godfrey," he exclaimed, "I have loved a mere coquette, one who never could conceive the real idea of love! Her empty heart never could have known the purity of that delightful passion which can melt us into tenderness or fill us with joy." His dark eyes flashed with sorrow and anger; his cheek was pale, the veins on his forehead were swollen, and at that moment he closely resembled his mother the duchess, as I had seen her, when in her wild and excited moments. "Why had she those dangerous graces of mind," he resumed almost incoherently, "graces that made a slave of me, after the mere beauties of her person had lured and won my heart? Why have I slighted so long poor Lizzy Hope, she who has loved me so well, and in secret too? Why did I escape the bayonets of Italians at Coni, and the bullets of the French at Dettingen? Why yield up my honest heart to a mere thing of art, of smiles and falsehood?"

He took another draught of wine, and dashed the glass to pieces against the wall.

"True," said I bitterly, as I thought of my own secret

interest in the matter ; “so the world wags, Drumlanrig. Thus, how often do we find all that is good and faithful, honourable, tender and true, wasted on the false, the base and the faithless. ’Tush my friend, turn to your wine—”

“Right—we’ll think no more of her ; so—so my goddess has proved a mere woman *à la mode*, after all,” replied the earl filling another glass ; “for this her long and unaccountable silence somewhat prepared me, and for this I may be the better soldier after all. But to think of her being married to a wretch—for such the brother of Falshaw must be—makes my blood curdle with terror, in the anticipation of all to which she may be subjected. Poor girl—how bitter, how futile now may her repentance be !”

I saw that he was becoming highly excited ; his hands trembled and a fever spot burned on his cheeks. His emotion moved me, and laying a hand on his shoulder, I said,

“Let me share your grief Drumlanrig, for I too loved Letty Hyde, and loved her madly.”

“You ?”—he exclaimed with profound astonishment expressed in his voice and in his keen dark eyes.

“Yes—but knowing well that she preferred you, I strove to stifle the love that grew within me, and to bury the secret in my heart.”

“You were aware of this cutting preference, and yet you saved my life at Dettingen, when, by leaving me to perish, a formidable rival would have been removed for ever !”

“You were my friend,” said I reproachfully ; “apart from that, for Letty’s sake alone, I would have saved you.”

"Oh, how noble a heart she has lost in you!"

"And in you, Drumlanrig."

He clasped his hands and turned away, saying—

"Can I blame you, when I too loved her—and so fondly?"

His eyes were full of tears; but was it not strange? I felt for a moment a species of savage satisfaction in the idea that he had lost her too, and that I was not alone in my disappointment. Yet, like his, my heart was wrung at the idea of Letty being allied—fettered for life—to a man such as we pictured a brother of Falshaw to be.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MARCH TO OUDENARDE.

THE memories of my friendship for Letty Hyde, and more particularly my *last* interview with her, had, as a certain writer says, "taught me to know, that great personal attractions may be the *second* excellence of a woman."

When endeavouring to reason with myself, it seemed as if I had loved Letty more because there was a barrier between us. It was the mere obstinacy of human nature, which often leads us to prize most that which is beyond our reach. Thus, a lover never values his mistress so much as when he is on the eve of losing her, by the superior attractions of a rival or by her own waywardness; yet after all, it may not be love that fires the heart then, but merely wounded self-esteem.

Under the name of Phillis, Drumlanrig had celebrated Letty in verse in some of the magazines of the day, and these effusions were deemed so sparkling, that they won the praise even of Horace Walpole, who greatly admired an author if within the pale of fashion, just as he afterwards despised Smollett and Fielding because they were *out of it*.

But Drumlanrig and I were equal now, for Letty was lost to us both, and to all appearance for ever.

Though considered one of those who made the best figure in the London world of fashion, my friend was rather varying in disposition; for, at times he could appear cold, proud, and reserved, especially when among strangers; but with his chosen friends, or his soldiers, he was ever affable, kind, and winning. On many occasions, he had evinced a degree of bravery that amounted to rashness, especially at the siege of Coni in Piedmont, where, in a desperate sally, he led his men girdle deep through the river Gezzo, under a dreadful fire of cannon and musketry.

In his manner the ease of a well-bred man mingled oddly with the stiffness of a soldier; and in his voice, the softness that a woman would love with the sternness of tone that only comes with a long and inborn habit of command.

We had not much time given us to ponder over the strange tidings contained in the letter of the duchess, for on the 1st of May, Louis XV., having put himself at the head of one hundred and twenty thousand men, with a hundred and sixty pieces of cannon, ranging from twelve to forty-eight pounders, and forty mortars which threw cominges, or bombs of five hundred weight each, advanced to invade us in Flanders, and on the 3rd he had reached

the great barrier town of Lisle—a fortress of the first rank in Europe.

The reader may imagine the consternation which existed in the city of Brussels, and the sudden bustle and excitement in our camp on this rapid movement becoming known!

The able earl of Stair was no longer at our head, and all became doubt, difficulty, and confusion.

Field Marshal George Wade, whose greatest achievements had consisted of building bridges and making roads in the Scottish Highlands, took command of the British, now only twenty-two thousand strong, with sixteen thousand Hanoverians, and twenty thousand Dutch under Count Maurice of Nassau. There were also some Austrians—whose number I forget—under the Duke d'Arenberg and Rudiger Count Gleichen.

So great was the disparity between the forces, that Louis was enabled to overrun the whole country with the greatest ease.

Our drums beat the *générale* early on the morning of the 2nd of June, when we took our farewell of Brussels, struck our tents, called in our detachments, guards, and pickets, and commenced by various roads our march for Oudenarde, the little town where, thirty-two years before, Marlborough and Eugène fought a glorious battle.

Our men were high in spirit and admirable in discipline and order, and as they defiled past the old Anderlecht gate on the western side of Brussels, rampart, street, and barrier gave back a thousand echoes to our drums and fifes, the measured tramp of feet and the clatter of hoofs and artillery, the jangle of steel scabbards, sponges, and rammers, and the heavy rumble of the loaded baggage wains; while silken standards, heavy with the embroi-

red names and badges of old achievements, rustled in the wind above the long and glittering forests of bayonets, that flashed with many a pike and sabre through the clouds of rolling summer dust.

Favourite generals and officers, such as the lords Argonier and Panmure, were greeted with long and loud cheers, as they dashed along the line of march to reach their several posts and divisions. Thousands of citizens crowded upon the ramparts and waved their hats and handkerchiefs, as they bade adieu to the departing allies; and I—fired and excited by the scene—found myself joining the men, as they struck up the ballad of "Bergen-op-Zoom," which was lustily chorused, with a hearty clamour on the drum.

Old Major Stuart, perceiving that Lord Drumlanrig was unusually dull on this morning, when all were so gay and joyous, began to rally him as we marched along.

"Aha!" said he, "this comes of being in winter quarters—love is always the fruit of idleness. Did your flirtation commence at the municipal ball, or over a music lesson with flageolet or spinnet? Our frauleins here are not indifferent performers with either."

"Perhaps so," said Drumlanrig, with a smile of vacant indifference.

"Egad, your lordship seems hopelessly gone! Luckily I am past caring for aught now, save the wants of my old charger Almanza, and my own little comforts, so far as one may study them when under canvass. I remember when Crawford-Lindsay and I served against the Turks on the Danube, we took prisoner, during a charge, an old long-bearded and huge turbaned Mire-alai (that is, colonel) of irregular horse—and being all Tartars, God

knows they were *irregular* enough. He lived in discontent for a month, and in all his discontents and misfortunes he was wont to console himself with a saying which he had picked up from a Persian fakir, and he rhymed it over so often, that I learned it by rote."

"And this 'wise saw?'" said Drumlanrig, not unwilling to divert the prosy major's attention from himself.

"Taking his chibouque from his mouth, he used to say—'He who has no wealth, has no credit; he who has not obedient wives, has no repose; he who has no offspring, has no strength; he who has no kindred, has no support; but Allah ho Ackbar! he who has *none* of them, lives free from every care'—and like a true Turk he let the world wag as it pleased. Step out there, in front," added the major, raising his voice, on perceiving that our men were losing their places, as the roads were deep and broken in some parts. "Close up gentlemen, close up, and go right through everything! D—n it, my boys, don't point your toes as if you were dancing a minuet, rather than being on the line of march. And there is Rose too," continued the major, resuming his banter, "he looks quite pale and sentimental, because the countess of Gleichen does not accompany the army. What does her ladyship think of our departure, eh, Rose?"

"How should I know, when women themselves can scarcely tell what they think about?" replied Sir Henry, half petulantly.

"Fie," cried Drumlanrig; "this is an ungallant speech."

"'Tis true withal; but what is the age of the lady you speak of?"

"She owns to thirty," said the major, "which no doubt means forty, for your continentals will never permit themselves to grow old, or their hair to become grey."

"Nay, nay sir," said I; "on my honour I believe she is not more than five-and-twenty," but the banter, roughly enough at times, still went on, for a little fun goes a very long way on the line of march.

During a halt on the road, the major, Rose, Drum-nrig, and I, had some wine under a large tree, on which hung the signboard of the village auberge. It was but a five minutes' halt.

"Come boys, pass round the bottle, and be jolly while you may," said our bluff field officer; "who can now how often we may be fated to meet again? Siege and battle teach us stern lessons, and make more philosophers in a practical sense than the school of Pythagoras—a dry old humbug—ever did. Pass the wine, Roseburn.

"Here we be, Scots soldiers three,
Pardonnez-moi, je vous——"

agad—whom have we here?" he added, as a woman of miserable aspect and clad in rags, approached and craved charity.

Her voice gave me a thrill, and I recognized Kōnda, the Dutchwoman, the wife of the rascal in whose den in the wood of Soignies I had so nearly perished when I lost the way to Nivelles. Want and misery had done their worst upon her, and as I slipped into her and a few Flemish petards I inquired about her miserable husband; but she shook her head sadly and said,—

"Do not ask me."

"And Falshaw—what of him?"

"He has joined the French army."

"The enemy?"

"Yes."

"Wee-ugh!" whistled the major; "here is news for Battereau's Foot!"

"In what capacity has he gone?" I asked.

She could not tell; but added, "he must be by this time at the town of Lisle—if he has not——"

"What madam?"

"Been shot or hanged by the way, either of which may probably happen, considering his aptitude for getting into scrapes by making money at cards, making love to his hostess, and so forth."

"Pleasant little weaknesses, my dear Madame Konrada," said I, but the bugle sounding to advance again cut short our interview, and we hastened to our places.

In this march towards Oudenarde nothing was done of importance; nor, indeed, did we do aught but make useless manoeuvres in the roughest weather and long halts in the worst places until the month of March in the following year, when, with the full concurrence of their high mightinesses, the States General, his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland (no great accession certainly, as the sequel proved,) was appointed commander-in-chief of the Confederate forces, with the rank of captain-general, a commission last borne, by the great John, duke of Marlborough.

With the new campaign, the great feature of which was the famous and to us most severe battle of Fontenoy, began a series of personal perils and sufferings

of which I could not have had the slightest anticipation; and yet, happily, the influence of the gentler sex was not wanting to shed a ray of soft light across the path I had to traverse.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FONTENOT.

IT was on the 19th of April that we advanced towards Tournay, which had been the seat of the chief tribunal or parliament of the French conquests in Flanders since 1669.

Our Household Brigade was now commanded by Sir John Ligonier, son of colonel Francis Ligonier, a French Protestant refugee.

France had now two great armies in the field, one on the Maine under the prince of Conti, to oppose the Queen of Hungary on one hand, and to overawe the Electors assembled at Frankfort on the other; a second army, consisting of seventy-six thousand men, was commanded by the famous Maurice, Count de Saxe, Marshal-general of France and Duke elect of Courland and Semigallia—an officer so highly esteemed, that the Marshal Duc de Noailles now served under him as first aide-de-camp.

With this army he invested Tournay on the 24th of April, and the arrival of Louis XV. and the Dauphin in the camp greatly animated the besiegers, and generally kindled the ready enthusiasm of the French troops, who were now led by five princes of the blood and sixty-seven general officers, all of noble families.

The siege was being pressed with vigour, when the Duke of Cumberland unwisely advanced with only fifty-three thousand men to raise it. Our almost useless Dutch allies were commanded by the Prince of Waldeck, a leader as destitute of skill and experience as the former, who was then only in his twenty-fourth year. Our Austrians were under old Count Konigseg, whose day for command was long since past; and *thus led*, we advanced to engage one of the finest armies in Europe, led by the first general and tactician of the age!

Marshal Saxe, who possessed all the natural gifts requisite to form a great leader, together with a rare skill and a profound knowledge of the art of war, no sooner heard of our approach than he left eighteen thousand men to block up Tournay, posted six thousand men to keep open the bridges of the Scheldt, and with the rest made the most masterly dispositions to give us a suitable welcome at Fontenoy, a small village, situated on rising ground four miles south-east of Tournay and on the left bank of the river.

Along the summit of the eminence which there slopes upward from the plain, he formed his line of infantry; the village of St. Antoine, near the river, covered his right flank, and was entrusted to the corps of Piedmont and Biron, under the Comtes de la Marche and de Lorges.

The wood of Barri, full of troops and cannon, covered his left.

The village of Fontenoy, in front, was committed to the care of the Comte de la Vauguyon, with the regiment du Dauphine. On his left were the brave Irish Brigade, under the command of the gallant lord Clare. On *their* left were the French marines, under the Comte de Guerchi, and in their rear was the battalion of Angoumois

in the castle of Bourquenbrai, on the summit of which a white banner with three *fleurs de lys* was flying. Here colonel Mongeorge commanded.

In the Bois de Barri and the villages were batteries of heavy cannon, concealed by green hedgerows, and protected by abattis of felled trees, fascines of baskets, and walls of turf.

To turn the flanks of the French was impossible, and to assail in front their superior force of one hundred and six battalions and one hundred and seventy-two squadrons, thus posted and thus strengthened, was either the extreme of rashness or the extreme of ignorance.

Nevertheless, the duke of Cumberland, after a most imperfect reconnaissance, ordered his army, which consisted of only forty-six battalions and ninety squadrons, to advance at once and to attack. We had ninety pieces of ordnance; eight of these were mortars, but many were only *three-pound* falconets.

The whole position of Count de Saxe rose with a gentle ascent from a flat and fertile plain, which he could sweep by the *concentrated* fire of two hundred and sixty-six pieces of heavy cannon.

In the chill and dusky atmosphere, and while the mist of the past moonless night enveloped the banks of the Scheldt and the wood of Barri, at two o'clock on the morning of the 1st of May, we began to advance over this open plain.

All was still—so very still, that during a temporary halt, for a final examination of flints and priming, I heard the hour of two struck distinctly by the village clock at Fontenoy. Then, in the dark, the army formed in columns of attack.

Our right wing was composed of British, and Hano-

verians, who, under Major-General Zastrow, were in the centre—and formed four lines before a hamlet named Veson. Our left wing, composed of Dutch and Austrians, reached to the wood of Peronne. In front of Veson was a redoubt mounted with cannon, and manned by six hundred Frenchmen, and this point Brigadier Ingoldsby had orders to storm at the head of four regiments, while the prince of Waldeck was to attack the village of Fontenoy at the head of his yellow-coated Dutch infantry. This was all *we* then knew about the arrangements, as we stumbled forward in the dark, our men encumbered with knapsacks, havresacks, canteens, and great-coats, across growing cornfields, through hedges, over dykes, ditches, and fences, amid which, on the line of march, we formed open column by regiments, at quarter-distance, and deployed into line.

Against the pale cold blue of the starry morning sky, the outline of the enemy's position, the far-extending ridge, the waving foliage of the Bois de Barri, and the conical spires of the villages of Fontenoy and St. Antoine, could be seen distinctly; but all else was darkness and obscurity till the east became gradually streaked with grey light, and long ere the first rays of the yet unrisen sun began to play upon the lower clouds many an eye that saw him yesterday was darkened by death for ever.

About ten minutes after daybreak was discernible, and when there was merely sufficient light to enable us to perceive each others' features in our ranks—features all pale and jaded by our having spent the entire past night in heavy marching order—a red flash broke from amid the obscurity in front, and then by a deep *hum* overhead, we knew that a large cannon-shot had passed harmlessly to our rear.

At that moment an aide-de-camp leaped his horse over a low hedge close by the right of our regiment, and said hurriedly to our brigadier:—

“Sir John Ligonier, it is his royal highness’s order that you will advance instantly with the brigade of guards and seven guns, to drive in the enemy’s field ordnance which are now opening in front, and the moment you silence them the whole line will advance upon the French position.”

Almost immediately afterwards seven pieces of our flying artillery came up, with the horses at a gallop, with the matrosses seated on the saddles and on the magazines.

The guns were grape-shotted; the whole brigade fixed bayonets, and the order to advance was given.

In quick and fierce succession now, out of the dark obscurity in front, the red flashes of the French artillery followed each other; and there were times when ten or twenty guns would flash at once, and many a shriek and moan rose from our thinning ranks, as the round-shot plunged through them, making bloody heaps of mangled dead and wounded, over which we closed up shoulder to shoulder, manfully and well.

Then came the sharp *hiss* of the grape-shot, as a new and terrible fire from the French guns swept through our brigade, tumbling the men over each other in great numbers.

Here Ensign Murray, who bore our king’s colour, was killed close by me, and I had literally to tear the colour staff from his dying clutch, lest it might be left behind. I know not where the grape-shot struck him, but after falling, his body rose in the form of an arch, his head and heels alone touching the ground. His nerves and muscles seemed strung and rigid; his eyes

glared, and blood was flowing from his lips. Then there was a spasmodic shudder as his limbs relaxed, and he sank at full length amid the corn of a field through which we were advancing. It was at that moment I released the colour from the poor fellow's grasp, and handed it to one of our ensigns named Haldane, who was severely wounded soon after.

A young gentleman who served in our company as a volunteer was moaning piteously with a wound in his breast, which our surgeon declared at a glance to be mortal.

"Remember, my poor boy, that you die covered with laurels," said Major Stuart.

"Laurels!" echoed the other with a ghastly smile; "then lay them on my mother's grave, for on the day I became a soldier I broke her heart," he added wildly, as he expired.

Here Panmure's horse was shot under him; two of our captains—lieutenant-colonels Douglas and Carpenter—were dismounted and killed at the same moment; and so withering was the fire of grape that our ranks became disordered; but the earl placed himself in front of the colours, and advanced on foot.

"Gentlemen of the Scots Foot Guards," he exclaimed, brandishing his sword, while the shot actually grazed the curls of his Ramillies wig, "so long as you have a bullet in your pouches—while you have a bayonet left to point against the enemy—*defend your colours!* Forward!—forward!—hurrah!"

A loud cheer given by the English Guards on our right now ran along the line, and we advanced to the charge at a quick run. In a moment more we were among the French field guns, bayonetting and cutting

down the gunners, before they could trace the horses or limber up for a retreat.

A sanguinary *mêlée* ensued in the grey light of the morning, and in a few minutes the destructive fire of this park of artillery was silenced for ever.

Falling back, we rejoined our first line, the formation of which was complete by nine o'clock.

Trumpets and bugles were now heard in all quarters sounding the "advance," and soon after followed the deepening roar of the musketry, as our troops moved forward with astonishing rapidity to their various points of attack—the Dutch, under Prince Waldeck, against Fontenoy, Ingoldsby to assail the redoubt in front of Veson, and our first line, led by the duke of Cumberland in person, to assail the centre.

Gloriously we went on with bayonets fixed and all our colours flying, and with a rapidity in advancing that inspired us all with enthusiasm. Yet this movement was not without its darker features for the Household Brigade, which had to traverse the same ground over which we had passed in the early morning about five hours before to drive in the field guns; and there, in the furrows and by the hedgerows, lay vast numbers of our splendid guardsmen—stiff, pale, and dead, with the drops of the crystal morning dew and the damp of death mingling together upon their sharpened features; others lay gasping for water, with parched throats and glazing eyes—the bead-drops of agony oozing over the temples of the wounded as their blood and life ebbed away together. Powdered wigs, three-cornered hats, swords, drums, and muskets lay strewed on all sides; and the earth seemed to have been ploughed and sown with shot of every size.

As we advanced over this terrible scene some of our poor fellows recognized us, and raised their voices in feeble hurrahs and cries of "Old England for ever!" but soon the place where they lay was left behind, as we advanced with such rapidity that the duke of Cumberland, his staff, and all our field officers rode their horses at a canter, and passing between the village of Fontenoy on one flank and the redoubts of Barri on the other, when the wood was all a blaze with bursting shells, we ere long found ourselves within *thirty yards* of the enemy's muzzles; and close and deadly was their fire of musketry.

Regiment after regiment now brought their firelocks to "the present," and sheets of fire, followed by sheets of lead, tore through the adverse ranks.

From the green summer hedges and the almost yellow corn, from the dingles of the Bois de Barri, the musketry started in snow-white puffs, and then in cloudy volumes obscuring the sun—till the whole air became darkened with the smoke of gunpowder.

Amid this infernal uproar, I saw four of the Scots Greys placing in a litter Sir James Campbell, K.B., their colonel, whose leg had been shattered by a cannon-shot; but the poor old man, who was in his eightieth year, expired in their hands.

By a singular coincidence we found ourselves opposed to the French Household Brigade; and here ensued a very striking episode, which has been so ably detailed by M. de Voltaire, that I am tempted to quote nearly his words.

Before the smoke grew dense, the officers of the British Guards saluted the French by taking off their hats; then the Duc de Biron and the Count de Chambanne, who

were in front, returned the salute courteously, and the chevaliers of the French Guards followed their example. Lord Charles Hay (son of the Scottish marquis of Tweeddale), a captain of the English Guards, now exclaimed,—

“Gentlemen of the French Guards—fire!”

“Fire yourselves,” replied the Count d’Anterroche, a lieutenant of grenadiers, in a loud voice; “for, gentlemen, *we* never fire first.”

We then commenced a running fire of platoons, so that one company was reloading while another was firing.

“Nineteen officers of our guards fell by the first discharge,” says Voltaire. “Messieurs De Clisson, De Ligney, De la Peyre, and ninety-five soldiers were killed, and two hundred and eighty-five were wounded; also eleven Swiss officers, and two hundred and nine of their soldiers, of whom sixty-four died on the spot. Colonel Courten, his lieutenant-colonel, four officers, and seventy-five soldiers were killed. The first rank being swept away, the three others, finding themselves unsupported, dispersed. The Duc de Grammont, their colonel, who might have rallied them, was already killed; and Monsieur Luttaux, next in rank, did not reach the ground until they had abandoned it. The English advanced as if performing part of their exercise; *the majors levelling the soldiers’ muskets with their canes, to make their discharge more sure.*”

Before, however, the French Guards “dispersed,” as M. de Voltaire mildly terms it, the order had been given by Sir John Ligonier to advance to close quarters.

“Prepare to charge—charge bayonets—hurrah!” rang along the line of the Household troops. We advanced with equal fury and rapidity, and the whole array of the old French Guards gave way before us.

In rout and confusion we hurled them down upon the Irish Brigade, which wheeled back into open column, permitted them to pass, and reformed line again, with admirable precision and speed.

Enveloped in smoke, we knew nothing of what was being done elsewhere, though we heard soon after that Ingoldsby had failed in carrying the redoubt, for which he was afterwards brought before a general court-martial, and sacrificed to cover the many blunders of a certain royal duke.

Our infantry drove the *élite* of the French far beyond their own lines. In vain their cavalry attempted to arrest our progress; in vain the Hussars, the Cuirassiers, and the splendid Mousquetaires du Roi rushed on in squadrons, with plumes waving and flashing swords uplifted. We swept all before us, by the steadiness of our fire; but in one of the charges made by the Austrian heavy cavalry, poor old count Gleichen fell mortally wounded. I saw his quaint grey figure at the head of his Cuirassiers for a moment, as the smoke opened; and in the next his riderless horse was galloping madly about the field with blood on its holsters and housings.

The brilliant Duc de Grammont was killed by some English artillerymen, who perceiving that he was mounted on a beautiful white horse, conceived that he was an officer of rank, and laid bets among themselves as to who would bring him down. Little imagining he was thus made a target, de Grammont rode in front of the Bois de Barri to give an order to Count Lowendhal, when a cannon-shot struck his horse, and covering the count with blood, literally sliced off a piece of flesh which fell into his large military boot.

"Have a care, monseigneur," said Lowendhal; "your horse is killed!"

"And so am I," replied de Grammont, whose thigh-bone was smashed by the same shot, from the effect of which he expired on the field.*

The French infantry having evacuated the village of St. Antoine, the Count de Saxe believed the day was lost, and sent Count d'Anterroche to the king and to the dauphin, who were waiting on horseback at an eminence named "The Justice of our Lady in the Wood," where the royal standard of France was flying. The latter was immediately *struck* by order of Louis, on the count begging that they would provide for their safety by retreat.

"Is the field then lost?" asked Louis furiously.

"Yes, sire," replied the count.

"And Maurice de Saxe has sent you to say so?"

"Yes, sire—for your Majesty's Guards have given way."

"Even the Swiss?"

"Yes, sire—even the Swiss—so all is over!"

"Not while the Irish remain to us," said Louis confidently. "Count, ride to my Lord Clare—desire him to advance at once, in the name of God and of St. Denis!"

It was at this most critical period of the day, when harassed by the manœuvres of the past night, when, after enduring since daybreak a cannonade from two hundred and sixty-six pieces of ordnance; after driving in the field guns, routing the French Guards, cavalry and line; after forcing a passage between Fontenoy and the Bois de Barri, and after driving the foe from the

* For firing this shot, a matross, named Baker, received a pension of £18 per annum.

height and village of St. Antoine, that our own fellow-subjects—men who, under better auspices, must have been our comrades and our brother soldiers—marched to attack us!

Of the French in our front, there were visible only their killed and wounded. A lull had taken place in the firing, though heavy volleys rang here and there with the hollow boom of an occasional cannon-shot, as if to show how the beaten foe still struggled.

Fresh ammunition was being served out to the brigade, and with some of our officers, Drumlanrig and I were conversing on a knoll, from whence we could see nearly the whole field.

Having been menaced by poor Gleichen's cavalry, just before he fell the Irish had formed squares, and my heart swelled within me when we saw them, all clad in scarlet coats like ourselves, deploying rapidly into line, and an air played by some of their drums and fifes came floating towards us on the soft breeze that calm May day.

It was an old Irish air of which I know not the name.

As these troops, the flower of the French army—untarnished in honour, as they were steadfast to the faith of their fathers and to the house of Stuart—formed line, with all their bright musket barrels and fixed bayonets glittering in the noon-day sunshine, we well knew how the slaughter would deepen and *when* the most bloody resistance would be made!

The representatives of thirty thousand Irishmen, who followed King James to France, the land of his exile, these were the veteran regiments of Clare, Count O'Lally, the Honourable Arthur Dillon, the Duke of Berwick, Rothe, Count Buckley and Fitzjames; and the brave Charles O'Brien, Lord Clare, was at their head.

They were the last stake the French king had to play in that bloody game at Fontenoy.

It was with emotions of a very mingled nature that I watched them advancing, though not against our part of the line ; for I knew that, like many of our Scottish exiles, these men had sacrificed all for their altar and their king.

A wild yell rang along their ranks, as the seven Irish regiments, after pouring in one deadly and disastrous volley, brought their flashing bayonets to the charge, and rushed upon our toil-worn infantry. Their cry, I afterwards learned, was,—

“Cuimhnigídh ar Luimneac agus ar fheile na Sacsanach !” (Remember Limerick and Saxon faith.)

The advance of these fresh troops, together with the disorder—“*déroute*” it was named—of the Dutch, decided the battle ; and thus, after having successfully routed every regiment in the French service, we were now in turn routed by the Irish, so the duke of Cumberland gave the order to *retreat*.

We fell back in undeniable confusion—our brigades broken up—cavalry and infantry all clubbed together, and but for the steady stand made by Lord Crawford, with Lord Semple’s Highlanders and Howard’s Kentish Buffs, to cover our rear, we could not have passed the Bruffoel so speedily. After this our routed troops retreated to Lessines, which I was fated not to reach with them.

As we retired between Fontenoy and the Bois de Barri, a squadron of French hussars daringly made a dash at our column ; firing their pistols, they fell on with their sabres, and cut a passage right through us. Drumlanrig had his sword arm broken by a pistol-shot and would have fallen, but his men dragged him on with

them. I was turning, with my sword uplifted to protect my head from the sabre of a passing hussar, when I felt a sensation between a shock and a sudden sear with a hot iron in the fleshy part of the right thigh. A pistol shot had struck me!

I fell—the whole squadron seemed to pass over me like a whirlwind, and as our brigade was falling rapidly back, I soon found myself alone.

I rose, but sank again as if pinned to the earth. There was a small round hole in my regimental breeches, and through it the blood was oozing. I tied my handkerchief over the wound, in which the ball had evidently lodged, and using my sword as a prop made a desperate effort to follow the brigade, which was now leaving the field double-quick; but at that moment a French hussar dashed from the wood of Barri and seized me by the collar; he struck the sword from my hand and made me a prisoner.

He was a powerful fellow, for he almost dragged me across his holsters. This only proved his own destruction, as I inserted a hand stealthily under the flap and drawing forth one of his own pistols, shot him through the loins. His horse gave a wild bound, and his rider and I fell heavily to the earth together, but I was immediately after surrounded by several hussars, who were about to cut me down, when, perceiving that I was an officer, they took me prisoner to the rear.

The Household Brigade had seven hundred and twenty-four officers and men killed and wounded; of these four hundred and thirty-seven were Scots Foot Guardsmen. On the field lay some ten thousand French, and twelve thousand of the Allies killed and wounded.

These details, of course, I learned after. I was now hurried to the rear, and thrust, with a mass of other prisoners, into the adjacent castle of Bourquenbrai.

His royal highness the duke of Cumberland was never able to face the enemy again, but lay entrenched with his troops between Antwerp and Brussels.

Such were the leading features of this disastrous field. Hence the memorable words of Prince Charles Edward, when, in this same month in the following year, he drew his sword and flung away its scabbard, before the battle of Culloden.

"Come, gentlemen, let us give Cumberland *another Fontenoy!*"



CHAPTER XL.

THE CASTLE OF BOURQUENBRAI.

I WAS filled with gloomy forebodings by the idea of being a prisoner of war, and of having, instead of freedom, to suffer bondage — instead of winning the great name which I hoped would compel even Letty who rejected me, to remember my love with pride — I might have to pine for long, inactive, and inglorious years, amid the penury and horrors of a French military prison.

To become a captive as a subaltern at the commencement of the war made the matter worse; for in those days the promotion of all officers while in the enemy's hands was stopped, and in his own person the prisoner had no power of ransom or release.

For many hours my wound remained undressed, as the French surgeons had more than enough to do in attending to the wants and sufferings of their own people; and as Colonel Mongeorge, who commanded the battalion of Angoumois in the Castle of Bourquenbrai, bore a deep hatred to the English, he was disposed to treat his prisoners with equal neglect and severity.

Thus, on awaking from an uneasy doze, I found myself, notwithstanding my uniform and epaulets, in a grim vaulted place—a mere bomb-proof, in fact—lying upon some damp straw, among wounded men of all ranks. Some of these were Austrians; but others were Englishmen, who, to show their contempt for their captors, and to solace themselves amid their troubles, at times burst vigorously forth with the song of “Britons Strike Home!” or with another ditty, of which I remember only one verse:—

“Club your firelocks, my lads,
Let us march to the coast,
And try whether Mounseer
Will stick to his boast.
For ‘*Parbleu!*’ cries he,
‘Me vil England invade,’—
But Mounseer deals largely,
And lies are his trade.
Derry down, down, down, derry down!”

The terrible excitement of that awful day was nearly over now; but as I lay upon my bed of straw, writhing with the agony of my wound, I still seemed to see the long vista of destruction that lay between Fontenoy and the Wood of Barri—the dense masses in fierce collision, bayonet clashing with bayonet, the thick smoke curling up from fence and field, from hedgerow and masked

battery ; I heard the thunder of the rushing squadrons, as hussars, dragoons, and lancers spurred on, while showers of lead and iron tore through them a terrible passage. There were the colours waving in the wind, as the infantry deployed from square or open column into line—here the flying artillery hurrying on to havoc—the soaring shells exploding in mid-air or rending ranks asunder ; the miles of death and agony, with all their sights and sounds, yet revolved before me like a wild phantasmagoria, and for some hours I seemed to be fighting the battle over and over again.

Loss of blood prevented inflammation, and next morning two surgeons of the regiment of Angoumois, on learning that a wounded officer was among the prisoners, came promptly to the vault where I lay, listlessly enough, and almost heedless of what came over me ; and though they treated me with that kindness and humanity which are ever the leading characteristics of the medical profession, they nearly drove me mad while probing the wound and extracting the ball. After this was achieved, the wound was sponged and dressed, some wine was given to me, a prisoner belonging to the Kentish Buffs was appointed to attend me as a servant, and I was conveyed to a kind of ward—a room of the old castle, in which about thirty wounded men, chiefly Frenchmen, lay on the floor, side by side, on pallets of straw.

Here day and night succeeded each other slowly and monotonously ; but about a fortnight after I was quite convalescent, and able, with the assistance of a staff, to walk about the courtyard of Bourquenbrai, an ancient Flemish château, of which the French had taken full military possession for the time.

Arrangements were now made for the transmission of

all the prisoners to France, and I was looking forward to this movement as the first stage in my career of captivity, when an event occurred which, after escaping all the perils of Fontenoy, nearly ended in my being shot in cold blood.

A party of Dutch dragoons, with a flag of truce, having returned to Fontenoy with a message from Prince Waldeck concerning the body or the burial of Brigadier General Salis (one of their officers who fell in the action), had wantonly fired on a foraging party of the Angoumois, and shot several of them.

Colonel Mongeorge was infuriated by this circumstance, and despatched a fleet horseman, who overtook the Dutch dragoons, with a notice, "that if the guilty men were not sent back instantly to Bourquenbrai, he would make a terrible retaliation on the allied prisoners in his hands."

But the Dutch officer and his party replied that "Mynheer Mongeorge had their full permission to go to der tuyvil," and, laughing, pursued their way towards Lessines, in Hainault.

On this answer being brought to him, Colonel Mongeorge was transported with rage, and swore that he would instantly shoot twelve of his prisoners, without regard to rank, taking them alphabetically as their names stood on the list in his possession, and on this unhappy roll the twelfth was *mine*.

We were all summoned to the courtyard summarily, and while the platoon by which we were to be dispatched was being formed and prepared, we received the sudden and terrible announcement, which few of us could hear with composure or indifference, that we were to suffer for the delinquency of the Dutch.

It was strange that though our faces were pale and our eyes somewhat bloodshot and wild, as we gazed inquiringly on each other and on the preparations for so sudden and awful a change—preparations which brought us so close to eternity—the danger seemed yet a kind of dream, an event the truth of which we could scarcely realize.

As the platoon, which consisted of twenty soldiers of the regiment of Angoumois, loaded under the orders of a sergeant, and some old blankets or rugs wherein to wrap our bodies were brought by a party of pioneers, who, to save time, perhaps, had also brought their *shovels and pickaxes*, one or two poor fellows (of Bateau's Foot, I think), men who, probably, had acted bravely enough in the recent battle, showed signs of dejection and dismay.

When the French military chaplain, an aged Benedictine, approached in haste, and endeavoured to expostulate with Colonel Mongeorge on the enormity of these proceedings, their haggard eyes followed his every motion with the deepest anxiety, for although ignorant of the language in which he spoke, they could read the humane purpose of the old man in his earnest voice and gestures; but the colonel was inexorable, and roughly ordered him to withdraw.

Every window and nook of the castle that overlooked the court in which we were parading for the *last* time was crowded with the dark faces of French soldiers, who commiserated our fate; but the stillness of death prevailed.

As an impromptu coffin, a blanket or rug was placed before each of us to kneel upon, and with a wild glow of defiance in my breast, the resolution that before this

cowardly butcher I would neither disgrace my country or its uniform by changing a muscle of my face, as an officer I took the right of this silent and bewildered line of doomed men, and folding my arms, glanced with quiet scorn at Mongeorge.

The platoon had finished their loading, returned their ramrods, and were standing at "ease," when a gentleman who wore the uniform of a Mousquetaire Noir, and who had his right arm in a sling, came suddenly before me, and politely lifting his hat, said—

"Monsieur, I have had the honour of seeing you before."

"Perhaps," replied I, with indifference, for in the state of my mind then everything earthly mattered but little.

"Don't you remember when and *where*?" he continued.

"Excuse me—but I do not."

"Have you forgotten giving a draught from your canteen to a poor wounded Mousquetaire, who lay half-smothered by his horse on the field of Dettingen?"

"No—I remember now."

"I am he; my left leg was shattered by a ball there, my right arm has had the same luck at Fontenoy; but you may command me, monsieur. I am Pierre de Clisson, one of the Mousquetaires Noirs, and you shall not perish thus—Mongeorge is my kinsman."

He now said something in haste to the stern colonel, who approached me and said, almost fiercely—

"Monsieur—your rank, what is it?"

"Lieutenant."

"In what regiment?"

"The Scots Foot Guards."

"*Très bon !*" exclaimed de Clisson, "*officier de la Garde Ecossais de sa Majesté Britannique*. You hear, L le Colonel."

"For your sake, Clisson, I will make an alteration," replied the inexorable Mongeorge; "put back the cotsman, and bring forth another."

I was dragged away by the Mousquetaire, and a poor young lieutenant of Battereau's corps, named Llewellyn, was butchered in my place. M. de Clisson took me to a remote part of the castle; but there I heard the reports, and felt the walls shaken by three volleys of musketry in succession; and each time three sharp stings seemed to pass through my heart.

When again I passed through the court-yard one or two dark patches of discoloration on the pavement alone indicated that a tragedy had been acted there; but now I had a greater horror than ever of Bourquenbrai, and longed for transmission to France; and my wishes were soon gratified, for on the second day after this painful fair, while I was seated near the castle gate, conversing with my new friend the Mousquetaire, to my surprise and joy the Count d'Anterroche rode in, and recognized me at the moment he dismounted.

CHAPTER XLI.

COLONEL MONGEORGE.

"I SHALL be glad enough that you are a prisoner M. Lauriston," said the count, "if your being so procures me the pleasure of your company so far as Marli."

"How?" I asked.

"I am on my way there with despatches and letters to the queen and Madame de Pompadour, preceding the return of the king himself, and shall be glad of your society."

"I know not to whom my parole of honour—I trust it is to be accepted—should be given."

"*Tête Dieu!* have you not yet been asked for it?"

"No."

"*Ma foi*, that is odd! But I shall soon see Colonel Mongeorge, and arrange all about it. Ah, Clisson—*mon ami Pierre*," he added to the mousquetaire. "Out of the sick list again! Every battle does you a mischief. At this rate there will not be a bit of you left for the ladies to admire, by the time we have played out the game in Flanders, and the Black Mousquetaires are again at Versailles and Marli."

By the intervention of Count d'Anterroche, Colonel Mongeorge wrote down and accepted my parole of honour, which was to the effect that I was neither to quit the French territories nor serve against France until duly exchanged for an officer in the French Guards of the same rank, and as soon as this document received my signature I was comparatively free; but as d'Anterroche assured me that no subaltern of his brigade had

been taken alive, my sojourn in the land of the lilies bade fair to be a long one.

Of horses captured in the recent battle there were plenty stabled at Bourquenbrai, so a nag was soon procured for me; but as I had lost my baggage and was destitute of everything, d'Anterroche supplied me with money, and a sutler having fallen heir to the contents of an abandoned baggage-cart, I procured from him a suit of light blue velvet laced with silver, a claret-coloured roquelaire trimmed with black fur, six ruffled shirts, and a hat of the last Parisian cock, for all of which I exchanged my muddy, torn, and blood-stained regimentals. Yet I could scarcely repress a sigh when I doffed the trappings of the Foot Guards, for years might elapse before I wore them again.

A sword and a pair of plated pistols were also procured for me. They had been taken by a soldier from the dead body of the French Colonel de Bournouville; and on the day after the arrival of the count the latter and I took the road towards Paris, well mounted, and in excellent humour with ourselves and the world in general.

Prior to this, I should have mentioned that Colonel Mongeorge, ashamed probably of his late barbarity, offered to procure for me a captaincy in the regiment of Loyal Scots which had been raised in the August of the preceding year for the French service, and which was then under the command of the gallant Lord John Drummond, brother of James duke of Perth. This corps, which was partly composed of exiled Jacobites and Scottish deserters from our army in Flanders, was officered by Scottish gentlemen of good family. It had British pay, with the free exercise of the Presbyterian

religion, and a renewal of all the great privileges enjoyed of old by the Scots in France; but the offer to serve it I prudently declined, and was glad when I bade adieu to the colonel of the battalion of Angoumois.

As we quitted the old Flemish chateau and rode on we saw on every side terrible traces of that fierce struggle which had ensued on the 1st of May.

Rusty cannon-shot half buried in the earth; three-cornered hats, hussar and grenadier caps, belts, and cartridge-boxes, were yet lying thickly, as the peasants and plunderers had failed to glean up everything; and the white ammunition paper was whirling, like autumn leaves, in the eddies of the wind.

The dead had been buried with a haste almost indecent, not in graves, but in piles of five or six; *over* these the earth had been loosely heaped, and half fleshless bones, especially fingers and toes, protruded through the scanty covering, on which the summer grass already sprouted rankly.

A foul taint pervaded the air and the country round, and all the crows in the world seemed to be floating over Fontenoy and St. Antoine. The once sweet, fertile, and peaceful Flemish landscape, whose boldest features were an ivy-clad church, a thatched farm, or a white windmill, bore deep marks of that heartless desolation which ever accompanies the march of a French army.

Houses were deserted, their windows shattered and their doors standing wide open; fences had been levelled beneath the wheels of gun carriages and baggage wains; plates and dishes, broken furniture, even gilded mirrors strewn the highway. Other dwellings had their walls blackened by fire; and the remains of carts, doors, chairs, and tables, half broken or half burnt, showed that the

troops of his most Christian majesty had been at no loss for fuel, while dead bodies of men, horses, and dogs filled all the wells, as the burial parties cared little where they cast them, so that they were hid from sight.

We quitted this painful locality at a gallop.

Count D'Anterroche was expressing his indignation at the episode which occurred at Bourquenbrai, when I remarked, that it would seem as if the name of Mongeorge was not unfamiliar to me when I first heard it.

"Very probably—the name made some noise a few years ago," replied the count.

"Did he distinguish himself in the field?"

"Not of Mars," responded my friend, with a peculiar laugh; "but, perhaps, you may have heard of his disastrous intrigue with Madame Tiquet of Paris. *Tête Dieu!* it made a devil of a fuss—but before either you or I could have been born."

"How was it disastrous?"

"I will tell you. Mongeorge was a captain of the French Guards, in the same battalion to which I have now the honour to belong, and he was then the greatest boué in Paris, which is saying a great deal. Madame Tiquet was possessed of the greatest charms—the beauty of the devil, in fact—together with a degree of tact, and power of exhibiting the most wonderful coolness and self-possession, in the most trying situations; but I have often observed this talent in women of the world, and have come to the conclusion that the greatest actresses are *not* to be found on the stage.

"Madame Tiquet loved her husband very much; but he loved M. Mongeorge of the French Guards a great deal more. Now, M. Tiquet must have been a sim-leton, as Mongeorge was wont to swagger over him

at times in his own house, so that once Madame interfered, saying:—

“‘Ah, my dear M. Mongeorge, do not frighten my husband, pray. You see he was not born to be a soldier!’

“‘I should think not,’ said Mongeorge.

“‘*Ah, mon Dieu!* I often wonder *why* he was ever born at all?’ sighed the lady.

“‘He is terribly dull, certainly, my dear Madame——’

“‘But a good creature,’ said Madame, patting her husband’s head; ‘and in all things I am always of *his* opinion.’

“‘How so?’ asked Mongeorge, with knitted brows.

“‘Because he never contradicts me; or only says, Fools occasionally dispute, but wise people always give way.’

“Some remarks such as these having been overheard, M. Tiquet behaved in such a manner that he was found to be in the way of the Platonic friendship which existed between our guardsman and Madame, who, for a few louis, employed her porter to remove him effectually by firing three bullets into his body—yet M. Tiquet, being a tough fellow, did not die.

“Her intrigue with Mongeorge was too notorious even in Paris (where, in such matters, people are very indulgent), for her to escape suspicion of being concerned in this attempt upon the life of her husband; and when urged by her friends to seek safety in flight, she wept naturally, wrung her beautiful white hands, hung over her dear, dear, and half-dead spouse; spurning, on one hand, the advice of those who bade her escape, and appealing, on the other, to her own innocence and to heaven, where the hearts of all were read; so that at last every-

one believed her, and condemned themselves for their unjust and unworthy suspicions — everyone, at least, save a grim old Benedictine, the confessor of M. Tiquet, who did not believe a word of all this, and viewed in her only a deep criminal — a profound but beautiful hypocrite.

“On the eighth day, when poor M. Tiquet was hovering between life and death—as a little pink note, containing ‘a thousand tender remembrances,’ duly informed M. Mongeorge, who was on guard at the castle of Marli—our suspicious Benedictine came in haste to madame, who, like a faithful wife, was seated by her husband’s bedside, reading the prayers ordained by the church for those who are in peril or affliction.

“‘Madame,’ he whispered, ‘there is not a moment to be lost—you are about to be apprehended on this dreadful charge! I have here one of the habits of my order—assume it, slip down stairs to where a sedan awaits you. By it you will be taken to a postchaise—thence to Calais, and thence to England.’

“‘And leave my husband? Is this the advice of a man of God?’ she exclaimed, with reproach flashing in her lovely dark eyes, and little imagining that, had she shown signs of guilt or trepidation, the said postchaise was to take her direct to the Bastille. ‘Nay, sir, such measures are for the guilty; the innocent are everywhere secure.’

“‘Think of the dreadful reports, madame,’ urged the priest.

“‘They are spread by the enemies of my dear husband, to degrade us in the eyes of the world. I will demand a trial——’

“‘You?’

“‘Yes, father. And say, was it ever known that a

guilty person sought the searching presence of a tribunal, if it could be avoided ?'

"The Benedictine was confounded, and retired, believing that he had deceived himself; but next day she was apprehended by an officer and a party of police, on the confession of her porter and an accomplice.

" 'Monsieur,' said she, with a disdainful smile, 'You need not have brought this mighty escort; had you come alone as a gentleman ought, and presented—not a warrant, but your ungloved hand, I would have gone wherever you wished to take me.'

"She was soon tried, and notwithstanding all this admirable display of coolness, of charming candour and sublime innocence, she ultimately confessed her crime; but not, however, until she had been found guilty and sentenced — so madame's exquisite tact availed her nothing in the end. She was beheaded in the Place de la Grève; her porter was hanged, and the accomplice obtained an appointment in the galleys for life."

"And M. Mongeorge?"

"He made some interest with a lady who was on the best terms with his most Christian majesty, and instead of being sent to ruminate in the Bastille he was transferred to the line; so he is now colonel of the battalion of Angoumois.* But, *ah! ma foi!* Here we are already at Froidmont on the road to Douay!"

* This was one of the *causes célèbres* of those days.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHATEAU D'ANTERROCHE.

MAKING but a brief halt at Douay, we continued our journey the first day to Cambrai, where the great Fenelon had died about thirty years before. Resting our horses for some hours, the next post brought us to La Fere. These were long stages, and as I still suffered from my wound, the count informed me that he meant to halt for a time at his family residence, which was only a few miles distant from Compiègne.

We reached this quaint old town in the Valois, on a lovely evening towards the end of May, when the sun was setting amid clouds of gold and saffron; when the rooks were cawing lazily and flapping their black wings, in the old primeval forest of Compiègne, whose dingles have echoed to the trumpets of Joan of Arc and of the duke of Burgundy.

The cornfields were waving in the soft breeze like the billows of a yellow sea; and the large leaves of the trellised vines were tossing to and fro. As the sun sank lower, the mountains to the westward seemed to open up their valleys when the light fell aslant upon their green or purple ridges, casting in dusky shadow many a crevice and chasm. Unlike ravaged Flanders, here all was peaceful, calm, and still, for since the great camp formed by the Grand Monarque, after the peace of Ryswick, no sign or sound of war had disturbed the woods or pastures of Compiègne.

Leaving the town at some distance on our left, we passed through a portion of the ancient forest, and ere-

long saw the grey round *tourelles* of the Chateau d'Anterroche, with their steep roofs covered with slate, and topped by large gilt vanes (exactly like the turrets of our Scottish chateaux of the time of James VI.) appearing above the oaks of the forest, through a path of which like a long and spacious avenue, we proceeded at a rapid trot.

We soon saw the whole edifice rising before us on a mass of insulated rock, surrounded by an embattled wall and moat, which was full of reeds and slimy water, and which was crossed by an old decaying drawbridge. The arched gate in this wall was defended by eight antique brass cannon, which had been captured by a Count d'Anterroche at the siege of Dreux in 1562, and each of these bore a coronet and *salamandre*, the crest of Diana of Poitiers.

Within this barrier stood the chateau, a mass of round towers clustered together, with steep roofs perforated by innumerable dormer-windows, and all well loop-holed for musketry, as in the days of Henry IV. it had been besieged more than once. Some portions of it were very ancient, as they were said to have formed a hunting-seat for Lothaire I. and the emperor Charles the Bald.

"Old memories crowd fast and thick upon me," said d'Anterroche, with more honest emotion than we are wont to give Frenchmen credit for. "In that old house, my father, my mother, and many of their predecessors have died, and been slowly borne to yonder village church; and in that old house, my two brothers, who were killed in Bavaria, and Julie and I were born."

Who Julie was I did not inquire—some boyish love, a fair cousin probably, I supposed her to be.

We were warmly welcomed by the old porter, a veteran

of the French Guards, who had lost an arm when serving under the count's father at Malplaquet—and by many other servants, who came crowding about d'Anterroche, with expressions of regard that though profuse were without any tinge of servility.

He led me through a handsome and spacious vestibule, the walls of which were entirely covered by trophies of arms and armour. Among these were many banners and kettledrums taken from the English, Dutch, Danes and Spaniards, during the wars under the Maréchal Duc de Berwick and others.

"My own valet, Raoul," said d'Anterroche, "will conduct you to an apartment, which shall be yours while you are here. You will require to amend your toilet after so long a journey, and then join me at supper whenever you are ready."

Weary and covered with dust, I gladly availed myself of the offer, and was conducted to an apartment, for the splendour of which I was scarcely prepared.

The walls were hung with new tapestry, representing shepherds and shepherdesses seated under shady trees that teemed with golden fruit; they were flute and crook in hand, but were much more occupied with each other than their flocks. The shepherds were in flowing periwigs and long waistcoats of flowered satin; their Phillises wore their hair powdered and *à la marquise*, and were covered by vast quantities of flounces, furbelows, and ribands.

The bed was curtained with blue damask, decorated with knots of white riband, the drapery drooping over it, in bell-tent fashion, from a ring in the ceiling. Between two windows of stained-glass stood a Venetian mirror, framed in cut crystals and silver filagree work, and

panelled or secured into the wall—a fashion of the Grand Monarque's time; and on each side tall vases of Sèvres, filled with freshly-gathered flowers, stood on a beautiful buhl table.

The floor was of oak, and polished like a coach panel.

I observed all these details while performing my ablutions and dressing my hair, a rather elaborate performance in the days of Fontenoy, for those who did not wear wigs. I powdered slightly, as a box of brown "*maréchal*," with many essences and perfumes, stood on the toilet table.

Lighted by the last flush of the setting sun, which streamed in varied tints through windows that were covered with quaint designs in painted glass, I had just concluded, when an impatient and smart little knock rang on the door, and believing it was the valet Raoul, I cried "enter."

It was thrown open, and a tall, dark, and handsome young girl rushed in, threw her plump arms round me, and kissed me on each cheek before I could speak.

"*Ah, mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed on suddenly discovering her mistake; "what have I done!"

"A very good piece of acting, d'Anterroche," said I, as, in the dusk, I recognized the regular features and dark eyes of my friend; "but what jest is this? You, count, you dressed as a woman, and without your cherished moustache, too!"

"Monsieur, I beg——"

"By Jove, count, who could have imagined you would look so handsome? You actually look beautiful, but you have certainly cut three inches off your height. Come! you are quite an actor, and would make your

fortune among the Comédiens du Regent or "Les Immortels" — Richelieu's famous "Forty" of the Académie Française.

"Monsieur, you have mentioned my name," said my visitor, drawing back; "it is d'Anterroche," but, she added, with great sweetness, "it is Julie d'Anterroche—the Count Etienne is my brother. A thousand pardons, monsieur, for this intrusion, but I mistook your room for his."

And with a merry laugh and a low courtesy, she was withdrawing, when the count came along the corridor, clad in a handsome suit of black velvet corded with silver, for which he had exchanged his uniform of the French Guards.

"Joy, my dear Etienne," she exclaimed, as she rushed into his arms; "you have returned at last!"

"Julie!"

"And you have escaped that dreadful day at Fontenoy?"

"Without a scratch, dear Julie."

"Ah, *Mère de Dieu!* the *Mercure François* says that twenty thousand of our army were killed, but that certainly not one of the English had escaped alive!"

"*Peste!* that is rather beyond the truth, since my friend, M. Lauriston, of his Britannic majesty's Scots Foot Guards, is here alive and well."

Mademoiselle bowed and smiled as she presented her hand, saying—

"Thank heaven that the battle was not so bloody after all!"

"It was bad enough, Julie; but why do I find you here in monsieur's bedroom?"

"I heard of your arrival when I was at the falconry

with Violette de Clisson, and rushing to see you, *sans cérémonie*, found my way in here. Isn't that it, monsieur?"

"Exactly, mademoiselle," said I.

"And you are again at home, Etienne, blessed be the Mother of God—at home in our dear old chateau d'Anterroche!"

"Yes, Julie, thank heaven,—and the very bad firing of messieurs the Dutch, who first attacked us. But many of your friends have fallen."

"Pierre de Clisson—oh, I hope poor Pierre is safe?"

"Violette's brother—oh, as usual."

"Wounded?"

"Yes."

"Poor Pierre!"

"He has a singular luck that way, and is now at Bourquenbrai for the recovery of a shattered arm."

"The chevalier de Ligny, who danced so delightfully?"

"He was killed by the first fire of the English Guards."

"And de la Peyre, who always tied his hair with a blue riband, in honour of Violette de Clisson?"

"Killed also."

Julie's large eyes began to dilate and her voice to tremble, as she asked—

"Colonel de Mezieres, who admired me so much when at Marli?"

"Mortally wounded when we formed square against old Gleichen's Cuirassiers—since dead. La Brosse, de Maillet, Bournouville, le marquis de Roset, all, all, with thousands of others, are rotting, uncoffined, on the field of Fontenoy!"

"*Ah, mon Dieu ! Etienne,*" said the young girl, with dark eyes full of tears, "I shall inquire no more."

"Then let us to supper, dearest Julie, for M. Lauriston——"

"What, Etienne—is this gentleman *the* Monsieur Lauriston who saved your life in London, when those rrid English were about to assassinate you?"

"The same, my sister."

"Ah, monsieur, a thousand thanks to you, and a thousand more!" she exclaimed, taking both my hands in her own; "I shall always love you!"

These frank words, so charmingly spoken—or, I should rather say, those charming words so frankly spoken—caused a thrill through my breast, for she who uttered them possessed more than ordinary loveliness.

"Yes, Julie, 'tis my good friend M. Lauriston; but neither he nor I have eaten since we picked the bones of a fricasseed fowl at *La Fere*, you must hold us excused from applying you with more news until you have supplied your commissariat."

"To supper then, with pleasure."

She presented her hand to me and we descended at once to the dining-room, which, in the old French fashion, joined the kitchen, from whence it was merely separated by a square service-door, concealed when unused by a screen, and before which rested a butler's tray or table, in the fashion of the Parisian hotels and coffee-houses.

CHAPTER XLIII.

JULIE.

I WAS now introduced to another young lady, Violette de Clisson, who proved to be a sister of M. de Clisson, the Mousquetaire Noir, whom I had succoured at Dettingen, and to whom I owed my life at the castle of Bourquenbrai; so, as the ladies had innumerable questions to ask, a few minutes sufficed to make me feel quite as an old friend with both.

When the wax candles were lighted in the candelabras and girandoles I had an opportunity for observing Mademoiselle d'Anterroche and her friend more particularly. Violette de Clisson, being of Norman blood, was a fair-skinned, fair-haired, large, and somewhat voluptuous looking girl, with a winning manner, a seductive voice, and an easy air of careless elegance in all she did; but Julie d'Anterroche, though less in stature, was a singularly handsome girl, possessing that dark beauty which is full of character and is piquant and expressive.

I shall briefly say, that her air was noble, her figure faultless—to my eyes at least; her bearing was full of elegance, and her features were delicately beautiful. Add to all this a brilliant manner, such as prevailed at the court of the three last Louis, and a captivating soprano voice of great flexibility and sweetness. Eyes, dark, lustrous and soft, a pale complexion, and clear cut lovely little mouth and nostrils, which shew high blood in women as well—I crave mademoiselle's pardon—as in horses.

Julie strongly resembled her brother, only that of course, his features were larger and more massive.

"'Tis no wonder you mistook me for him masquerading," said she, with a smiling whisper, "for we are twins, and our likeness to each other has frequently been remarked."

"But you also mistook *me* for him," said I.

"True—but you were in his room, and wore a blue velvet suit, the same as his—and then there was the dusky light," she added, colouring and drooping her eyelashes.

"And so you actually thought me fool enough to go about in a girl's dress, like Philip of Orleans, the king's uncle," said d'Anterroche. "That was a weakness of the late regent, and it got him into innumerable scrapes."

The recent battle, with all its episodes, and my meetings with their brothers—meetings which had come to pass so strangely—all afforded ample scope for conversation during supper, at which we had plenty of pink champagne iced—the favourite beverage of the late king Louis XIV.—a luxury which I had scarcely enjoyed since the day we embarked on the Thames for Flanders.

From the vault at Bourquenbrai, in which I had lain so lately, on a straw bed, among reckless prisoners and dead or dying men, the rapid transition to the present scene and refined society in which I found myself, seemed like the result of witchcraft.

The large apartment in which we were seated, was furnished with elaborately carved walnut-wood, covered with scarlet silk damask, of the early years of Louis XIV. The fireplace was supported by four female

termini of pale bronze, with their ample bosoms bursting from amid acanthus leaves, and above each rose a great crystal girondole full of wax-lights.

The ceiling was blue starred with gold, and the floor was of oak from the forest of Compiègne, and so polished that one might have skated upon it. Portraits and stars of arms adorned the walls. Among the latter were several wooden-hafted bayonets. These, d'Anterroche informed me, were among the *first* used in France, as they belonged to the king's regiment of Fusileers which his father had commanded in 1670, and were simply inserted in the muzzle of the firelock—the first *socket*-bayonets being invented by a Scottish colonel, for the use of his corps in Flanders—I believe, the 25th, or Edinburgh Regiment.

The spinnet, the harp, the guitar, were all resorted to in turns by the ladies. We had all the best airs of Cafarelli, and from the two fashionable operas of Michael Duboulay, *Zephyr et Flore* and *Orphée*, the music for which was composed by Lulli, director of the grand opera or Académie Royale, in the same theatre which the famous Molière occupied from 1660 till his death, and which was destroyed by fire in 1763.

Violette was the most accomplished vocalist, but I preferred the voice of Julie. We passed a delightful evening and they retired late, leaving the count and me to our wine.

As I kissed the pretty hand of Julie d'Anterroche and looked into her deep smiling eyes when she bade us adieu until the morrow, strange and intoxicating thoughts rushed upon me—uncared for, unloved, as I knew myself to be by Letty Hyde, now the wedded wife of another.

“Try the hock, Lauriston,” said the count, “do

justice to my cellar. In a few nights hence, I may promise, you shall taste of the queen's at the castle of Marli."

"You leave this charming house, then—"

"On the third day from this. I cannot tarry longer. *Peste!* I have the king's letters for the queen and for Madame Pompadour—and, *tête Dieu!* Jeanette de Pompadour is France.

In three days I feared that Julie d'Anterroche would be more than France, or all the world itself to me.

"I think my sister is pleased with you," said the count, as if he had divined my thoughts. "What do you think of her, friend?"

I reddened, and felt painfully confused—the wine, too, was not without producing its effect by this time.

"Think, count—I dare hardly tell you. I have a profound admiration for her accomplishments, and may I add, beauty."

"You could scarcely omit it, my dear fellow."

"Her eyes are so dark and beautiful."

"Dark? Violette's eyes are *blue*; 'tis Julie, I presume, you are thinking of," said he, laughing. "Violette is one of our gayest belles. I was very fond of her in boyhood before I joined the Guards, and saw a little of life and a great deal of wickedness at Paris, Versailles, and Marli; and I was vain enough to hope that I was her first love."

"Only to hope?"

"Nay, I could never be assured. Our ladies of the court of Louis XV. and of his predecessor possessed, or possess, affections of the most rapid growth. If I was Violette's first love I may congratulate myself; but no one can say who may be the *last* of her lovers, for their name is legion."

CHAPTER XLIV.

WE STUDY ERASMUS.

IN the morning, at breakfast, Violette de Clisson wore a dress for walking, a *Pompadour* sacque of purple silk, the fashionable colour (whence our 56th Foot are called "the *Pompadours*" to this day, from their facings); but Julie had a plain white muslin dress, from amid the loose wide sleeves and snowy Mechlin lace trimmings of which her round white tapered arms came softly forth all unadorned, their own form and exquisite delicacy being far beyond what gems or bracelets of gold could enhance; and so it was with her adorable little neck and throat.

As soon as the morning meal was over, Violette assumed her gipsy hat, and affecting to be studious, took from the library a volume of Madame du Boccage's epic poems, and after exchanging a singular smile with Julie—a smile which, however rapid, I detected—she sallied forth into the garden, and for three successive mornings I remarked that this was the case.

Violette, I was afterwards told, had a lover, whom, save herself, no one in the chateau had as yet seen, not even her good friend and gossip, Julie. He was a gentleman, very tall and very handsome, of course, who had one day saved her life from a boar, which had found its way from the forest of Compiègne into the avenue of the chateau. He had contrived, after this romantic episode, to meet Mademoiselle de Clisson again and again during the absence of the count in Flanders; and had rigidly secluded himself on the plea that, for reasons

connected with the king and Madame de Pompadour—a fertile French excuse in those days—he dared not make himself known, for some time at least.

All this proved excessively attractive to a young girl, banished by her brother's desire from the gaieties of Paris and Marli, and for a time she sympathized so much with her unfortunate chevalier, that when his remittances became overdue—a circumstance that was not of unfrequent occurrence—the louis-d'ors of Violette were completely at his service.

But all this I learned some time after.

"I should like to see this mysterious lover," said Julie, who was my first informant; "but she has exacted from me a promise that I will not mention his existence either to her brother or my own—also, that I would not attempt to probe her secret. However, *you* were not comprehended in our compact."

"I trust Mademoiselle de Clisson is not deceiving herself or being deceived, for she seems alike good and artless," I remarked, "but gay and heedless."

"Violette is both," said Julie, "as a poet says, in her mind,—

"A beau, a monkey, or a feather
Strive for pre-eminence together :
A ball, a rout, a play, a drum,
Things present, past, or yet to come :
A bugled sacque—a coach-and-six,
Or where the killing patch to fix ;
A satin hoop, a wedding ring,
A parson, and—a better thing."

And, when she finished her quotation, Julie burst into a merry laugh.

Count d'Anterroche had been so long absent from his

property (at Paris, and when with the army), that he now spent much of his time with his steward in the examination of accounts and rent-rolls, with his gardener, with the stud-groom at the stables, at the vinery, the falconry, the fish-ponds, and so forth, suggesting improvements or repairs. Then Violette, as I have said, had her own affairs to attend to. Thus, for the three destined days of my sojourn at the chateau, Julie and I were thrown together as much as I could have wished.

Occasionally we rode together, once so far as Bethisy, of which her brother was chatelain, and once to Chantilly, a royal palace of the prince of Condé, to see its gardens and waterworks. In both instances we were unattended, and I shall never forget the charm of the hours thus spent with Julie by the skirts of the great old forest of Compiègne, or of our evening promenades in the long and stately avenue which led from the main road to the gate of the chateau, with its double lines of lofty trees, planted by hands that had long since mouldered in the dust. Then there was the old-fashioned French garden, which resembled so much our gardens in Scotland—with its grass-paths, its hollies, hornbeams and juniper bushes, cut into pillars, pyramids, and peacocks with tails outspread.

For this we could exchange the seclusion of the venerable library, with antique tomes bound in yellow vellum, and with the sombre light that fell through painted windows on the down fauteuils and walnut-wood cabinets. There we spent hours undisturbed, with books of poetry and engravings; I thinking only of Julie, her long lashes and her white hands, whose touch, at times, thrilled through me—her charms of voice and manner; she intent only on interesting and amusing

me; till the dinner-bell rang, and the count came from the steward, or the stables, or the garden, to change his costume—then to dinner, to wine, to music. And so the time stole away, and soon—ah, too soon—the close of the *third* day was at hand!

Julie was too French and too quick in her perceptions not to perceive that she had inspired me with an admiration and deep interest that would soon ripen into love; for love grows fast in a land where the vineyards blush in the sunshine. Yet she made no effort to win me; perhaps she had been too much used to excite both love and admiration to care much about either now. At all events, we were scarcely ever separate, and every moment she was absent seemed an age to me.

With Julie, I found all the advantage of having been heralded by the letters of her brother, which had mentioned me more than once most favourably, and by the *Mercure Français*, which had made the most of a very small affair—my crossing the Maine and abstracting the linchpins from the French field-guns—an adventure, which, in the true spirit of Parisian hyperbole, was made the feature whereon to hinge a hundred acts of valour, exceeded only by those of our old and valued friend Jack the Giant Killer.

“So *you* are the officer who saved the life of Etienne—who swam the Maine, dismounted all the cannon of Maréchal Noailles, and beat off single-handed a whole company of the Royal Cantabres! *Ma foi!* and to think you are here, sitting close by my side—alone and talking quite like any one else—it is so droll!”

Julie thus viewed me with extreme favour. To be the saver of the life of Etienne inspired her with gratitude; I had been his friend and was wounded,

which increased the interest; I was a prisoner of war; that excited her pity; I was only a year or two older than herself, and well enough looking to create a deeper emotion than mere compassion in her heart. She was French and impulsive, and we soon learned to look into each other's eyes, as if in search we knew not of what, to sigh tenderly, to think unutterable things, and have long but meaning pauses in our conversation.

But if I—an alien, a foreigner, and a commoner—dared to love his sister and to tell her so, what would the frank and soldierly young count think of such an abuse of his hospitality and kindness? True, the union with England was not so remote that the Scots had become quite aliens to the French; but that old sympathy was a slender reed to rely on now, when we met them so often in the field.

When in love we are not apt to reason much or scrutinize too closely; for if opportunity be the Devil's game, propinquity with a pretty girl is Cupid's most certain snare.

Well, the third day was drawing to a close, and Julie and I were seated side by side in one of the luxurious fauteuils of the old library. Violette had ridden to Compiègne to see her confessor, at least, so she said; the count was somewhere about the grounds, and we were turning over the leaves of different books in a listless way, saying half timid things, with long pauses between—pauses that the quickened pulse alone filled up, and that were more eloquent than words, till at last I opened a volume of Le Clerc's edition of "Erasmus."

Erasmus?

It may sound very odd—the idea of a man, whose brains were anything better than those of a cod-fish,

conning over the ponderous lucubrations of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, with a lively black-eyed girl beside him; but it was neither his Greek nor his Latin Commentaries we studied together, but simply the following passage in his "Epistles" that I read to Julie, with her hand in mine, and her soft perfumed hair touching my cheek with every respiration of a lovely little bosom that was *not* entirely concealed by the square-cut body of her long silken sacque.

"Ah, Julie," said I, "here is something about England. Shall I read it to you?"

"Yes, monsieur."

So we read together the following, in translating which, Julie had to aid me more than once; so we sat very close together.

"Did you but know, my Faustus (saith Master Erasmus to an intimate friend), the pleasures which England affords, you would fly thither on winged feet, and if the gout would not permit you, you would wish to be a Dædalus! To mention to you one among many things, here are nymphs of surpassing loveliness, merry and easy of access, whom you would prefer even to your favourite Nine. Here also prevails a custom never enough to be commended.

"Wherever you go, and wherever you come, every nymph receives you with a kiss; when you take leave, every one gives you a kiss—when you return, ambrosial kisses again welcome you! If one leaves you, she leaves you with a kiss; if one meets you, her first salutation is a rosy kiss. In short, wherever you go, kisses everywhere abound; which, my Faustus, did you once taste, and learn how very sweet and how fragrant they are, you would not, like Solon, wish for a ten years' exile, but

would desire to spend in England the whole of your life!"

While reading this paragraph (which, to come from the pen of the translator of the Greek Testament, to say the least of it, seemed somewhat lively,) my arm had gone round Julie's waist, almost unconsciously, and she neither withdrew nor repelled me. To remain thus and to retreat were alike impossible, and with each line we read I drew her nearer and nearer to me; thus, when the twelfth tome of Mynheer Erasmus fell on the floor, I had pressed my lips first to the forehead and then to those of my lovely companion.

The blood rushed to her temples for a moment, and then left her pale and colourless as usual; then she gently set my hand and arm aside, and, laughing, said,—

"*Ma foi!* what a country it must be! and such droll people, too, if Monsieur Erasmus write truth."

But we were both agitated and confused. I could only whisper,—

"Pardon, Julie—pardon me, but I love you—love you so dearly that I knew not what I did!"

Then as a step approached I kissed her again, and, opening the folding-sash of a window, stepped from the library into the garden; but while hurrying away I seemed to leave my soul on the beloved lip of Julie d'Anterroche.

* * * * *

On the same evening, when the old woods of Compiègne were tossing their green branches in the soft west wind, and when the last light of the setting sun streamed in wavering flakes athwart the stately avenue, under the leafy arch of which actual darkness seemed closing in—while Violette had gone mysteriously into the park and

the count was giving final orders about our departure for Marli on the morrow, Julie, at my earnest entreaty, put on her capuchon and palatine (a black velvet tippet, then fashionable), and passed with me into the garden.

I felt that after the late deliberate avowal of the afternoon some further explanation—some promise to be given and returned—some basis of hope and plans for the future should be made; and with my heart throbbing wildly and happily, we passed, hand locked in hand, along the gravel path, for some time in silence—a silence which neither of us knew how to break.

All that passed on that evening promenade seems but the memory of a delightful dream to me now!

I had, I dearly loved, Letty Hyde—true; but Letty had never *responded* to my passion. Now Julie did so, with all the strength of her impulsive soul; thus the tie so suddenly formed grew alike tender and strong between us, and for the first time in life I felt the double joy of loving and being in turn beloved.

I had told the penniless Letty that I loved her; and the avowal trembled timidly on my lip.

I had told Julie that I loved her—abruptly and with confidence.

How was this? What caused the change in my nature? For in the last instance the barriers formed by difference of rank, race, and religion seemed almost insuperable. Whence was it that a second avowal of love came so freely from my tongue? Perhaps we can only love truly and blindly but once. Some say so; and so it may be.

By some instinctive and undefinable knowledge created in my own heart I had soon learned that Julie loved me—at least that I was not indifferent to her. Moreover, I was no longer the new-fledged ensign—the inexperienced

boy, whom the kind and noble Drumlanrig had introduced, raw from the College of Edinburgh, to the brilliant drawing-rooms of his mother, the gay and fashionable "Kitty Hyde," at old Queensberry House, in Burlington Street; and I could stake boldly now in any game of life.

CHAPTER XLV.

A ROYAL LETTER.

WE were all seated at supper; the count had arranged that he and I should ride for Marli betimes to-morrow, and that he would write to his sister detailing his further plans, as to whether he was to rejoin his battalion in Flanders or to remain at court—as a week or two would soon decide; also as to what hope there was of having me exchanged for a lieutenant of the French Guards, and if one had been taken to have me sent home to Britain. As he said all this, glances full of deep and tender meaning were from time to time exchanged by Julie and me; but we were rather silent and preoccupied, till Violette de Clisson suddenly raised her large blue eyes, and announced that she "heard a horse galloping up the avenue."

Her delicate and peach-like cheek reddened, as if with expectation, and in a minute more a horseman alighted at the gate. We heard a loud and mellow voice in the court, and then the ring of spurred heels, as a man, having evidently a long and military stride, crossed the tessellated pavement of the vestibule; and then, before the servants could announce him, a gentleman in the uniform of the

Black Mousquetaires entered, casting aside his hat and cloak as he approached the table.

"Pierre!" said Violette.

"Pierre de Clisson!" exclaimed the count and Julie together, while Violette sprang from the table and threw her arms around him.

"*Peste!* my fair sister," said he; "take care of my wounded arm. Count, your most humble servant—yours, Monsieur de Lauriston. Fair Julie, *permettez moi*, I am still your slave;" and then the dark moustache of the jovial mousquetaire brushed Julie's soft cheek for an instant.

"This is a sudden move, Pierre," said the count.

"Rather—and a long ride from Bourquenbrai. Mongeorge did not desire to be remembered to *you*, Lauriston!"

"What does it all mean?" asked Violette.

"That I am the bearer of a letter——"

"From the amiable Colonel Mongeorge!" asked Julie, laughing.

"*Ma foi!* no—from the king himself."

"The king!" said Julie, changing colour; "for whom?"

"My friend, your brother, mademoiselle," replied the mousquetaire, handing to d'Anterroche a letter sealed with yellow wax, and then helping himself to portions of a fowl, eating with all the relish and readiness of a soldier, and pointing to a glass, which Raoul, the valet, immediately filled for him with hock. "Talking of letters—*Ouf!* I have *billets-doux* from half the army to the ladies at Marli and Paris. *Tudieu!* They seemed to have considered my valise a veritable mail-bag. I have no less than three from old Count Saxe to Mademoiselle Ver-

riere, and one to little Aurore, their daughter. 'Tis a fine thing to be a *maréchal* of France! No doubt the count laments that he must fight the English, instead of fluttering about his little Verriere in the green-room or at her toilet, placing her dainty patches and laying on her rouge. Then I have no less than sixteen notes from officers of the French Guards to Mademoiselle Clairon, of the Théâtre du Palais Royale. But what is the matter, Etienne? Your despatch does not seem to please you!"

"Excuse me, monsieur," said the count to me, while his features grew wrathful as he read his letter; "and you, Raoul, retire," he added to the attending servant, who instantly withdrew.

"What the devil is the matter? Not a *lettre de cachet*—no appointment for life in the Bastille, I hope?" exclaimed Pierre, with his mouth full.

"The king simply announces his return to Marli in a few days, and requires that my sister, Mademoiselle d'Anterroche, whom I withdrew without the royal permission—so he words it—from her duty as a maid of honour in attendance on the queen, shall return without delay to Marli le Roi, under pain of displeasure. So 'tis written—the king wills it!"

Julie's usually pale face grew ashy white on hearing this; but her dark eyes sparkled with fire.

"*Tonnerre de ciel!*" exclaimed Pierre de Clisson, laying down his knife and fork; "this is a delightful fowl, but a most unfortunate affair! I could easily have lost the letter by the way, had I known what was in it. I had fine excuse for doing so when I swam my horse through the Scarpe, where the bridge was blown up last year."

"What does all this mean?" I inquired; for the

unmistakeable agitation of Julie interested me deeply: a return to court is what most ladies would wish."

"Lauriston," exclaimed the count, with trouble in his voice and the fire of uncontrollable exasperation in his eyes, "you know not what you say. This king of France has dared to—to love my sister! Now do you understand me?"

This abrupt speech pierced my heart like a sword, and the pleading eyes of Julie met mine—they were full of mortification and distress.

"Clisson," said her brother, "is the king at present with the army?"

"Not at all; the army, under count de Saxe, is pursuing the duke of Cumberland towards Lessines, and at this hour," continued the nonchalant Mousquetaire, "his majesty is coming towards our beloved city of Paris as fast as six cream-coloured horses can drag his great winging tumbril of a carriage—all stuffing within and plate and gilding without. I have often surmised whether it would be bullet-proof—in battle, I mean."

"'Tis well you added that—your surmise were treason," said D'Anterroche, with a grim smile.

"Must you obey this order?" I inquired, with ill-concealed anxiety.

"To delay obedience were alone a crime."

"Are not the people free to choose their own service?"

"In England, yes—in France, no," was the significant reply.

"But your king is married," said I, flushing with anger.

"So is Jeanette de Pompadour," said D'Anterroche, with a bitter smile, while even Clisson laughed aloud. "My dear fellow, you really don't know what you are talking

about. At Versailles, Marli, or even le Petit Trianon, marriage may be a cloak, but it is no protection now. Thank Heaven, however, our Julie has ever been above reproach——”

“And can still protect herself,” said Julie, with a smile of pride and disdain, for this conversation humiliated her, and she rose from the table.

“I am but a poor devil of a King’s Mousquetaire, and can do nothing in this matter,” grumbled De Clisson. “By the way, Mademoiselle d’Anterroche, I wore your glove in my hat at Dettingen, and got a bullet in my thigh; I wore your *fontange* of purple ribands as my shoulder-knot at Fontenoy, and, *corbæuf*! got an arm broken. Excuse me, fair Julie, acting the knight-errant with more of your favours, as they bring me only grief, and Monsieur Jean Bull’s bitter almonds are hard to digest.”

“Poor kinsman Pierre!” said Julie, shrugging her white shoulders, with a half droll, half commiserating air.

“You presented me with that knot of ribbons at the last grand ball given at Marli just before the army marched; and very oddly I found Colonel Mezieres lying dead at Fontenoy with a knot of purple ribbons exactly similar on *his* shoulder; but you remember the ball?”

“Yes,” said Julie, with manifest impatience.

“You could not forget it,” resumed the incorrigible Pierre, stretching out his long legs, and twirling his moustaches; “for it was on that night that the most Christian king went mad about you, and only recovered his senses by the timely arrival of Madame de Pompadour in her purple dress (’tis like the banner of the Mousque-

taires Gris), and a valet with a goblet of his beloved beverage, Champagne well iced."

"*Peste!* Don't jest thus, Pierre," said the count, starting from the table, and walking to and fro; "here, in my father's house, with cannon at the gate, and these old scutcheons facing me everywhere, I can ill brook being affronted, even by the king of France and Navarre!"

The two ladies sat in silence; each feared a separation from a lover; but poor Julie had the most to dread. Pierre filled up the pause by filling his glass with wine.

"Then another day or so," said he, "will see us all at court—at Marli, where Jeanette de Pompadour has still more power than the queen; where our ladies quote Messieurs de Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the plays of Marmontel, and love every husband but their own. *Peste!* The only woman who is proper enough, or as I think, foolish enough to do so, is old Madame la Maréchale——"

"*Diable!* Clisson, how you chatter! You forget the presence of your sister and of mine, and that you are not in a caserne, or under canvas in Flanders. Our ladies at court have certainly illustrated one maxim: Virtue may make a countermarch, vice *never*. Rousseau should be——"

"What?"

"Tarred and feathered for his sickly sentimentality."

"Tarred and feathered! What, — Monsieur Jean-Jacques! — *Ouf!* My dear count, you are quite a barbarian!"

"To return to her duty as a maid of honour!" resumed D'Anterroche, glancing at the king's letter; "and this daring mockery is written to me!"

"'Tis very awkward, certainly," said de Clisson; "and we have no longer an old dame—a veritable Cerberus—like Madame de Navailles, to watch the maids of honour and bar their windows with iron, as she did to exclude the enterprising Louis XIV., and lost her place at court in consequence."

"Pierre de Clisson," said D'Anterroche, becoming seriously angry, "your banter will drive me mad! I respect the king's order, and must obey it, even while remembering that he is the worthy successor of that Louis who blasphemously said, that after belonging to him the poor and gentle La Vallière should *belong only to God*, and so, to make way for another, consigned her to a convent! But let Louis XV. beware, or he may learn that, though only a lieutenant in the grenadiers of his Guard, I am Etienne d'Anterroche!"

And kissing the forehead of his sister, whose eyes were full of tears, the count bowed and withdrew.

"*Parbleu!*" said Pierre, filling his glass again, while his sister Violette moved her chair close to him, and Julie and I drew aside within the recess of a window: "'tis an uncomfortable business."

"This order is full of many perils to me," Julie whispered, with a sigh and a sad smile.

"At least *we* shall not be separated, for I, too, will be at Marli," said I.

"True," and her soft hand pressed mine gently.

"Godfrey" (she called me Godfrey!), "say, in this matter, what would you advise—what shall I—what can I do?"

"In this case, Julie, I seem to have a formidable rival, and a lover is a dangerous and naturally a selfish adviser."

"Well—granted; but, ah, *mon Dieu*, what am I to do?" she asked, with clasped hands.

"Obey this strange king's order. I suppose, dearest Julie, in this beautiful France, this sunny land of Bastilles and *lettres de cachet*——"

"Ah, cease, do," she exclaimed, with a shudder; "you know not whom or what you jest with."

"Thank God I am a Briton."

"And you *love me*?" she said, in softly mingled tones of inquiry and reproach.

"Dear, dear Julie!"

"And now, adieu—good night," said she, retiring.

"Adieu, Julie," cried Pierre. "(*Ouf*—the bottle is empty!) Be up with the lark; but I shall not have time to visit my little château of Clisson, for we must all march betimes for Marli, which, however, will be mighty gay."

"You will certainly not have much time for the deep study of anything," said Violette, with an air of annoyance, "except gaming and hunting."

"Unless it be Erasmus," added Julie, with a quick bright glance, which made my heart leap as she and Violette retired.

"*Tête Dieu*! what does she mean by Erasmus?" asked the Mousquetaire; "and who is he?"

"I cannot say," said I, laughing, in spite of my perplexity.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MARLI LE ROI.

THE noon of the next day saw us all far beyond the town, the cathedral, the old castle, and the older forest of Senlis, and in sight of the smoke of Paris.

Julie d'Anterroche and her friend Violette de Clisson, who, for reasons of her own, accompanied us most unwillingly, occupied the count's carriage, while he, M. de Clisson, and I rode together. Raoul and two other valets in livery, armed and mounted, trotted their horses in our rear, and a courier preceded us about ten miles in front, to arrange relays and provide every accommodation for us on the way.

I rode on that side of the carriage where Julie sat, and the count on the other, which was occupied by Violette; but finding her rather abstracted and not very conversable, he dropped in the rear and joined her brother, and in this order we passed at a rapid trot through a fertile and beautiful country, where the vines were reddening and the crops were ripening under a smiling summer sun.

Julie was alternately silent, absorbed in perplexing thoughts of the future, or was seized by a desire to converse with me, and in a tone of forced gaiety pointed out various objects of interest by the way.

The face of the count, her brother, wore a stern expression, which showed that he deemed the king's command an insult; and it was his determination that Julie should formally require of the queen her dismissal, or

the acceptance of her resignation as maid of honour, and return at once to the Château d'Anterroche.

I overheard him stating his plans to Pierre de Clisson, who did not attend much to them, but whistled to his horse, and gave it words of command or made it curvet and caracole, while he sang occasionally scraps of such songs as the Mousquetaires Noirs were wont to enliven their marches with, to quiz the girls whom they passed or their rivals in court and camp, the Mousquetaires Gris.

Passing to the westward of Paris, towards evening we reached the castle of Marli le Roi, which Louis XIV. had built for a hunting seat and place alike for diversion and seclusion—at least, such seclusion as he was wont to seek in the society of Mesdames La Vallière and Maintenon.

On alighting in the outer court or esplanade before the gate, Julie and her friend were at once conducted to the apartments of the queen, and a sadness came over my heart as I pressed the hand of the former to my lips—a sadness that foreboded a separation, perhaps for ever, while I could perceive that her fine dark eyes were reddened and inflamed by the tears she had shed in the shady corner of the carriage.

Pierre and I repaired to a hotel near the castle gate, there to await the return of the count, who went at once to deliver to the queen and to Madame de Pompadour the letters with which the king had charged him. For that night I saw no more of Julie.

* Next noon as we sat at luncheon, the trumpets of the main guard sounding *à cheval*, announced that Louis XV. was approaching Marli le Roi, and seizing our hats and swords we hurried forth to see him arrive.

As an eminent French courtier relates, Marli was

indeed a princely residence.* Louis XIV. "weary of the crowd and of seeing at Versailles none but the great, persuaded himself that he had become fond of simplicity and solitude. Seeking where to gratify this new passion, he retired among those hills which overlook Paris on one side and St. Germain on the other, and that extensive plain, watered by the Seine and covered with villas and villages. Beyond Luciennes he found a deep and narrow valley, with precipices on each side, which rendered it inaccessible, secluded and buried amid a range of hills, on one of which stood a little village. The depth of the vale could never admit of any view; its only merit was its narrow extent. It took inconceivable labour to drain this sink, the resort of toads and other reptiles, and the receptacle of all the filth in the neighbourhood. At length, however, the hermitage was completed. He meant it only for a place at which he might sleep three or four times in the year, with such attendants as could not be dispensed with; but the buildings gradually increased in magnificence, the hills were levelled to afford room, and a prospect was at length opened. I have seen large trees with all their branches and leaves transported thither from Compiègne and other forests; more than three-fourths of them died, but were replaced by others. I have seen whole avenues disappear, extensive tracts of wood suddenly changed into sheets of water with pleasure-boats sailing upon them, and these again transformed into thick and shady forests. I have seen pools become cascades, waterworks sunk to quiet pools; fish-ponds adorned with the most exquisite sculpture and gilding, but scarcely finished

* It was destroyed during the Revolution.

before they were turned into bowling-greens; not to speak of the prodigious waterworks, with their immense aqueducts, conduits, and reservoirs. Reckoning up all these particulars we will find that Marli has cost perhaps more than even Versailles."

A regiment of French Invalids, who wore a strange old-fashioned uniform, and whose officers all had the Cross of St. Louis, now got under arms, and lined the court of the palace. They were all armed with the partizan, a long and broad-bladed halbert, which had been disused by the French line since 1670.

In a splendidly gilded coach, on the panels of which were the arms of France and Navarre impaled, supported by figures with tabards of the same, bearing each a banner and the motto *Montjoye Saint Denis*, drawn by six cream-coloured horses, the king approached rapidly, preceded and followed by a mounted escort and attended by a brilliant staff of nobles, among whom were the dukes of Mazarine, Villeroi, and Charost, the Marquis d'Ango, and M. de Beringham; all of whom had the privilege of entering the royal chamber when he retired to bed.

Powdered with the dust of a long ride, and having their lace tarnished by exposure in the late campaign, I saw two troops of splendid horsemen sweep in with the royal carriage, form squadron, and halt. These were the Mousquetaires of the king, all men of noble birth and undoubted bravery.

One troop was named the Mousquetaires Gris, from their dapple-grey horses, the other Les Mousquetaires Noirs, their mount being jet black; but all were armed alike with sword, musketoon, and pistols, and this force served as a school wherein many of France's greatest captains learned the noble art of war.

The king himself was their commander. Their cloaks and coats were blue, richly laced with silver; the former had white crosses before and behind. The officers wore large gorgets and breastplates; and each body had one flag and two standards, which they could receive from no humbler hand than the king's.

The royal servants, of whom there were four upon the footboard behind the carriage, wore the old regal livery of Louis XIV., tricoloured—blue, with red and white galloon lace.

At the gate stood the governor, captain, intendant, and subaltern officers of the castle of Marli, all in full uniform, decorated with their orders, and each with his hat under his arm, with the twenty-four gentlemen-in-ordinary of the household, forming a lane beyond, to the steps of the entrance where a group of richly attired ladies awaited the king.

"Which is the queen?" I inquired of D'Anterroche.

"Her majesty has better taste than to appear when La Pompadour comes forth," he replied in a whisper. "Queen Mary is not likely to forget that she is the daughter of Stanislaus Leczenski, king of Poland, though Louis may occasionally forget that she is his wife."

"And madame, the famous marchioness?"

"Is there—you may know her by her remarkable dress."

Wearing a sacque of rich dark purple embroidered with silver, and having her fine hair so elaborately powdered that it was snow-white (which, singular to say, enhanced rather than impaired her marvellous beauty), I now, for the first time, saw this extraordinary woman, whose name was then so familiar to all Europe. She was in company with many noble ladies, among whom were the duchesses

of Villeroi, Noailles, and Charost, the countesses of Toulouse, de Grammont, and others of high rank; and there, too, were Julie d'Anterroche and Violette de Clisson!

These ladies were in full court dress, all rouged and patched, with necks, shoulders, and arms bare, glancing white and sparkling with jewels.

Jean Antoinette Poisson, formerly the wife of Etiolles, nephew of the farmer-general Normand Tournehem, had just been created, by royal patent, Marchioness de Pompadour. Yet she stood somewhat apart from the ladies of the court, either because they shrank from her, or because a native pride prevented her approaching them, and, moreover, she had an ample retinue of her own. Even at the distance where D'Anterroche and I stood we could perceive that she was very lovely, being then in her twenty-fifth year. When hunting in the forest of Senar, on the borders of which the farmer-general had an estate, Louis had first seen Madame d'Etioles, who assiduously and repeatedly cast herself in his way. He immediately became enamoured of her, and (discarding Madame de Mailley) took her from M. Etioles, who was a mean-looking and ill-favoured fellow, and who, as the courtiers phrased it, "was impertinent enough to make a great noise about the loss of his wife." So he was despatched to Avignon with a *lettre de cachet* and a good dragoon escort, and desired to remain there during the king's pleasure, lest worse might befall him; but Madame d'Etioles was neither the last nor the only fancy of the wandering Louis.

Now there was a flourish of trumpets, and the standards of the Mousquetaires and of the Invalids were lowered, and swords flashed brightly in the sun

the officers saluted, when Louis, amid a general uncovering of heads, alighted from his carriage, and bowed and smiled with conventional suavity to all. Then, after a few words to the Governor of Marli, he approached the group of ladies.

Louis XV. was now in his forty-fourth year, and still possessed those dangerous graces of person and manner which made so many of the fair ones of his court fall victims to his spirit of gallantry. Yet his facial angle denoted rather a low type of intellect. He wore a brown velvet suit spangled with silver, a red satin vest, over which he wore a broad blue riband. In his hat was a diamond buckle and white ostrich feather.

I know not whether it was the majesty that doth hedge a king, or an instinctive dread of a monarch whose presence suggested all the terrors of despotism; but on raising my hat respectfully, when the cold inquiring eye of Louis XV. fell casually on me, I felt a species of shudder—a foreboding that this man would work me evil; and could I have foreseen what a few days more would bring forth, that hour had been my last in Marli le Roi!

Perceiving that every head was uncovered the King said, "Messieurs, your hats," upon which every one assumed his three-cornered beaver, and bowed very low.

"Count d'Anterroche," said Louis, suddenly passing between the dukes de Bouillon and de Tremes, and pausing before my companion.

The count bowed low, while I retired a pace or two.

"You delivered our letters to her majesty and to the Marchioness de Pompadour?" said Louis with a soft smile.

"Yes, sire."

"And concerning that missive which I sent by the Mousquetaire de Clisson to yourself—eh?"

"It has been obeyed, sire," said D'Anterroche with a coolness that cost him an effort.

"Good," said Louis, drawing his lace cravat through a button-hole.

"Mademoiselle d'Anterroche is here at Marli——"

"I thank you."

"At Marli, to resign her place of maid of honour, and she craves your permission, sire, to leave the court, as the neighbourhood of Paris is unsuited to her health," said the count coolly and resolutely.

A dark and disdainful frown gathered on the face of Louis, as he remarked evasively.

"By-the-bye, your battalion of the Guards is still in Flanders, M. le Comte, and Fontenoy has left it somewhat short of officers—at least, so Maurice de Saxe informs me."

And with this significant speech, which made the proud heart of D'Anterroche to swell with passion, Louis passed among the ladies, who continued to make a succession of low sweeping courtesies, as he addressed to each a few words with great grace and suavity.

He kissed the hand of Madame de Pompadour, and then turned immediately to Julie d'Anterroche. My heart seemed to stand still at that moment, and though they were at some distance from me I could hear some of his remarks.

"I rejoice, mademoiselle, to see you again at Marli. Would I had a crown of white roses with which to crown you, like the fairest in the fête of La Rosiere—a crown which brings with it more happiness than does that of France."

To this choice piece of fustian the reply of Julie was inaudible; but I could see that she was very pale, and trembled.

"A king must learn the art of pleasing as well as reigning," said Louis; "so, mademoiselle, one of my earliest tasks shall be to please you, and to deserve your esteem. Come, and you shall hear of how we beat the English at Fontenoy."

He took the hand of Julie and led her away, leaving Madame de Pompadour deadly pale, sinking with mortification, and the centre of a hundred smiling but malicious glances, as the brilliant crowd collapsed, and followed Louis into Marli. The portal seemed to swallow up them all. My heart and brain became burning hot, my left hand was clenched in my sword-hilt, and I felt with bitterness that I was powerless, a prisoner on parole—a mere spectator, while my love was about to be torn from me, and I dared not even speak of it to her brother.

"Come," said the count with a husky voice; "let us go to the Toison d'Or."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE TOISON D'OR.

THIS place, the Toison d'Or, was a famous hotel and tavern not far from the palace gate, and over its entrance swung a gilt sign, representing the Golden Fleece. Here Pierre de Clisson, the count, and several of the Black and Grey Mousquetaires, with many gentlemen of the court, usually assembled at a species of table d'hôte, and thither, we repaired ostensibly to dine.

We found the *salon* pretty full, and I was sensible of a temporary hush in the buzz of conversation as we entered. The king's marked attention to Julie d'Anterroche had not been unobserved, and doubtless had caused much scandal, open speculation, and merriment; but the sudden entrance of the count, her brother, had arrested all.

"Let us drink, Lauriston, and be merry to-day," said D'Anterroche in a low voice; "to-morrow I set out for Flanders, and to-morrow, despite the king, Julie shall leave the court——"

"For the château, at Compiègne?"

"No; for a more secure habitation—the convent of our aunt, at Rheims. To you, my friend!" he added, tossing off a bumper of wine, and the conversation round the dinner-table soon became general again.

In their brilliance and gaiety the Mousquetaires were particularly pleasing. They were all gentlemen of undoubted spirit and courage, and sons of the first houses in France. They treated me with great delicacy and courtesy; the war—particularly the late battle—as if by

tacit agreement, was never mentioned. They were all splendidly dressed, and each wore the end of his cravat through a button-hole, in the then approved style of Parisian dandyism.

"And so, Etienne," said one to D'Anterroche, "our friend Violette de Clisson has returned to court?"

"Yes. Scarcely the place for one so lovely and innocent."

"Innocent! Why, my dear fellow, those charming blue eyes of hers, seem to say——"

"A thousand things, her timid heart knows not," interrupted the count, while playing with his sword-knot; a fashion of play that generally stopped any conversation he disliked.

"*Tête Dieu!* I agree with you, count," said the Mousquetaire. "Maids of honour have some trouble in maintaining their title here. But what think you, monsieur," he added to me, "of all the beauties of Marli?"

"I have seen but *one*," said I, thinking of Julie; "and her face, her eyes, and presence are ever before me."

"Take care, *mon ami*," said Pierre de Clisson, laughing loudly on the opposite side of the table; "if you mean the little farmer's wife, who has just been made a marchioness, your admiration may prove perilous."

"A marchioness," reiterated D'Anterroche with disdain; "and moreover she has got a free gift of that splendid old castle of Arnac-Pompadour, which was built in the eleventh century by Messire Guy de Latour!"

My heart, my soul, were with Julie, yet I could not avoid being interested in the names which I heard mentioned by the gay and heedless circle of soldiers, who canvassed freely the scandals and stories of the

camp they had left, of the court, and of Paris, with the whole gossip of which I was soon conversant.

I heard the names of Montesquieu the essayist, Marivaux the novelist, of Voltaire and Fontenelle (and of their literary rendezvous at the house of Madame de Tencin), jangled oddly enough with those of grisettes, fleuristes, courtesans, actresses, and ballet girls of the Opera Comique. Then there were duels and suicides, and sudden disappearances of men of rank, who were supposed to be confined *secretly* in the Bastille—only supposed, as no one knew with certainty, or dared to surmise.

I heard Pierre de Clisson relate with great drollery the story of old Maréchal Richelieu and Madame la Popliniere, with the wonderful contrivance of the hinged fire-place, which was a means of access between two different houses, but which was discovered on the day when Maréchal Saxe was reviewing his Uhlans, on the Plaine des Sablons. Then came anecdotes of the royal card-table in the king's drawing-room at Marli, where peers and marshals of France and knights of the orders du Saint Esprit and St. Louis went mad about ombre and lansquenet. I heard of La Pompadour's generosity in procuring a pension of a hundred louis for poor old Crebillon, who had been living in penury in the vilest parts of the Marais; of the pencillings she had made on the last MS. tragedy submitted to her by Marmontel; of the delicate speech made by the lover of the pretty Lolote, when she fixed her charming eyes on a distant star—"Do not gaze so much at it, my love—I cannot give it to you!"—a speech which delighted all Paris, quite as much as the final charge of the Irish at Fontenoy, and far more than Voltaire's panegyric thereon,

which was declared to be "a mere frigid gazette of the battle."

In an hour I heard all the scandal of Paris and Marli, of the fashion of the king's new wig, and Madame Pompadour's new gown—for these and the addition of twenty battalions to the line seemed of equal importance.

A Mousquetaire now told us how charmingly Mademoiselle Clairon acted in Marmontel's late tragedy; and how M. de Voltaire stood up in the boxes to the full height of his grotesque little figure, and opening his toothless gums, exclaimed "*Bravo! Clairon! animo genérose puer!*" when the lovely Leonide appeared in chains before her judges.

Another told of the intrigue between Mademoiselle Verrière a beautiful actress, and the poet Marmontel, while her lover, old Maréchal Saxe, was fighting the Allies, and why he had deprived their daughter Aurore of her pension of a hundred louis per annum.

The names of the Abbé de Boissy, who wrote comedies instead of sermons; of Bernard the sculptor, who by a whim of his patrons was made *secrétaire générale des dragons*; of the pretty Babette, the famous fleuriste, whose name was given to the gay Abbé de Bernis—were all mingled pell-mell with those of the dukes de Bouillon, de Tremes, de Grammont, Villeroi, and Noailles, and of the king's mistresses, mesdames la Lauraguais, de Mailley, Ventimiglia, la Tournelle, and Flavicourt, with a coolness and drollery peculiarly French.

At last, bored by the buzz of voices, I withdrew to a window which opened upon a balcony, from whence I could see the vast mass of the castle of Marli, with all its lofty windows glittering in the sun above the trees which Louis XIV. had brought from the forest of Compiègne.

Therein was my Julie, and there too was the royal Blue-beard of whom I had heard so much.

I knew not to what length a presumptuous despot, who *commanded* the ladies of his court to love him, might be prompted to go with a girl so lovely as Julie, and I writhed in mental torture, and longed for the morrow, when she would depart for Rheims.

Every moment I pictured Louis by her side, pouring his odious love speeches and fulsome compliments into her averted ear, and deep in my heart grew the hate of a regicide!

Full of these thoughts I left the room, and at the door of the Toison d'Or suddenly met the count's principal servant, Raoul, who delivered a little pink note to me, whispering,—

“Monsieur, 'tis from mademoiselle.”

A note from Julie, and for me! It contained these words written by herself.

“Meet me in the corridor of the picture gallery at even this evening. Les Mousquetaires Noirs are on duty, and Pierre de Clisson will pass you through the gates. When at Trianon or Marli the king always goes to Madame de Pompadour's apartments after vespers, so we shall be safe from interruption.—JULIE.”

I looked at my watch, and the hands seemed to be racing in pursuit of each other, so much did this little note bewilder and delight me. At last I made out that there must be no delay in keeping my appointment, as the time was already half-past six. I sent a waiter to beg M. de Clisson to speak with me, and Pierre came readily.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE INTERVIEW.

WHAT Pierre de Clisson said, or how he passed me through the guarded gates of Marli, I know not now, so great was my agitation; but I remember that a great gilded time-piece in the corridor adjoining the picture gallery struck seven as I entered the appointed place of rendezvous.

The corridor was of great length. On one side many doors opened from it I knew not to where; but their architraves and cornices, scroll-work, and gildings were all in the fashion of the time of Louis XIV.; on the other side was a line of lofty and stately windows which overlooked the royal gardens, and through them, in the distance, I could see the wooded heights of Marli wearing a golden gleam as the sun was in the west. These windows were deeply recessed and curtained by long hangings of damask.

There was a sound—the rustling of a dress—a door was opened softly, and Julie d'Anterroche appeared. I sprang towards her, she laid her head upon my breast and sobbed heavily, while smiling through her tears, for her agitation was almost hysterical.

She was attired in exquisite taste, and her fine hair was dressed to perfection; but her face was paler than usual.

"I can see you but for a few moments only," she whispered, "and I knew that if this opportunity was missed that—that——"

"Beloved Julie!" I whispered, and drawing her into

one of the deep window recesses, I pressed her to my breast.

"My brother," she began, and paused.

"I left him at the Toison d'Or."

"He has resolved, most wisely, that I shall leave Marli to-morrow for our aunt's convent at Rheims, while he must depart for the seat of war in Flanders, and we shall travel so far together."

"I heard, and understood, the king's most palpable sneer, and it was a hint."

"It was an insult to D'Anterroche—a command there was no misinterpreting!" said Julie, with flashing eyes.

"Does Violette go with you to Rheims?"

"No, she remains here with her aunt, the Marchioness d'Ango. In the convent of St. Pierre I shall be safe, till this absurd fancy of the king's may pass away, or until——" she looked down and paused.

"May not I accompany you to Rheims?" I asked with earnestness and entreaty in my tone.

"Impossible!" said she with a sad smile.

"But at least I may follow you?" I urged.

"If you choose," said she smiling, and turning up her pretty mouth with a delicious invitation.

"Oh Julie, to love you once is to love you for ever!"

As I said this in a low voice, there was a sound close by that made us start; but we saw nothing to cause alarm.

"Does the king know of your intended journey?"

"No; if he did, he would leave nothing undone to prevent it. Louis is absolute!"

Intoxicated by the joy of folding to my heart and retaining in my arms this beautiful girl, whom I loved

so passionately, and whose manner and softness were so calculated to excite tenderness and affection, I forgot all about my parole of honour, and oblivious of distance, of difficulties, and of everything else but her presence and the mutual passion which inspired us, I urged her to fly with me from Marli, from France itself, to unite her fortunes with mine, assured that her brother would forgive us in the end.

I know not what I said, or how I phrased all this; but love lent me eloquence and deep earnestness, and Julie by her silence gave consent. Yet so great was her terror of the king that, while tacitly agreeing that marriage and flight with me would be her best means of escape, she trembled in her heart for what would ensue if we were pursued and overtaken before we could leave France, either by getting into Germany over the frontiers or to England by sea.

"Fear nothing, dearest Julie," said I, with a confidence inspired by love and its success; "I am no subject of this despotic king and fear him not, though the corruption of his court has spread through all who derive authority from it."

"Hush! *mon Dieu*, be wary!" said she, hiding her face in my breast.

"I am a prisoner of war, certainly; but he dare not——"

"Stay, I beseech you," said she, placing a hand on my mouth; "I tremble more for you than for myself, if discovered or overheard."

"True; he is a worthy descendant of that Louis XIV. who, in his boundless ideas of the royal prerogative, announced '*L'état c'est moi!*' A brutal and licentious king, who forced his queen to appear in the same carriage with

his two mistresses, La Vallière and De Montespan! To-morrow, then, dearest Julie, when you leave this ostensibly for Rheims, I will follow you in secret, and at the first stage beyond Paris we shall unite our fate together. Say but yes, Julie."

A kiss—a long and tender one, that mingled with a sigh, was my only answer. What other could I wish?

"Dear, dear Julie, once free of Marli—once on British ground—at home in my own house in Scotland, we shall think often and speak kindly of your beautiful France, while we may laugh to scorn its treacherous and licentious master."

At that moment a large mirror, which hung between two of the doors close by us, swung suddenly open upon hinges, disclosing a recess, a secret passage, within which stood Louis XV., the king of France, who had been acting the part of a common eavesdropper!

Jealousy of what he saw, natural rage at what he had heard, and intense mortification in being discovered in a position so humiliating, distorted his features almost to ugliness.

His eyes absolutely glared at us with an expression of snake-like malignity that made me tremble for Julie, and even for the future as regarded myself.

Julie clasped her white hands tremulously, and raised them and her dark eyes beseechingly towards him; but Louis was the first to recover himself, and bowing with an assumed air of *sang froid*, he closed the panel, and we heard his footsteps retiring hastily by the passage which the mirror concealed.

The sounds we had heard were now completely accounted for.

"Away," said Julie; "away from Marli! You have not an instant to lose!"

"At Meaux, on the road to Rheims—to-morrow, then—remember, Julie, remember!"

A brief but passionate embrace followed, and we separated in confusion. Alas! it was fated, perhaps, to be my last embrace—my last sight of Julie d'Anterroche!

I rushed from the palace and returned to the Toison d'Or in such a state of mind as the reader may conceive. I sought the count; but he and Pierre de Clisson had gone no one knew whither. I knew that to remain longer in that hotel would be to court danger; but where was I to go—and how to leave without some explanation with D'Anterroche?

That the king would take sure and terrible vengeance on me I felt certain. Instant flight might save me; but in flight I would lose Julie. We had agreed to meet at Meaux on the road to Rheims; but that agreement had been overheard by our tormentor, who would frustrate it. I was maddened by alarm and perplexity!

A draught of wine restored my energies, and settling my bill, I carefully loaded my pistols, buckled on my sword, and walked forth with the intention of leaving Marli on foot as quietly and with as little bustle as possible.

As I quitted the Toison d'Or the *maître-d'hôtel* gave me a letter which had come for me, addressed under cover to D'Anterroche. It was from the earl of Drumlanrig. I knew instantly his familiar handwriting and his crest upon the seal; but I was too excited by my late rencontre with royalty, and had too little time to read it then; so thrusting it unopened into my breast-pocket,

I sallied forth into the street just as the clock of the palace struck nine.

The *maître-d'hôtel*, whose attention I could well have spared, accompanied me to the door. I thought he observed me with scrutiny in his eye; so to deceive him I inquired,—

“Which is the road to Nantes?”

“Westward, monsieur,” he replied; and pointed down the street of the little town.

“I thank you,” said I, walking off; and so soon as he disappeared, I took the opposite road, the way direct to Paris.

CHAPTER XLIX.

LES MARÉCHAUSSEES DE FRANCE.

AGITATED by painful doubts, and oppressed by fears for the future, I walked hurriedly onward in the dark. Already I might be followed; and every instant I expected to be overtaken, arrested, or assassinated; thus every sound startled me, and made my left hand instinctively seek my pistols.

And Julie! What might her situation be when Louis had discovered her passion for another—another, whom he could crush by a word—a breath! Our plans for marriage and elopement he had, doubtless, overheard, and would easily find means to frustrate and to prevent her journey to Rheims; while the count, her brother, would be compelled, by honour, to rejoin his regiment in Flanders without delay; or would it be, that he might have the fate of many who were similarly situated, a

seclusion in the Bastille, in virtue of a *lettre de cachet*, that his sister might be more completely in the snares and at the mercy of the most Christian king.

As yet, however, I was still armed and free!

That I should see Julie on the morrow, after what had passed, seemed almost hopeless now, yet I felt myself compelled to seek Meaux, or its vicinity.

The parole accepted by Colonel Mongeorge I could not break by leaving France, while the tenor of that document was respected by French authorities; thus I conceived the idea of remaining in disguise near Marli, and watching over Julie; but if discovered, this disguise might bring me to the gallows as a British spy! And so, full of such racking thoughts as these, and with a heart torn by love for Julie, and despair lest I should never see her more, I walked on and on, I scarcely knew whither, between vine-trellises and cornfields, orchards, and copsewoods, till I reached a solitary wayside auberge, which seemed so secluded, so very humble and obscure, that it promised to afford me safe rest and shelter for the night.

Wine alone I asked for, and I drank it in vain, seeking to drown care, to deaden thought or gather courage; but it was not to be inspired by the thin, sour *vin ordinaire* of a roadside inn. The ideas I have enumerated occurred to me again and again, in every form and variety, and with a poignancy such as only the mind of a lover could invest them, as I turned restlessly in my bed on which I stretched myself without undressing, so as to be ready instantly for any emergency.

I locked the door of the room, and remembering what had occurred to me in the forest of Soignies, made a careful examination of my apartment, a squalid attic;

then placing my sword and pistols by my side, I extinguished the candle and addressed myself to sleep.

For hours I heard no sound but the rustling leaves and branches of the adjacent coppice, or the patter of the vine and ivy leaves, which grew close round the windows of my room, and half obscured the light of the moon. Weary, at last, I slept.

In this happy state I could have been but little more than an hour, when I was roused by the sound of feet and voices. The door was burst open—a glaring light was flashed across my eyes, and, starting up, I found the room full of armed men, amid whom stood the master of the auberge, in his shirt and drawers, just as he had been summoned from bed, trembling with cold and fear.

My worst anticipations were about to be realized, as I found my nocturnal visitors to be some of the *Maréchaussées de France*, or military police, of whom there were then thirty-one companies *à cheval*. They wore deep-skirted blue coats, with red cuffs, chamois leather vests, cloaks lined with red serge, and having horsemen's sleeves, with six silver loops and tassels on each. They were all armed with swords and carbines, and wore over the left shoulder the old-fashioned bandoleers.

Twelve of these formidable-looking fellows now surrounded my bed, and their brigadier, a grave but not unpleasing official, who, in virtue of his rank, wore a coat and cloak laced with silver an inch in breadth, laid a hand on my shoulder, saying,—

“Monsieur le Lieutenant Lauriston, I believe.”

“Yes—a prisoner of war,” said I.

“Ah, the same. Rise; you are required.”

“My pistols!” said I, grinding my teeth with rage, for mad resistance was my first thought.

"Ah, we took care, wisely, to secure them before disturbing you," he replied coolly, with a smile. "We arrest you in the name of the king."

"I thought it would soon come to this!" said I, bitterly.

"Doubtless, for monsieur must know of what he is accused—or of what he is guilty."

"Does the king, in whose name you seize me, mean to take my life?"

"Here, at least, monsieur's life is in perfect safety, provided——"

"Provided what?" I demanded impetuously.

"He makes no resistance."

"And you, sir,—who are you?"

"François Bonnival, a brigadier of the *Maréchaussées* de France. Come, sir, we must seek the road; but first, if monsieur will excuse me, we must make a search for secret weapons and papers."

My pockets were soon examined, and the linings of my coat and waistcoat. My purse and watch were taken and then restored to me, and the brigadier, politely lifting his hat, pointed to the door, but retained possession of the sword and pistols I had procured at Fontenoy.

I gave a couple of French crowns to the terrified host, to pay for my brief lodging, and followed the brigadier to the outer door, where stood a close carriage with the horses of his people, who immediately sprang into their saddles with military alacrity.

A *maréchaussée* held the door open. I stepped in mechanically, and next moment was being conveyed I knew not whither. Trees, fields, hedges, farm-houses; villages, whose inhabitants were sunk in sleep; *châteaux* amid lawns and orchards, their walls and windows involved in

darkness and obscurity, were passed rapidly by, and I heard only the monotonous hum of the whirling wheels and the measured tramp of the galloping escort, with the jingle of their steel scabbards and carbines, as we travelled on.

I thought of the man with the iron mask—of all the dreadful stories I had heard or read connected with France—her secret police, her legal assassinations and atrocious prisons—and my heart sank within me.

The carriage horses and the escort—all save the brigadier—were changed frequently; but little conversation seemed to pass at each halting-place—no questions were asked and no information was volunteered.

Was I to be assassinated? It would seem not, for that might have been done as easily within one mile of the auberge as at fifty from it. I was being conveyed somewhere in secret? Was it to the coast, that I might be shipped off to England?—to Flanders, that I might be set free on the frontiers—free to seek the British camp?

Such ideas and hopes raised my sinking spirit, and at the fourth place where we changed horses I entreated the brigadier to say where he meant to convey me.

“Where my orders direct,” said he, curtly.

“But to what place?”

“Monsieur is a soldier; I, too, am a species of soldier. Obedience is mutually our first duty; and I must beg monsieur to remember that to preserve silence is one of the standing orders of our corps.”

“Oh, Julie!” I murmured, in a burst of despair, as I sank back within the carriage.

“*Le pauvre diable !*” I heard a maréchaussée say, “he evidently thinks there is not another lover in the world but himself!”

"*Morbleu !*" said a second, "there are many such as he rotting in the Bastille of St. Antoine, at Loches, and the Isles of St. Marguerite."

"Yes, and a few years make them quite used to their prison, and quiet too."

"I remember of one—the Chevalier d'Orval——"

What followed I know not, for once more the carriage and escort were in motion, and I heard only the whirl of the wheels and the tramp of the hoofs as we sped onward.

We were amid a forest now ; day was breaking, and we must have travelled at least fifty miles since leaving the wayside inn.

CHAPTER L.

A STRANGE JOURNEY.

IN mental torture, apprehension, and suspense slowly passed the hours, while the carriage rolled swiftly on.

At one time I felt almost soothed by the thought that I suffered all this for Julie d'Anterroche ; then I started from my seat, as if stung by a serpent, when imagination drew vividly all to which she might be subjected when helpless and alone in the palace and power of one so absolute and cunning and so daringly lascivious as Louis XV.

And the generous D'Anterroche—what was *he* now doing ? Was he preparing to convey Julie to Rheims, and to depart himself for Flanders ? or was he subjected to treatment similar to my own ? What would he and Pierre de Clisson think of my mysterious disappearance

from the Toison d'Or? Julie alone could enlighten them; but in doing so would be compelled to reveal our secret meeting, the story of our love, and the degrading espionage of the king.

That I was not being conveyed to the terrible Bastille was evident, as we had already left Paris far behind. Could our destination be Brest or Marseilles?—*the galleys!*

The courtesy with which I was treated seemed to contradict a sequel so terrible; but my mind was full of perplexity, and with deep anxiety I watched the features of the country through which we travelled; but never having been in France before, every place we passed was, of course, new to me.

Soon after sunrise, when traversing an undulating and beautifully diversified district, where the broad green vineyards and yellow corn-fields were bordered by groves of fruit-trees laden with scarlet and golden apples, and where a vast forest closed the distance—far off I saw a river gleaming in the morning light. It took a broad and circular sweep through the landscape, and had a noble city built by its side; and in the old embattled walls, the cathedral, the towers, and bridge, I recognized, by a print I had seen at home, Orleans and the Loire.

Orleans! I was being conveyed *inland*—towards the heart of France; but whither?

Another city through which we passed—a city situated on a hill, with a broad river at its base and an ancient castle on a rock—by the merest chance I learned to be Blois. There fresh horses and another escort were procured, and again the carriage went on; but now came the shades of evening, and then the obscurity of night, to increase the gloom that oppressed me.

Again, forests, fields, orchards, houses, and villages, all unknown to me, were passed in dark and monotonous succession; and from a species of sleep—the very stupor of emotions that overcame me by their own weight and intensity—I was roused by the carriage being stopped suddenly and the sound of voices challenging hoarsely in French.

Sentinels seemed to be exchanging the *parole* and countersign. I looked out. My escort had halted their blown and foam-flecked horses under the gateway of what appeared to be a castle or prison of great antiquity and strength, and in the light of four upheld torches, the blaze of which flared redly in the night wind, I saw the black depth of a quaint old archway, and the jagged pikes and rusty chains of a grated portcullis, as it rose slowly in its grooves of solid stone.

Then the hoofs of the horses sounded hollowly on a drawbridge as the carriage passed in, and the gates of wood or iron, or of both, jarring as they were closed, barred, bolted, and chained *behind* me; and I felt, with a pang like a knife in my heart, that we had reached our destination and that I was more than ever a prisoner.

“Descend, monsieur,” said the voice of the Brigadier Bonnival, who had come so far with me.

On stepping from the carriage, I found myself face to face with an ugly little man in French uniform, whose chin came so far down his breast that it seemed to be edged by the gilt gorget which hung round his neck by a riband, and who, between his epaulettes, had such a hump on his back, that he might well thank Heaven he had not been born in Sparta.

A number of ill-looking fellows with scrubby beards and scratch-wigs, all carrying bunches of keys and horn

unmistakeable agitation of Julie interested me deeply: "a return to court is what most ladies would wish."

"Lauriston," exclaimed the count, with trouble in his voice and the fire of uncontrollable exasperation in his eyes, "you know not what you say. This king of Franco has dared to—to love my sister! Now do you understand me?"

This abrupt speech pierced my heart like a sword, and the pleading eyes of Julie met mine—they were full of mortification and distress.

"Clisson," said her brother, "is the king at present with the army?"

"Not at all; the army, under count de Saxe, is pursuing the duke of Cumberland towards Lessines, and at this hour," continued the nonchalant Mousquetaire, "his majesty is coming towards our beloved city of Paris as fast as six cream-coloured horses can drag his great swinging tumbril of a carriage—all stuffing within and plate and gilding without. I have often surmised whether it would be bullet-proof—in battle, I mean."

"'Tis well you added that—your surmise were treason else," said D'Anterroche, with a grim smile.

"Must you obey this order?" I inquired, with ill-concealed anxiety.

"To delay obedience were alone a crime."

"Are not the people free to choose their own service?"

"In England, yes—in France, no," was the significant reply.

"But your king is married," said I, flushing with anger.

"So is Jeanette de Pompadour," said D'Anterroche, with a bitter smile, while even Clisson laughed aloud. "My dear fellow, you really don't know what you are talking

about. At Versailles, Marli, or even le Petit Trianon, marriage may be a cloak, but it is no protection now. Thank Heaven, however, our Julie has ever been above reproach——”

“And can still protect herself,” said Julie, with a smile of pride and disdain, for this conversation humiliated her, and she rose from the table.

“I am but a poor devil of a King’s Mousquetaire, and can do nothing in this matter,” grumbled De Clisson. “By the way, Mademoiselle d’Anterroche, I wore your glove in my hat at Dettingen, and got a bullet in my thigh; I wore your *fontange* of purple ribands as my shoulder-knot at Fontenoy, and, *corbæuf*! got an arm broken. Excuse me, fair Julie, acting the knight-errant with more of your favours, as they bring me only grief, and Monsieur Jean Bull’s bitter almonds are hard to digest.”

“Poor kinsman Pierre!” said Julie, shrugging her white shoulders, with a half droll, half commiserating air.

“You presented me with that knot of ribbons at the last grand ball given at Marli just before the army marched; and very oddly I found Colonel Mezieres lying dead at Fontenoy with a knot of purple ribbons exactly similar on *his* shoulder; but you remember the ball?”

“Yes,” said Julie, with manifest impatience.

“You could not forget it,” resumed the incorrigible Pierre, stretching out his long legs, and twirling his moustaches; “for it was on that night that the most Christian king went mad about you, and only recovered his senses by the timely arrival of Madame de Pompadour in her purple dress (’tis like the banner of the Mousquetaires).

taires Gris), and a valet with a goblet of his beloved beverage, Champagne well iced."

"*Peste!* Don't jest thus, Pierre," said the count, starting from the table, and walking to and fro; "here, in my father's house, with cannon at the gate, and these old scutcheons facing me everywhere, I can ill brook being affronted, even by the king of France and Navarre!"

The two ladies sat in silence; each feared a separation from a lover; but poor Julie had the most to dread. Pierre filled up the pause by filling his glass with wine.

"Then another day or so," said he, "will see us all at court—at Marli, where Jeanette de Pompadour has still more power than the queen; where our ladies quote Messieurs de Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the plays of Marmontel, and love every husband but their own. *Peste!* The only woman who is proper enough, or as I think, foolish enough to do so, is old Madame la Maréchale——"

"*Diab!e!* Clisson, how you chatter! You forget the presence of your sister and of mine, and that you are not in a caserne, or under canvas in Flanders. Our ladies at court have certainly illustrated one maxim: Virtue may make a countermarch, vice *never*. Rousseau should be——"

"What?"

"Tarred and feathered for his sickly sentimentality."

"Tarred and feathered! What, — Monsieur Jean-Jacques! — *Ouf!* My dear count, you are quite a barbarian!"

"To return to her duty as a maid of honour!" resumed D'Anterroche, glancing at the king's letter; "and this daring mockery is written to me!"

"'Tis very awkward, certainly," said de Clisson; "and we have no longer an old dame—a veritable Cerberus—like Madame de Navailles, to watch the maids of honour and bar their windows with iron, as she did to exclude the enterprising Louis XIV., and lost her place at court in consequence."

"Pierre de Clisson," said D'Anterroche, becoming seriously angry, "your banter will drive me mad! I respect the king's order, and must obey it, even while remembering that he is the worthy successor of that Louis who blasphemously said, that after belonging to him the poor and gentle La Vallière should *belong only to God*, and so, to make way for another, consigned her to a convent! But let Louis XV. beware, or he may learn that, though only a lieutenant in the grenadiers of his Guard, I am Etienne d'Anterroche!"

And kissing the forehead of his sister, whose eyes were full of tears, the count bowed and withdrew.

"*Parbleu!*" said Pierre, filling his glass again, while his sister Violette moved her chair close to him, and Julie and I drew aside within the recess of a window; "'tis an uncomfortable business."

"This order is full of many perils to me," Julie whispered, with a sigh and a sad smile.

"At least *we* shall not be separated, for I, too, will be at Marli," said I.

"True," and her soft hand pressed mine gently.

"Godfrey" (she called me Godfrey!), "say, in this matter, what would you advise—what shall I—what can I do?"

"In this case, Julie, I seem to have a formidable rival, and a lover is a dangerous and naturally a selfish adviser."

"Well—granted; but, ah, *mon Dieu*, what *am* I to do?" she asked, with clasped hands.

"Obey this strange king's order. I suppose, dearest Julie, in this beautiful France, this sunny land of Bastilles and *lettres de cachet*——"

"Ah, cease, do," she exclaimed, with a shudder; "you know not whom or what you jest with."

"Thank God I am a Briton."

"And you *love me*?" she said, in softly mingled tones of inquiry and reproach.

"Dear, dear Julie!"

"And now, adieu—good night," said she, retiring.

"Adieu, Julie," cried Pierre. "(*Ouf*—the bottle is empty!) Be up with the lark; but I shall not have time to visit my little château of Clisson, for we must all march betimes for Marli, which, however, will be mighty gay."

"You will certainly not have much time for the deep study of anything," said Violette, with an air of annoyance, "except gaming and hunting."

"Unless it be Erasmus," added Julie, with a quick bright glance, which made my heart leap as she and Violette retired.

"*Tête Dieu*! what does she mean by Erasmus?" asked the Mousquetaire; "and who is he?"

"I cannot say," said I, laughing, in spite of my perplexity.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MARLI LE ROL.

THE noon of the next day saw us all far beyond the town, the cathedral, the old castle, and the older forest of Senlis, and in sight of the smoke of Paris.

Julie d'Anterroche and her friend Violette de Clisson, who, for reasons of her own, accompanied us most unwillingly, occupied the count's carriage, while he, M. de Clisson, and I rode together. Raoul and two other valets in livery, armed and mounted, trotted their horses in our rear, and a courier preceded us about ten miles in front, to arrange relays and provide every accommodation for us on the way.

I rode on that side of the carriage where Julie sat, and the count on the other, which was occupied by Violette; but finding her rather abstracted and not very conversable, he dropped in the rear and joined her brother, and in this order we passed at a rapid trot through a fertile and beautiful country, where the vines were reddening and the crops were ripening under a smiling summer sun.

Julie was alternately silent, absorbed in perplexing thoughts of the future, or was seized by a desire to converse with me, and in a tone of forced gaiety pointed out various objects of interest by the way.

The face of the count, her brother, wore a stern expression, which showed that he deemed the king's command an insult; and it was his determination that Julie should formally require of the queen her dismissal, or

the acceptance of her resignation as maid of honour, and return at once to the Château d'Anterroche.

I overheard him stating his plans to Pierre de Clisson, who did not attend much to them, but whistled to his horse, and gave it words of command or made it curvet and caracole, while he sang occasionally scraps of such songs as the Mousquetaires Noirs were wont to enliven their marches with, to quiz the girls whom they passed or their rivals in court and camp, the Mousquetaires Gris.

Passing to the westward of Paris, towards evening we reached the castle of Marli le Roi, which Louis XIV. had built for a hunting seat and place alike for diversion and seclusion—at least, such seclusion as he was wont to seek in the society of Mesdames La Vallière and Maintenon.

On alighting in the outer court or esplanade before the gate, Julie and her friend were at once conducted to the apartments of the queen, and a sadness came over my heart as I pressed the hand of the former to my lips—a sadness that foreboded a separation, perhaps for ever, while I could perceive that her fine dark eyes were reddened and inflamed by the tears she had shed in the shady corner of the carriage.

Pierre and I repaired to a hotel near the castle gate, there to await the return of the count, who went at once to deliver to the queen and to Madame de Pompadour the letters with which the king had charged him. For that night I saw no more of Julie.

Next noon as we sat at luncheon, the trumpets of the main guard sounding *à cheval*, announced that Louis XV. was approaching Marli le Roi, and seizing our hats and swords we hurried forth to see him arrive.

As an eminent French courtier relates, Marli was

indeed a princely residence.* Louis XIV. "weary of the crowd and of seeing at Versailles none but the great, persuaded himself that he had become fond of simplicity and solitude. Seeking where to gratify this new passion, he retired among those hills which overlook Paris on one side and St. Germain on the other, and that extensive plain, watered by the Seine and covered with villas and villages. Beyond Luciennes he found a deep and narrow valley, with precipices on each side, which rendered it inaccessible, secluded and buried amid a range of hills, on one of which stood a little village. The depth of the vale could never admit of any view; its only merit was its narrow extent. It took inconceivable labour to drain this sink, the resort of toads and other reptiles, and the receptacle of all the filth in the neighbourhood. At length, however, the hermitage was completed. He meant it only for a place at which he might sleep three or four times in the year, with such attendants as could not be dispensed with; but the buildings gradually increased in magnificence, the hills were levelled to afford room, and a prospect was at length opened. I have seen large trees with all their branches and leaves transported thither from Compiègne and other forests; more than three-fourths of them died, but were replaced by others. I have seen whole avenues disappear, extensive tracts of wood suddenly changed into sheets of water with pleasure-boats sailing upon them, and these again transformed into thick and shady forests. I have seen pools become cascades, waterworks sunk to quiet pools; fish-ponds adorned with the most exquisite sculpture and gilding, but scarcely finished

* It was destroyed during the Revolution.

before they were turned into bowling-greens; not to speak of the prodigious waterworks, with their immense aqueducts, conduits, and reservoirs. Reckoning up all these particulars we will find that Marli has cost perhaps more than even Versailles."

A regiment of French Invalids, who wore a strange old-fashioned uniform, and whose officers all had the Cross of St. Louis, now got under arms, and lined the court of the palace. They were all armed with the partizan, a long and broad-bladed halbert, which had been disused by the French line since 1670.

In a splendidly gilded coach, on the panels of which were the arms of France and Navarre impaled, supported by figures with tabards of the same, bearing each a banner and the motto *Montjoye Saint Denis*, drawn by six cream-coloured horses, the king approached rapidly, preceded and followed by a mounted escort and attended by a brilliant staff of nobles, among whom were the dukes of Mazarine, Villeroi, and Charost, the Marquis d'Ango, and M. de Beringham; all of whom had the privilege of entering the royal chamber when he retired to bed.

Powdered with the dust of a long ride, and having their lace tarnished by exposure in the late campaign, I saw two troops of splendid horsemen sweep in with the royal carriage, form squadron, and halt. These were the Mousquetaires of the king, all men of noble birth and undoubted bravery.

One troop was named the Mousquetaires Gris, from their dapple-grey horses, the other Les Mousquetaires Noirs, their mount being jet black; but all were armed alike with sword, musketoon, and pistols, and this force served as a school wherein many of France's greatest captains learned the noble art of war.

The king himself was their commander. Their cloaks and coats were blue, richly laced with silver; the former had white crosses before and behind. The officers wore large gorgets and breastplates; and each body had one flag and two standards, which they could receive from no humbler hand than the king's.

The royal servants, of whom there were four upon the footboard behind the carriage, wore the old regal livery of Louis XIV., tricoloured—blue, with red and white galloon lace.

At the gate stood the governor, captain, intendant, and subaltern officers of the castle of Marli, all in full uniform, decorated with their orders, and each with his hat under his arm, with the twenty-four gentlemen-in-ordinary of the household, forming a lane beyond, to the steps of the entrance where a group of richly attired ladies awaited the king.

"Which is the queen?" I inquired of D'Anterroche.

"Her majesty has better taste than to appear when La Pompadour comes forth," he replied in a whisper. "Queen Mary is not likely to forget that she is the daughter of Stanislaus Leczenski, king of Poland, though Louis may occasionally forget that she is his wife."

"And madame, the famous marchioness?"

"Is there—you may know her by her remarkable dress."

Wearing a *sacque* of rich dark purple embroidered with silver, and having her fine hair so elaborately powdered that it was snow-white (which, singular to say, enhanced rather than impaired her marvellous beauty), I now, for the first time, saw this extraordinary woman, whose name was then so familiar to all Europe. She was in company with many noble ladies, among whom were the duchesses

of Villeroi, Noailles, and Charost, the countesses of Toulouse, de Grammont, and others of high rank; and there, too, were Julie d'Anterroche and Violette de Clisson!

These ladies were in full court dress, all rouged and patched, with necks, shoulders, and arms bare, glancing white and sparkling with jewels.

Jean Antoinette Poisson, formerly the wife of Etioilles, nephew of the farmer-general Normand Tournehem, had just been created, by royal patent, Marchioness de Pompadour. Yet she stood somewhat apart from the ladies of the court, either because they shrank from her, or because a native pride prevented her approaching them, and, moreover, she had an ample retinue of her own. Even at the distance where D'Anterroche and I stood we could perceive that she was very lovely, being then in her twenty-fifth year. When hunting in the forest of Senar, on the borders of which the farmer-general had an estate, Louis had first seen Madame d'Etioilles, who assiduously and repeatedly cast herself in his way. He immediately became enamoured of her, and (discarding Madame de Mailley) took her from M. Etioilles, who was a mean-looking and ill-favoured fellow, and who, as the courtiers phrased it, "was impertinent enough to make a great noise about the loss of his wife." So he was despatched to Avignon with a *lettre de cachet* and a good dragoon escort, and desired to remain there during the king's pleasure, lest worse might befall him; but Madame d'Etioilles was neither the last nor the only fancy of the wandering Louis.

Now there was a flourish of trumpets, and the standards of the Mousquetaires and of the Invalids were lowered, and swords flashed brightly in the sun

the officers saluted, when Louis, amid a general uncovering of heads, alighted from his carriage, and bowed and smiled with conventional suavity to all. Then, after a few words to the Governor of Marli, he approached the group of ladies.

Louis XV. was now in his forty-fourth year, and still possessed those dangerous graces of person and manner which made so many of the fair ones of his court fall victims to his spirit of gallantry. Yet his facial angle denoted rather a low type of intellect. He wore a brown velvet suit spangled with silver, a red satin vest, over which he wore a broad blue riband. In his hat was a diamond buckle and white ostrich feather.

I know not whether it was the majesty that doth hedge a king, or an instinctive dread of a monarch whose presence suggested all the terrors of despotism; but on raising my hat respectfully, when the cold inquiring eye of Louis XV. fell casually on me, I felt a species of shudder—a foreboding that this man would work me evil; and could I have foreseen what a few days more would bring forth, that hour had been my last in Marli le Roi!

Perceiving that every head was uncovered the King said, "Messieurs, your hats," upon which every one assumed his three-cornered beaver, and bowed very low.

"Count d'Anterroche," said Louis, suddenly passing between the dukes de Bouillon and de Tremes, and pausing before my companion.

The count bowed low, while I retired a pace or two.

"You delivered our letters to her majesty and to the Marchioness de Pompadour?" said Louis with a soft smile.

"Yes, sire."

"And concerning that missive which I sent by the Mousquetaire de Clisson to yourself—eh?"

"It has been obeyed, sire," said D'Anterroche with a coolness that cost him an effort.

"Good," said Louis, drawing his lace cravat through a button-hole.

"Mademoiselle d'Anterroche is here at Marli——"

"I thank you."

"At Marli, to resign her place of maid of honour, and she craves your permission, sire, to leave the court, as the neighbourhood of Paris is unsuited to her health," said the count coolly and resolutely.

A dark and disdainful frown gathered on the face of Louis, as he remarked evasively.

"By-the-bye, your battalion of the Guards is still in Flanders, M. le Comte, and Fontenoy has left it somewhat short of officers—at least, so Maurice de Saxe informs me."

And with this significant speech, which made the proud heart of D'Anterroche to swell with passion, Louis passed among the ladies, who continued to make a succession of low sweeping courtesies, as he addressed to each a few words with great grace and suavity.

He kissed the hand of Madame de Pompadour, and then turned immediately to Julie d'Anterroche. My heart seemed to stand still at that moment, and though they were at some distance from me I could hear some of his remarks.

"I rejoice, mademoiselle, to see you again at Marli. Would I had a crown of white roses with which to crown you, like the fairest in the fête of La Rosiere—a crown which brings with it more happiness than does that of France."

To this choice piece of fustian the reply of Julie was inaudible; but I could see that she was very pale, and trembled.

"A king must learn the art of pleasing as well as reigning," said Louis; "so, mademoiselle, one of my earliest tasks shall be to please you, and to deserve your esteem. Come, and you shall hear of how we beat the English at Fontenoy."

He took the hand of Julie and led her away, leaving Madame de Pompadour deadly pale, sinking with mortification, and the centre of a hundred smiling but malicious glances, as the brilliant crowd collapsed, and followed Louis into Marli. The portal seemed to swallow up them all. My heart and brain became burning hot, my left hand was clenched in my sword-hilt, and I felt with bitterness that I was powerless, a prisoner on parole—a mere spectator, while my love was about to be torn from me, and I dared not even speak of it to her brother.

"Come," said the count with a husky voice; "let us go to the Toison d'Or."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE TOISON D'OR.

THIS place, the Toison d'Or, was a famous hotel and tavern not far from the palace gate, and over its entrance swung a gilt sign, representing the Golden Fleece. Here Pierre de Clisson, the count, and several of the Black and Grey Mousquetaires, with many gentlemen of the court, usually assembled at a species of table d'hôte, and thither, we repaired ostensibly to dine.

We found the *salon* pretty full, and I was sensible of a temporary hush in the buzz of conversation as we entered. The king's marked attention to Julie d'Anterroche had not been unobserved, and doubtless had caused much scandal, open speculation, and merriment; but the sudden entrance of the count, her brother, had arrested all.

"Let us drink, Lauriston, and be merry to-day," said D'Anterroche in a low voice; "to-morrow I set out for Flanders, and to-morrow, despite the king, Julie shall leave the court——"

"For the château, at Compiègne?"

"No; for a more secure habitation—the convent of our aunt, at Rheims. To you, my friend!" he added, tossing off a bumper of wine, and the conversation round the dinner-table soon became general again.

In their brilliance and gaiety the Mousquetaires were particularly pleasing. They were all gentlemen of undoubted spirit and courage, and sons of the first houses in France. They treated me with great delicacy and courtesy; the war—particularly the late battle—as if by

tacit agreement, was never mentioned. They were all splendidly dressed, and each wore the end of his cravat through a button-hole, in the then approved style of Parisian dandyism.

"And so, Etienne," said one to D'Anterroche, "our friend Violette de Clisson has returned to court?"

"Yes. Scarcely the place for one so lovely and innocent."

"Innocent! Why, my dear fellow, those charming blue eyes of hers, seem to say——"

"A thousand things, her timid heart knows not," interrupted the count, while playing with his sword-knot; a fashion of play that generally stopped any conversation he disliked.

"*Tête Dieu!* I agree with you, count," said the Mousquetaire. "Maids of honour have some trouble in maintaining their title here. But what think you, monsieur," he added to me, "of all the beauties of Marli?"

"I have seen but *one*," said I, thinking of Julie; "and her face, her eyes, and presence are ever before me."

"Take care, *mon ami*," said Pierre de Clisson, laughing loudly on the opposite side of the table; "if you mean the little farmer's wife, who has just been made a marchioness, your admiration may prove perilous."

"A marchioness," reiterated D'Anterroche with disdain; "and moreover she has got a free gift of that splendid old castle of Arnac-Pompadour, which was built in the eleventh century by Messire Guy de Latour!"

My heart, my soul, were with Julie, yet I could not avoid being interested in the names which I heard mentioned by the gay and heedless circle of soldiers, who canvassed freely the scandals and stories of the

that even La Lauraguais would not have known him ; so Louis XV. had no dread of his beauty then."

I have rehearsed this conversation in my own way, omitting the oaths, jests, and vulgar ribaldry with which the Frenchman so freely interspersed it.

"Gargousse," said I, "if you or your employers imagine that I will remain passively here, you are all very much mistaken. I shall attempt to escape——"

"A great many do ; but they are always caught or killed," he replied with a grin.

"Whether I escape or perish, I shall, at all events, be *free*," said I, with a savage joy which startled even Gargousse, "and in that conviction there is something great and glorious!"

But the mocking laugh of this hateful and hideous Cerberus was my only response, as he closed the ponderous door and retired, leaving me to brood over the horrible anecdotes he had told with such zest.



CHAPTER LIII.

THE EARL'S LETTER.

THREE weeks passed away—how wearily and how monotonously I shall not attempt to describe ; but shall hasten to an episode which brought about a terrible change in my prison life at Loches.

One day, when seated listlessly at my window, gazing between its rusty and cobweb-covered bars, at the far stretching vale through which the Ource was winding towards the Loire, with the light of the setting sun

shining redly on the hills of Touraine, I suddenly be-thought me of the letter which I had received from the earl of Drumlanrig. What had become of it, and how had it disappeared? I distinctly remembered thrusting it into my breast pocket when I quitted the Toison d'Or and before my arrest at the auberge on the Paris road.

I now discovered a hole in the said pocket, and through this aperture the letter had dropped or slid down to the lining of my skirts, which being stiffened with buckram according to the fashion then prevailing, had prevented me discovering its presence, until I searched for it, and found it sorely frayed and crumpled, but nevertheless quite readable.

Hastily I opened and perused it, and it seemed to come to me like a voice from the outer world—the world of light, of life and liberty, from which I was perhaps excluded for ever. It had been written on the second day after the earl's arrival at old Queensberry House, in London on sick leave from the army, and ran nearly thus—for every word of it is engraved in my memory:—

“MY DEAR GODFREY,—Aware that nothing will lighten your irksome life, as a prisoner of war on parole, so much as news from home, I write to mention, that after a pleasant voyage in the *Royal Oak* from Ostend, I came to town by the Dover stage, suffering a little from my wound, but a great deal from feverishness of mind and body. Of course you know that my sword-arm was broken at Fontenoy—a battle which the Whigs, of course, extol as a victory.

“I found the dusky dome of St. Paul's and the broad waters of the Thames just where we left them, and the vast world of London revolving there the same as ever

—our battles of Dettingen and Fontenoy almost forgotten, like those of Ramillies and Malplaquet, and something *new* impatiently waited for. Our Londoners are likely to get it too, for another unhappy rising of the Highland clans in the cause of the chevalier is confidently anticipated, and the French have encamped 15,000 infantry at Dunkirk to join them. Matters are looking so dark in Scotland, that aid from Holland has been solicited, and as the Household Brigade will certainly be ordered home, you may soon expect the pleasure of serving in London again.

“You will have heard, of course, how sixteen hundred Frenchmen surprised Ghent, and how Bruges was abandoned, after a brave resistance, by our Scots Fusileers. In fact, Louis XV. is now master of Flanders; H.R.H. the duke of C—— being all but a fugitive!

“I found my father, as usual, immersed in politics, and my mother dividing her time between Ranelagh and Vauxhall, the Haymarket opera, the drawing-room at St. James's, and barge excursions up the river to Richmond. I have heard nothing of Letty Hyde, nor can I trace her, for the duchess maintains an obstinate silence concerning her; but I found, resident here at Queensberry House, the Lady Elizabeth Hope, as pale, lily-like, and drooping as ever. Several entertainments at home, on a grand scale, and parties to Ranelagh, had been projected by my mother and her invariable adviser in all such important matters, Mr. Horace Walpole; but all these have been abandoned or put off in consequence of my indifferent health: so we are now to go down to Scotland instead; and though I know my mother detests the country in general and Scotland in particular, we are to remain for

some months at our dear old castle of Drumlanrig, where it is confidently hoped that the pure breeze which comes from the Dumfriesshire hills to shake its dark oak woods, together with the tender assiduities of herself and Lady Elizabeth, who (of course) accompanies us, and is to be my especial nurse, will restore me to perfect health. All vanity apart, poor Lady Elizabeth seems fonder of me than ever, and as Letty is gone, and one must love something, I begin to think I am not worthy of the regard our fair Hope bestows upon me—and—I know not what to say; but you may already begin to perceive *how all this will end*. . . .

“I met our old friend Wolfe at the Horse Guards yesterday. He goes to Scotland, as aide-de-camp to General Henry Hawley.

“Be assured that the duke, my father, will leave nothing undone to effect your exchange by the next cartel. The duchess sends her love to you. She is the same gay and brilliant woman as ever, or when her friend Gay wrote—

“‘Yonder I see the cheerful duchess stand,
For friendship, zeal, and blithesome humours known.’

Adieu for the present. I enclose this letter under cover to your friend Count d’Anterroche, in care of a French officer returning by cartel. My *next* will be from the mountain land that lies beyond the Border,—till then believe me, my dear Godfrey, ever yours,

“DRUMLANRIG.”

I could have wept, so childish had three weeks of confinement and oppression of spirit made me, as I read on, and as the pale, grave, handsome face of my friend came

before me, and his mellow manly voice seemed to meet my ear.

Ah, how little could he imagine where I was then—how situated and how degraded!

This letter, so suddenly remembered and discovered, seemed as a companion sent to me in my loneliness; and I was about to read it again, commencing even at the address and date, when it was roughly snatched away; a hand like an iron vice grasped my right shoulder, and I met the malevolent and cruel eyes of Gargousse glaring into mine!

"*Morbleu!*" said he; "so you are in communication with some one beyond the walls!"

"It is false; that letter came here with me."

"'Tis very likely it would escape the searchers!" he replied, with a sneer; "unless you had swallowed it they must have found it. Tell me at once from whom it comes, or you will be picketed until half dead, and sent to the *gamelle* for ever after."

"Restore my letter," said I, in a voice hoarse with passion, as I snatched up the stool which formed my only seat; "restore it, rascal, lest I kill you where you stand!"

Instead of complying, Gargousse thrust the letter into his filthy pocket and stood on his defence.

Rushing on him, blind with fury, I showered blow after blow on his head, but without much effect; he defended himself with great strength and ferocity, and the hard battle between us could not have endured long, as I am sure he must have won a victory which he would sorely have abused, had not the noise reached M. Goulard, who arrived with a party of the guard; so we were at once forcibly separated and conveyed before the old

governor—he with the fiery eyes and bushy wig—to whom Gargousse triumphantly showed the captured letter, loudly affirming that it was certainly *not* found upon me when delivered over by Bonnival, the brigadier of the Maréchaussées; thus I was certainly in correspondence with some one *beyond* the walls for the purpose of achieving an escape, which I had more than once sworn I would attempt on the first opportunity.

To all this I listened in contemptuous silence, as I felt soothed, even pleased, by the beating I had given this hideous fellow.

Neither the governor nor his deformed subaltern, M. Goullard, knew a word of English, consequently they could make nothing of the letter, though they viewed it from each corner alternately, and then tried how it looked upside down. The king's name occurred in it, which, of course, indicated treason—perhaps a design to assassinate him!

Fearing that my statement of the truth would be only disbelieved, and being loth to subject myself to unnecessary insult, I still remained silent, so the governor said, while knitting his bushy eyebrows,—

“When I saw you, *monsieur le prisonnier*, I expressed a hope that would be the *last*, as it was the first time. Each occasion that brings you before me is but the prelude to a more severe fate. You have evidently friends without who are conniving at an escape—else whence this letter in your possession? Take him to the common hall, and have him fettered to another prisoner.”

“*Fettered!*” I exclaimed, with a step forward, on which two soldiers who stood by the governor's chair brought their bayonets to the charge.

"I said fettered," he repeated, with a sour smile.

"To whom?" asked Goullard.

"The other English prisoner, who was brought here by Bonnival, last night."

On being led away I experienced a kind of relief in the idea of having a companion in misfortune—one with whom I could converse and, perhaps, mutually arrange an escape; and better than all, an English prisoner.

"Gargousse," said I, "I meant not to quarrel with you, had you but believed me and restored my letter."

"Oh, *parbleu*, I bear no malice," said he, with a grimace which belied his words.

"What is to be done with me now?"

"We are about, as the Scripture says, to find 'a help-mate meet for you.'"

"What do you mean?"

"That you shall soon see."

I really believed they were about to chain me to a woman, until Goullard said,—

"Silence, Gargousse—this is no place or subject for jest."

"Tell me, M. Goullard," said I, "whom am I to—to have for a companion?"

"An Englishman, who has been accused of a very remarkable crime at Marli."

"I beseech you, sir, to tell me more," said I, earnestly.

"He had paid his addresses, assiduously and in secret, to a noble and very beautiful demoiselle, whose friends he knew well would have slain him for his presumption in doing so; thus he artfully persuaded her to place in his possession all her money and jewels, and to elope with him—elope—*tête Dieu*!—from the king's palace at

Marli. They remained in a cottage near Clichy for a week, when our gallant secured all the lady's valuables about his own person, and resolving to leave her, gave her a powerful narcotic, which cast her into a deep sleep. This might have satisfied him, but he did more, for he thrust into her heart a silver pin eight inches long, which he had taken from her hair—inserting it immediately under the left breast. No blood came from the wound, so that the poor girl lay dead for some days before she was discovered, and it was only after a minute search, and when her bosom was uncovered, that the pin was found by the king's surgeon. Her seducer was found with her jewels upon him; the robbery was proved, but *not* the assassination; so he has been condemned to Loches for life."

"And the lady, what was her name?"

"Violette de Clisson."

"Violette!" I exclaimed, "and this villain had been the secret lover!"

"True, monsieur, and here he comes."

I heard the rattling of a chain as Goullard spoke, and on looking up, found myself face to face with—Mr. George Frederick Falshaw.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE HALL.

RAGE almost paralysed me for some minutes, and shame too, at the unmerited humiliation to which I was subjected, for I disdained the idea of explaining to a wretch so vile as Falshaw, how I came to be in Loches, and why in such a predicament. Then came a horror of the man who could so cruelly lure from home and destroy a girl so fair, so lovely, and so loving as Violette de Clisson. By what witchcraft—by what aid from Satan, had such a man won the blind affection of such a girl?

“Ha, ha! sink me! who would have thought of seeing *you* here, Mr. Lauriston?” said he, mockingly. “This is, as we used to say in Battereau’s, from the Guards to the Line, and from the Line to the Devil, with a vengeance! I heard all about it from a friend of mine—all about that delightful meeting in the corridor at Marli—the tender kisses; the nice little trip that was arranged on the road to Rheims; and how that devilish panel opened and displayed his——”

“Silence,” said Goullard, with his drawn sword at Falshaw’s throat; “silence now, if you would not have this bare blade passed through your heart, and silence *in future*, if you would not have your tongue cut out by the roots. There are names which none must mention here.”

Falshaw glared at the Frenchman’s sword with an expression of rage and spite mingling in his pale grey eyes; but he only muttered an oath, and relapsed into silence.

We were padlocked together by a chain of forty links which was attached to Falshaw's left wrist and to my right, so that we could never separate nor be further apart than three feet; nor could one move without the full knowledge and entire consent of the other.

We were then ushered through a massive iron gate into a large stone apartment, evidently the ancient hall of the castle, where, in the olden time, Charles VII. and Louis XI. had often held high festivals and feasted royally, when Loches was their favourite residence and the home of the former's mistress, Agnes, the gentle and tender demoiselle de Fromenteau.

Falshaw and I were thrust in; the iron gate was shut with a clang, and amid a hideous rattling of chains and shuffling of feet on the paved floor, we found ourselves immediately surrounded by thirty men—fifteen couples—all similarly fettered, and all regarding us with curiosity. One or two greeted us with expressions of pity; but many more with ironical phrases of welcome.

By the dim light which came in misty flakes through the deeply embayed, strongly grated, and small windows of this high arched hall—windows long obscured by dust and cobwebs—I surveyed with a sinking and sickening heart the squalid group by whom we were surrounded.

The attire of many of them was now literally rags, baffling all description; but some had remnants of uniforms and of fine clothing.

Many of these prisoners had been gentlemen, whom debauchery, extravagance, gambling, and crime, had reduced to this level. Some had been citizens of Paris, torn in the night from their families and the world, they knew not why; perhaps for a trivial remark on a

prime minister or one of the king's mistresses; or because they had too noisily (like poor M. Etiolles) represented the abduction of a wife or daughter by some great lord of the court, who had daily as many *lettres de cachet* at his disposal as he required.

Others were there for actual crimes against the state or society, but these were few; and some there were so broken in spirit by long confinement, that when ordered roughly by the warders, or bullied by those to whom they were chained, they wept like children.

I shall willingly hurry over my sojourn in *the Hall*, which was the most hateful portion of my life in Loches.

Falshaw, who was nearly in rags, escaped with little notice on our entrance; but my faded blue velvet suit which I had bought from the sutler after Fontenoy, excited general ridicule, and the now tarnished silver lace which adorned it was forcibly stripped off and bartered for wine with a warder, through the grated door of the hall, the vaulted roof of which rang with ironical halloos, when my health was drunk—halloos that sounded very like yells, for Frenchmen cannot cheer as we do.

We were asked what freak of good fortune procured them the pleasure of our company.

Remembering the manner in which Goullard had silenced Falshaw, I simply stated that I knew not, for my own part; on which some shook their heads mournfully, and said, such had been their own hard case, five, ten, or fifteen years ago.

"And you, *compère*, what brought *you* here?" one inquired of Falshaw.

"A false accusation of killing my wife when I grew weary of her; so beware how I grow weary of *you*," he

replied, with a scowl in his bloodshot eyes, which made the tattered questioner shrink back.

At sunset a brass cannon, which stood in a stone gallery at the end of the hall, had the charge drawn from it and was loaded anew with canister shot. Then its muzzle was depressed, so that it might sweep the whole place, in case of a revolt, a scuffle, or attempted escape. In this gallery a sentinel stood night and day, the object of incessant scoffs and maledictions.

At night sixteen bundles of straw were brought into the hall, and tossed on the paved floor as beds for us, when, amid mockery, despair, and grief, ribaldry and oaths—but never prayer—the night closed in.

I know not now how I endured or survived this horrible companionship.

Among fifteen other couples, so chained, so guarded, my chances of escape were less even than when in the solitary chamber in the keep; for now one or all must escape—one or all remain. And none dared whisper of escape or of revolt, lest another's treachery should destroy him.

Oh, how my soul sickened of such a place and loathed such society! I now longed for the solitude of my former apartment, even with all its terrible traditions and associations—the most horrid of which was the idea of the bones of the victim who had been entombed alive within the massive wall that bore so many lettered records of sorrows long since past.

There at least the free current of my own sad thoughts was undisturbed; and there I could conjure up the image of Julie d'Anterroche, and weave plans for escape and future life or death!

This new and repulsive mode of existence, seemed a

dream or a delirium. Had my senses left me? Sometimes I asked of myself, had I been wounded in the head at Fontenoy and become insane. Were all that had passed there—the danger I had run at Bourquenbrai—the visit to the château d'Anterroche—the love of the dark-eyed Julie—the scene at Marli, and my subsequent arrest, the visions of insanity?

Three days and nights were passed in horror there, when we were all hurriedly summoned to the courtyard about dusk on the evening of the fourth day. Unusual torrents of rain had swollen the water of the fosse to overflowing. The chains of the sluice-gate had given way, and the drawbridge was in danger of being destroyed by the upheaval of the planking; so we were ordered by M. Goullard to join a party of the castle guard, and by our united strength, to raise the sluice-gate, by which the surplus water was run off towards the Ource.

For a few minutes I felt how glorious liberty must be as I inhaled the pure, fresh breeze of evening, and surveyed the strong towers of Loches all reddened by the warm, hazy flush of the setting sun. Keenly I surveyed them—the lofty keep, the lower towers, the outer walls, the fosse, its depth and breadth, and these details I treasured in my heart for the time to come!

Falshaw and I had, on each side of us, a soldier with his bayonet drawn, and together with the rest, we put our united strength, by crow-bars and levers, to raise the large wooden frame of the sluice.

Slowly it rose by inches, up—up at last, and the water which poured under it in several streams at first, became a broad and foaming torrent, that tore down hill towards the Ource. At that moment, while all our hands were employed in sustaining it, I felt something

suddenly snap ; and lo ! a link of the chain which fettered me to Falshaw, being old and rusty, had parted. With singular presence of mind he exclaimed in French,

“The castle is on fire—look, look at the keep !”

Every eye turned in the direction indicated, and at the same moment he leaped headlong over the sluice-gate and plunged into the water, which ran down a steep ravine towards the river, and there he disappeared.

“Fire—fire at him !” shouted Goullard, boiling with rage at being outwitted, and several muskets were discharged at what was supposed to be the fugitive in the twilight, while I was seized, lest I should follow his example, which I felt strongly tempted to do.

The prisoners believed him to be drowning, or drowned ; yet we all looked on with the most stolid indifference.

The most accurate search was made ; but no trace of Falshaw's body could be discovered in the ravine or canal which led from the sluice to the river ; hence it was concluded that he must have escaped.

Oh, how capricious is fortune ! He, covered with guilt and infamy, was free ; while I, without a crime, was a prisoner still !

But this episode caused some amelioration in my affairs. When the captives were sent back to their beds of straw in the old castle hall, the remainder of the fetter was taken from my wrist, and I was conducted before the governor.

Some emotion of pity in the arid heart of this old man had disposed him to inquire further into the subject of the letter of Drumlanrig, for he had been, as I have stated, a soldier in his youth, and was not altogether destitute of compassion. He had shown the letter to the curé of Loches, who at once explained the purport of it,

and exculpated me from the charge of corresponding with any one beyond the walls.

The governor actually apologized for his severity ; but the letter was duly docketed among the records of the castle of Loches, where perhaps it remains to this hour ; and I was reconducted to my former solitary chamber, and again placed under the surveillance of that pleasing type of old Gaul, Gargousse.

CHAPTER LV.

NEWS OF JULIE.

For a time I felt it almost a luxury to be once more *alone*—left to my own thoughts and the companionship of myself ; but what I had recently endured made me tremble at the prospect of being discovered in the attempt to escape.

To escape, secured as I was on every side by barriers within barriers, stone, iron, and wood, by walls, fosse, and sentinels—it seemed as if the frog enclosed in the marble block might as well hope for freedom.

One idea gave me satisfaction. I had no longer the degrading and galling—the maddening iron fetter attached to me—the worst insult to which I had yet been subjected. The governor had certainly made an *amende*, but how could I think of this episode, how speak of it, if I was spared ever again to take my place in society—to see my home and my comrades of the Household Brigade ?

What was being done now in the great world around

me? Was our army still in Flanders? Had the invasion of which Drumlanrig wrote taken place, and had the Jacobite clans risen? Had George II. still the British crown, or had he fled to his beloved Hanover with his simple electoral hat?

Above all these, recurred the constant question, had Julie escaped the snares of the atrocious Louis?

Who could soothe—who answer all these thoughts that lay so near my heart? It was strange that by night my dreams were always of Letty Hyde and never of Julie d'Anterroche; though surmises of the latter's fate filled my heart with torture and ever occupied my mind by day.

I could remember now, that when I said I loved her Letty's image came reproachfully to memory; yet I had done nothing of which to accuse myself. Letty had foretold that a time should come when I "would readily love some one else," and how easy, how trippingly, came that second avowal of love from my tongue! With all its passion and depth, how unlike it was to the tremulous outburst of half whispered words I had poured into Letty's averted ear, on that afternoon when we sat together in the drawing-room of old Queensberry House!

* * * * *

For many, many days, my sole amusement was to watch the spiders spinning their webs across the window-bars to catch flies; for to such an ebb will the mind sink amid the monotony of long captivity.

There were times when the whole of my regiment, officers and men, drums and colours, came vividly to memory. Panmure on his black charger; Drumlanrig, old Major Stuart of Harewoodlee, with his Ramillies wig, his camp songs, and quaint stories of foreign wars;

Home, the veteran ; and Rose, the gay and gallant ; and poor little Jack Ruthven, whom Falshaw killed at Vilverden. The faces of the rank and file came also before me, and in my day dreams I seemed to hear the tread of their marching feet, and their voices as they chorussed so merrily "Bergen-op-Zoom."

Should I ever be free—should I ever see them more ?

Many an old scene of our London life hovered before me. Now it was the opera ; the boxes full of beautiful Englishwomen in their superb toilets, with snowy shoulders and flashing jewels ; the beaux with sword and wig, and deep brocaded vests. Anon it was the promenade in the parks, the bustle of horsemen and horsewomen, of gilded coaches and sedan chairs, borne by liveried valets ; then it would be Vauxhall with its countless lamps and music, its fire and waterworks, and old familiar faces came about me ; Drumlanrig, Letty Hyde, the duchess, Horace Walpole and men of the brigade ; gaiety, gallantry, and champagne. And then came other scenes : Flanders and the banks of the Maine or the Rhine, the fury of our advance at Dettingen, the flashing bayonets and the yell of the Irish in their last charge at Fontenoy.

From visions such as these, I would start to see the sickly grey of morning breaking through the harrow-like grating of my window ; *then*, indeed, I would sink back upon my pallet with a moan of misery, made the greater by contrast, for another weary, weary day had dawned.

A few months in Loches soon made me look far older than my years ; but I could remember the time, when on *first* donning my uniform, I was struck by the extreme youthfulness of my face, as reflected in my mirror.

Day succeeded night, and day again followed in silent, voiceless and monotonous succession. The sun rose and set, casting the shadow of the grated window on the same place, on the same stones of the same wall and floor. Week followed week, and month followed month, and I gradually lost all reckoning of time until one day the report of a cannon shook Loches. Another and another followed. Had the Allies entered France and penetrated to her heart—to Touraine? Was my hour for deliverance come?

I counted twenty-one guns, and then the firing ceased. Alas! it was only a salute; and I asked Gargousse, when he brought in dinner, what it was for.

“*Diable!* I thought all the world knew,” said he, “’tis a salute for King Louis, who is forty-five years of age to-day.”

By this reckoning I had been eight months in Loches—eight months (thirty-two weeks and more than two hundred and twenty-four days) without essaying aught for liberty. Half maddened by the idea, I started up and paced my room to and fro.

On this day a dinner, rather better than usual, and a few grapes, sent by the nuns of a neighbouring convent, were given to some of the prisoners, of whom I was one. They were wrapped in a piece of printed paper, and begging Gargousse’s permission to peruse it—for whatever it was must prove a novelty to me—I spread it carefully out, and commenced its perusal with mingled anxiety and avidity.

It was but the fragment of a Parisian newspaper, the date of which was apparently quite four months back.

Among many notices concerning the movements of the court, which was now at Versailles, and about a battle

in which the Allies had been defeated at a place named Val, I saw the following:—

“M. Pierre de Clisson (who lately espoused Mademoiselle Julie d’Anterroche, maid of honour to her majesty), is appointed lieutenant in the Regiment de Grammont, now serving with the army under M. le Comte de Saxe in Flanders.”

The room swam round me for some moments, and the solitary window seemed to become multiplied, and to whirl like a wheel of light about me.

Julie—even Julie had forgotten me!—and so soon, so very soon! For the paper which referred to her *late espousal*, was, I have said, fully four months old!

What had I done, what fault or error committed against Fortune, that she should treat me so harshly?

Of the day on which this fresh calamity befell me, I do not remember much more.

Many passed before I recovered equanimity sufficient to view with apparent composure this cruel desertion by her for whom I now suffered so much.

Had Julie ever loved me? I now remembered how Pierre de Clisson had bantered her about her knot of ribands and her glove, both of which he had worn under fire; but then my sudden disappearance was so secretly managed that Julie might suppose I had abandoned her.

I remembered the bitter words I had said of Louis XV. in his own hearing, and my still more severe remarks upon his predecessor, and felt that I was doomed for ever.

Existence, says a writer, is only valuable when it is necessary for the welfare of some beloved object. It may be so, and I have no doubt that in most instances it is

so. I had lost Letty and Julie ; I had lost by this time, perhaps, my commission and my honour too ; yet I felt existence dear—very dear to me, and I strove to concentrate my thoughts and my energies in the achievement of my freedom.

CHAPTER LVI.

I ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE.

By a strange coincidence, on the day when, after long and certainly undisturbed consideration, I came to the resolution of attempting to escape or to perish in the effort, a smith was brought by Gargousse to replace the lock of my door with another, as it had become impaired by time or use.

While Gargousse was conversing with the sentinel in the corridor, and while the smith was busy securing the lock by four iron bolts, I took the opportunity of abstracting one of his chisels, which I thrust into a loaf of bread that lay on the table, and there it remained undisturbed until night came, when I secreted it in my paillasse.

Whether Vulcan ever perceived his loss I know not. One fact is certain, no search was ever made in my room for it, and so valuable did I deem this newly-acquired means of work, that three days elapsed before I dared to bring it forth. It was about eight inches long, of tempered steel, with a flat head and a sharp point.

To what use was I to turn it ?

Any attempt to escape by the door, which was a

complicated mass of oak and sheet-iron, studded with nails, and barred by ponderous locks and chains, with guards and gates beyond, was more than useless.

Equally so would be any attempt by the massively jointed wall; and then a recollection of the bones of the luckless prisoner buried there made me shudder.

By the window? To saw or file through its massive iron bars and seek egress that way had also its perils. It was fully seventy feet from the ground, and overlooked a court in which no less than four sentinels were posted, with muskets loaded and bayonets fixed, night and day.

There remained ~~but~~ one other way: to remove the harrow-like grating which closed the fire-place; then the bars which crossed the flue transversely, and after ascending to the summit of the chimney-stalk, to lower myself by a rope (to be made of my bedclothes) from the battlement of the tower, a giddy and a fearful height, to that portion of the outworks which overlooked the fosse and sluice; and if I was fortunate enough to reach that place, to trust the event to Providence.

My soul sickened on contemplating the barriers that lay between me and liberty; at the prospect of toil so weary and protracted—toil that might be futile and end only in discovery or death. Yet toil was better than passive captivity, though the extent and strength of Loches, the incredible number of precautions observed, the sentinels, the order and discipline maintained, might well have made a stouter heart than mine abandon the idea in despair.

Before commencing operations, for several days I affected to neglect my toilet, so that the grime and dust incident to my working might pass without obser-

vation, or without exciting the too ready suspicions of the lynx-like Gargousse. As light would be required during my work in the chimney at night, I saved my candles and concealed a few remaining ends of them, telling Gargousse that, urged by an eager craving for food, I had eaten them—a statement which certainly made him stare; but he was compelled to believe it.

So nearly as I can guess the time, it was on the night of the 12th March that I began my operations.

The fire-place of my apartment was wide and ancient. It had long been unused, and the wind and rain had almost divested its four sides of soot. A grating of cross-bars built into the lintel and side jambs secured the whole aperture, within which there was no grate, the wood or fuel in winter being simply burned upon the inner hearth, in the old French fashion.

By inserting my chisel and picking out the lime I succeeded in raising the *outer* hearth-stone, a slab which was three feet in length; and this task, with a lever power so small, occupied me more than half the night, as it had to be done noiselessly and with extreme care; but on its removal I was enabled to creep *under* the grating and stand erect *within* the fire-place.

Then I raised my candle up at arm's length, and saw with a sinking heart the black flue vanishing away into obscurity above me, and crossed at intervals by massive iron bars secured into the stone. Each of these bars I should have to remove ere the top could be reached. Already I was weary, and creeping back to my chamber I restored the hearth-stone to its place, and carefully sweeping the mortar together pulverized and cast it from the window, with my prayers for success, upon the night winds of Heaven.

I then hid my chisel and retired to bed. Such was my progress on the *first* night of my attempted escape.

With the earliest beam of day, I got up to examine the hearth-stone; no trace of my last night's work could be discerned, and a sigh, almost of happiness, expanded my breast. At night, my operations were resumed; the hearth-stone was again removed, and beneath it I found a cavity wherein to conceal the rubbish caused by the dislodgement of the iron bars in the vent. Of these bars I could count six, the removal of which was the severe and incessant labour of fourteen nights.

Each was of hammered iron, measuring about two feet six inches long by two inches square, exclusive of what was inserted into the joints of the masonry. From these joints I had to pick or knock out the lime until the bar became quite loose, and on its removal I assailed the next, placing a piece of my carefully saved candle upon the bar immediately above me, to light my operations. At times I was almost choked by soot and dust and by the want of air, while I had to work in a most constrained position, replacing each bar in succession as I passed upward, that it might form a seat for me while I worked at the next above it.

The dust and fragments which dropped on the hearth below I carefully swept each night into the hollow beneath the hearth-stone. So hard did this lime prove, that I conceived the idea of softening it by wrapping round the end of each bar, and close to the wall, a stocking or a towel soaked in water. This remained moist for twenty-four hours, and prepared the mortar for dislodgement next night.

Never shall I forget the weary, yet hopeful, toil of that nightly work—the constrained position in which I sat or

stood in the narrow vent—the breathless pauses, with horror in my heart, whenever I heard a casual sound; for if once discovered I should be undone for ever!

Each night I loosened one end of a bar; yet that work of toil spread over fourteen, for two of them nearly baffled me altogether; and on that fourteenth night, after one hundred and sixty-eight hours of labour, the whole aperture of the vent was free!

Every bar I carefully replaced in its two sockets for the double purpose of avoiding detection, if the chimney should be inspected from above or below, and to afford me the means of clambering up to the summit of the stalk.

Nervously apprehensive in contemplating my prospects of success, for two days after the last bar was loosened, I did nothing more towards an escape; till a greater fear—that by evil fortune, after all I had achieved, I might be transferred to *another* apartment—set me to work again. I calculated that by tearing my sheets and blankets into lengths I could make a knotted rope, by which to descend from the battlement of the keep, the height of which appalled me.

From the roof of the latter I should have the choice of lowering myself at any part, and, so far as I could judge, the whole height was not less than eighty feet. I had a coverlet, two sheets of strong linen, and two blankets; these, if torn into lengths and knotted well together, would enable me to reach the ground; and to practise this mode of escape, to strengthen every muscle for the terrible strain that would be on it, for several hours of three successive days I hung on the bars of my window, giving my hands and arms the whole weight of my body.

I had already fixed on the night to make the grand, the dread essay—a night when I knew there could be no moon—when, lo! a new arrangement was made in the discipline of the castle; one which, most fortunately for me, was *not* made during my nocturnal operations.

Accompanied by a warder, M. Goullard now made a round of the prisoners every night at uncertain hours. The first visit of this official would certainly have filled me with the terror of discovery, had not Gargousse, who was somewhat garrulous, incidentally mentioned that I was to receive it.

The uncertainty of the time at which this round of the prisoner's rooms might be made, filled me with perplexity; so for two days before the night on which I had resolved to hazard all for freedom, I lay in bed and sent for M. Goullard. Feigning illness, I begged that he would not disturb me for a night or two or that he would kindly pay his visit earlier in the evening.

The humpback accordingly came earlier, growled a remark or two, and withdrew, saying he would send me a priest and a doctor on the morrow.

My heart beat with bounding throbs when the door was closed and his footsteps, with those of Gargousse, died away in the hollow passages. Then, with a prayer of hope and thankfulness, I sprang from bed, dressed myself, and looked forth upon the night.

No moon nor star were visible, but masses of black and crape-like clouds were piled over one another from the horizon to the zenith; a gusty wind whistled through the window bars, and there was a promise of rain.

I lighted my candle, removed the hearth-stone, and to bar any sudden intrusion—for I had not forgotten Gargousse's story of the vicomte who had been found in

the chimney before it was grated—I placed the slab against the inside of my door in such a manner as to render it immoveable. Thus no power could force it from without, and some time, therefore, would inevitably elapse before my flight could be discovered. So peril sharpens the intellect.

My sheets, coverlet, and blanket, I tore into sixteen lengths, which gave me nearly a hundred feet. Thus, exclusive of knotting, I had a sufficient rope by which to descend the wall of the keep.

On these knots depended my life! If but one gave way I should be dashed down, a mangled mass upon the rocks below, and carefully I formed them, testing their strength with my teeth, hands, and feet.

Long ere midnight my task was completed. I secured the iron chisel in my coat pocket, to be used as a weapon or for further work, as might be required. I slung the clumsy rope over my shoulder, scarfwise, so that it could not drop from me when climbing, and entering the chimney with my flaring and flickering candle, commenced my ascent.

I now proceeded mechanically, blindly—with a strange and benumbed sensation in my heart and brain. Each bar in succession I removed, swung myself upward and replaced it below me as a footing whereon to reach the next, until at last I gained the top of the stalk. At that moment, I remember, when I had no further use for it, the candle dropped from my hand, fell on the inner hearth below, flared up, and went out.

The cold air of midnight now played on my hot and feverish face, as I emerged, doubtless black as a negro, and leaped from the chimney stalk, upon the stone bartizan of the keep of Loches!

Darkness involved the sky and all the country round. A few red lights, twinkling far down the side of the hill on which the castle stood, alone indicated where the town lay. I turned to the other side, for there, I knew, were fewer sentinels, as the wet ditch, or fosse, which was fed by springs in the castle rock, was deemed a sufficient protection; and there, too, lay the sluice by which Falshaw had escaped or been swept away.

I shrunk close down behind the battlements on hearing in the court below the tread of feet, as M. Goullard and an armed party, one of whom bore a lantern, passed on their round of inspection. It might be that, forgetful of his promise, or inspired by a sudden or vague suspicion, he might visit *my* chamber; so no time was to be lost.

On the battlement was an iron basket, wherein alarm fires were to be lighted on the escape of a prisoner. But though this event had never been known to occur, the basket on this night was nevertheless full of combustibles, as usual. To the bars of this I secured my rope, tying well the knot, and fearful lest it should slip, I tore the sleeves from my shirt, and, to use a nautical phrase, "served" it well round.

I then lowered the whole coil gradually over the wall, and in an agony of mingled hope, fear, and joy, began my descent.

At that moment a church clock in the distance struck the hour of two. It was, perhaps, the last sound I might hear on earth! If I had miscalculated the height—if my rope should prove short—if it should part, or if my hold upon it were to relax, I was a lost man! I knew all this, yet despair gave me a false courage or a vast amount of new energy. Life had become, perhaps,

so wretched, so valueless, that death had fewer terrors for me, and I was not without experiencing a glow of triumph in the idea of baffling my tormentors.

The hair bristled on my scalp, and I still shudder when I think of my situation, swinging in mid-air, over the vast profundity below. Long after, in dreams it haunted me; but the darkness was, perhaps, my greatest safety, as it prevented giddiness, by concealing from view all beneath me. So, embracing the rope with my hands, my arms, and knees, I slid gradually but rapidly down.

Pendulously it swung about in the night wind, and I was repeatedly dashed upon the ashler wall of the keep, and once against the iron bars of a lighted window, within which I saw Gargousse and other warders seated at a table, singing, drinking, smoking, and playing at dominoes.

At last I found my feet on the ground, on a ledge of the rock, from which the vast square keep ascended to the height of more than eighty feet, my rope having proved more than enough, but only by two or three yards.

I looked about me for a moment. The fosse was close by, and nearly full of green and slimy water. I dropped into it, and swam towards the sluice-gate, the direction of which I remembered.

This I soon reached, and clambering up its slimy face from bar to bar, arrived at the summit; not, however, without falling back twice into the fosse, with a plashing sound so loud that each time I thought myself undone.

But the wind was rising now, and fortunately the rain of kind Heaven, which had thus far prospered me, was beginning to fall. From the top of the sluice-gate I lowered myself into the muddy and reedy ravine or canal

by which the surplus water of the moat was drawn off towards the Ource, and then, with trembling and voiceless lips, I thanked God that I was FREE !



CHAPTER LVII.

NEW PERILS.

QUITTING this unpleasant path, which was steep, rough, and full of mud, I 'scrambled up the bank, and struck at once into the open country, without caring to look back to where the vast black keep of Loches loomed threateningly between me and the sky, the darkness of its mass broken only here and there by a narrow window or grated slit, filled with red light.

Heedless of the direction pursued, I hurried on, anxious only to place the greatest possible distance between myself and the scene of my late captivity—that dire abode of sighs and tears, of chains and human martyrdom ; for too well I knew that if retaken there awaited me a deep and hopeless dungeon, wherein I should perish of despair.

Three pieces of ordnance, that flashed in succession across the sky and boomed heavily upon the night wind, served as fresh spurs to my flight, for they announced to all Loches that my escape had been discovered, and my wretched plight would, I feared, lead to my speedy detection. The beacon was now blazing on the summit of the keep, and a large red light upon a pole burned luridly in the air.

On, on, I went—I knew not, cared not whither ;

falling and rising again to run and flounder on, until my strength, so sorely tasked already, could no longer avail me; so that even were Goullard and Gargousse beside me I must have surrendered.

In the corner of a field I saw a large haystack; up this I clambered, and burying myself among the hay, lay panting, breathless, sore, and weary, listening for sounds of pursuit. But none came upon the wind; all remained still, and the lights on the tower of Loches gradually faded away. The warmth of my hiding-place induced sleep, and I fell into a profound slumber—a torpor of mind and body.

For some minutes after awaking next morning I had a difficulty in remembering where I was or how I came to be in so strange a habitation. My escape in all its details seemed like a dreadful dream; but the cuts and scars on my hands and knees, received when I swung on the rope and was dashed by the wind against the castle, soon dissipated that idea, and I remembered *all*.

High and brightly overhead the morning sun was shining in the wide blue sky. The branches of the budding trees were tossing on the soft west wind, and I heard the merry notes of the birds as they twittered from spray to spray.

“Oh, how sweet is liberty!” I exclaimed; but on looking round I still could see, about three miles distant, the tall dark keep of hated Loches cast its baleful shadow on the landscape. The white standard, with the triple *fleur de lis*, was flying on its summit, and underneath it fluttered a red streamer, to indicate, I suppose, that a prisoner had escaped.

The sound of voices near made me shrink down with a quickened pulse and watchful ear, and I discovered

that close beside the stack in which I was concealed some male and female peasants were seated at their simple breakfast of bread, cheese, and milk.

They were conversing about the escape of a prisoner from Loches—an event so unusual that it filled them with astonishment. Many were the vague and absurd surmises as to who or what he was, his crime, and how many years he had been confined there. All openly expressed hopes that the unfortunate would never more be retaken; in this the women, bless their tender hearts! were particularly vehement. But I lay close and listened, resolving not even to trust them, if I could avoid it.

They then lit their pipes and smoked away with great complacency, so close to my haystack that I was in considerable dread of a sudden conflagration; but after a time the whole party separated, betaking them to their several occupations in the adjacent fields, leaving me free to consider what I should do next.

Until the darkness of night had set completely in I dared not leave my hiding-place, and when doing so it was chiefly in search of water, as I was maddened by thirst consequent on fatigue and over-excitement. After long and vague searching I found a spring wherein to quench it, and there I laved my hands, face, and hair, to remove the blood and dust that covered them. I rubbed my clothes with dry hay; yet, with all my efforts, my costume and toilet were everyway calculated to excite suspicion, and the more so that the signals from Loches had announced to the whole country the escape of a prisoner.

My velvet suit, from which the silver lace had been stripped in the hall of Loches, still survived, but in a woeful plight—threadbare, cut, torn, and worn into holes.

Moreover, I was without a hat or cap of any kind ; and worse than all, I was without arms.

The further I got away from Loches, I cared not in which direction, there was less chance of recapture. Alas ! how far was I from the sea, the high road to old England ?

After travelling for many hours—avoiding the highways as much as possible, concealing myself in ditches or behind hedges and trees when any persons approached, making frequent detours to keep far from houses and villages—I found myself about daybreak within two miles of a town. On inquiring its name of a lame old mendicant who was passing, he answered “Tours,” which I knew to be more than twenty miles from Loches.

Seeking the shelter of a mulberry grove, so near the Loire that the water secured me from approach on one quarter, I lay the whole day, resting after my past fatigues, and with a hard stone grinding a sharp point upon the iron chisel, which I still preserved as a kind of weapon for defence.

Hunger next assailed me, but anxiety soon repressed the craving for a time ; and luckily, for I was without a sou. Thus penniless, how was I to travel through, and how ultimately escape from, a land to which my parole of honour no longer bound me ?

One of my many ideas was to reach, if possible, the château d'Anterroche, and obtain aid of Raoul or any servant of the count who might remember me. But could they be trusted ? was the next thought.

Remembering to have heard that a battalion of the Irish Brigade, the regiment of the Count de Walsh-Serant was quartered at Beauvais, I preferred seeking friends there, and feared not of successfully obtaining

the aid of any Irish officer, to whom I should tell my strange story. So with nightfall I resumed my journey, with a lightened heart but a hungry stomach.

After proceeding some miles I peeped through the window of a solitary cottage, and saw an elderly woman knitting by the fireside. As her aspect was prepossessing, and no men seemed to be about the place, I ventured to knock timidly, on which she opened the door, but with evident hesitation, for the hour was late. By this time I was so weak that I could scarcely address her. Perceiving this she gathered courage, and gently asked me what I wanted.

I told her that I was an unfortunate prisoner of war, escaping after enduring many miseries,—that I was almost famished by want of food. On this, she brought to the door a cup of milk, with a buckwheat cake, piping hot, and covered with butter and honey. While I ate this, the good woman told me, with tears in her eyes, that she had two sons in the Regiment de Picardie, and that for their sakes she would readily serve me, as my fate might one day be theirs. She pointed out the way to Vendôme, with advice “to be wary, as patrols were on the road—to avoid them, and God speed.”

Thus refreshed, I pushed on with renewed vigour, and must have walked more than twenty miles without meeting any one, when, near a wayside cross, I came suddenly upon a man who lay on the road, motionless and still, as if asleep or dead; and near him a horse, with its bridle trailing on the ground, was cropping the grass that grew round the shaft of the cross.

Fearing that the man might be really dead, I was about to pass hastily on, being anxious to avoid all trouble or annoyance, when, by a peculiar snort or snore

he uttered, I perceived that he was merely, but helplessly, intoxicated. By the grey dawn then stealing through the branches of the wayside trees, I could see that he was evidently a farmer by his dress, which was a long, light-blue, linen frock, elaborately braided on the breast and back, and on his head was a red woollen cap. I shook him, but he was insensible—stupefied, in fact, by his potations overnight; so, without the hesitation of a moment, I tumbled him out of his frock and placed it over my tattered attire. This, with his red cap, gave me a complete disguise.

I then dragged him aside into a dry ditch which lay at the back of the stone cross, and catching his horse by the bridle I mounted it and rode at full speed towards Vendôme.

This may seem a very free-and-easy mode of appropriating another man's property; but the desperation of my position must be borne in mind—the death, or worse than death, that hung over me. Moreover, I would have cared little to have assisted at the head of my regiment in sacking Paris and utterly razing it; so borrowing the dusty blue frock and Norman nag of the tipsy farmer were, in the general account, but small items after all.

There was mettle in my new charger; and when well lashed with a switch broken from a hedge, as we tore along the highway in the early dawn, by the speed to which he was driven, I might have been taken for Count Hugon, the great hobgoblin which haunted Tours and trod the night-watch under the hoofs of his magic steed—for certainly I rode on like a madman, in my anxiety to leave Loches and Touraine far behind me.

As my friend the farmer might have left Vendôme over-night, and his nag or costume might be, perhaps,

recognized there, I was too wary to enter the city ; and so struck off by a sequestered road to the right, and, after making a great circuit, found myself approaching Châteaudun.

I had ridden fast and far ; I had now travelled on foot and on horseback nearly seventy miles from Loches, and began to hope for future safety. The strength of the poor old horse had been completely overtaken, and mine was failing too ; so I took off his bridle, turned him loose in a rich green pasture, and next sought a copse wherein to pass the night, which, by the calmness of the sunset, promised to be fine and mild. Robbers I feared not ; I had still the chisel as a weapon to war with ; besides, I had nothing to lose.

This idea made me search the farmer's frock for a pocket, and therein, to my joy, I found three livres wrapped in a piece of paper.

This discovery gave me fresh courage, and desirous as I was for food and for one night's quiet repose on a better couch than the damp bare earth, I walked hastily towards the town, which appeared about three miles distant.

It was Châteaudun, an ancient place which crowns a hill above the Loire ; and close by, on a rocky eminence, rose a strong old castle of the counts of Dunois ; but, Ugh ! I had seen enough of French castles, and sought that part of the town where the odour of the tanneries and the din of the woollen factories filled the air.

Night had now set in ; but it was not without great hesitation that I entered a little inn of quiet and very humble aspect, in which, as it appeared to be kept only by a woman and her daughter, I deemed myself secure from molestation and discovery, for my late adventures led me to suspect every one and everything in France.

A fricasseed pullet and a flask of country wine, discussed by the wood fire that blazed on the kitchen hearth, restored my wasted strength, and while chatting with my hostess and her daughter I discovered that they had, on this night, no other inmate than a poor man who was travelling towards Paris.

The hostess was an old woman of very repulsive aspect; but compelled as I was to confide in her protection, and well knowing that flattery never fails with a Frenchwoman, I made myself agreeable to her by uttering absurd compliments till the night became far advanced. Growing weary of this at last,—

“Ah, madame,” said I, “the pleasure I have felt in listening to your sweet voice has made me actually forget—forget——”

“What, *mon ami*?”

“That I was very, very hungry, and am very sleepy now.”

“Ah, *mon Dieu*! my dear boy; come then, and you shall have the best bed in the house.”

“I thank you, madame—please to show me to my room.”

She ushered me upstairs to an apartment of humble aspect, but where everything seemed neat, clean, and pleasing, even to the pots of fresh flowers which stood in the half-opened window, through which I could see the last lingering flush of red in the west, where, in black outline, rose the stronghold of the counts of Dunois.

After long bivouacking, and being under canvas in camp, I have experienced the comfort, the emotion of intense luxury, on finding myself in a good soft bed; but after the dreadful toil of mind and body I had so lately

undergone, the bed of that humble auberge in Châteaudun seemed a couch fit for an eastern king!

In the room were two, both neatly curtained. I soon selected one, slipped in, and dropped into a profound slumber.



CHAPTER LVIII.

THE DOUBLE-BEDDED ROOM.

MY sleep was perhaps too deep to last more than a few hours, but it proved most refreshing, though long after midnight I woke with a nervous start—a fear I knew not of what—the result of past excitement, or of some dream probably. Springing up, I looked about me.

Through the window of the room the waning moon was shining brightly on the white curtains of the opposite bed, the prolonged snoring proceeding from which informed me that it had now an occupant.

This was rather more than I had quite anticipated, and my suspicions became roused. Was this sleeper old madame herself, her daughter, or “the poor man travelling towards Paris?” It might be one of the *Maréchaussées de France*, in which case I might deem myself lost, so before daring to sleep again I resolved to have a peep at my companion.

The snoring and respirations were steady and prolonged. I slipped from my bed and softly drew back the curtains of the other. The moonlight streamed in with a weird wan gleam; then, heaven and earth! what were my emotions, how keen my alarm, on seeing the hateful face of Falshaw!

I surveyed him for a full minute, as if forced to do so by a species of horrible fascination ; for some irresistible fatality ever cast this wretch in my path, and now the necessity of avoiding him, of making a second escape ere he awoke, instantly forced itself upon me.

I thought of all his horrid crimes, his long career of infamy, and could have killed him—crushed him like a scorpion as he slept ; but such a punishment suited neither my taste nor purpose.

Dressing myself in haste, I looked from the window ; its height from the ground was trifling—twelve feet or less ; and luckily the street without was dark, silent, and empty.

Casting a livre on the bed to pay for my lodging and supper, I opened the window softly, and dropped from my finger-points into the street. Stooping low in the shadow of the house, I crept towards the corner of the auberge, which I knew adjoined the road that led to the open country, and just at the moment I reached it, a man in the uniform of the *Maréchaussées de France* laid one hand on my shoulder, while the other held his short carbine at full cock.

“Stay,” said he ; “who are you ?”

As I had never thought of a name for myself during this unexpected tour in France, he had to repeat the question roughly before I replied,—

“I am a poor farmer of Touraine.”

“An honest one ?” said he contemptuously.

“I hope so.”

“Hope—are you not sure ? *Sapristi*—speak !”

“Yes, monsieur, dare you say I am otherwise ?”

“Does it look like honesty to leave a house thus, as

thieves do, by the window instead of the door, in the dark morning, at this hour too?"

"No; but you are aware——"

"Ah, *sacré!* my fine farmer, you must tell me all about this!" said he roughly.

"Wherefore?" said I, gathering courage from desperation, and the circumstance that we were alone, face to face, and that I might wrench away his carbine. "I command you to release me."

"Silence; you have just left a house which we were about to search."

"We—then you have a party?"

"Under a brigadier; yes."

"What, or for whom were you to search?" I asked faintly.

"A prisoner who has escaped from the castle of Loches. He has been traced here, and, for all I know, *you* may be the very man."

My knees actually sank under me, and the light seemed to pass from my eyes on hearing this terrible response; but gathering courage, I was about to spring upon the speaker and disarm him, or seek to do so, when several of his comrades, all accoutred with swords and carbines, surrounded me, and one rudely held a lantern to my face.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed, lowering the light; "Monsieur Lauriston, is this you?"

"What, Monsieur Bonnival, you know this farmer of Tours, it would seem?" said the first Maréchaussée, releasing me.

"This farmer," reiterated Bonnival the brigadier, whom I at once recognized, but who stammered and grew pale; "this worthy man of Touraine—*ma foi*, I should think so! How is *compère* Robichon, and

how is my old friend Madame Fanchon, your wife? And then there are the children—little Robichon, Fanchon, and my namesake—my godson—François, the baby. How many teeth has he cut, eh?”

I remained silent, for I thought this banter cruel, especially at such a time.

“*Tonnerre!*” muttered his comrades, “have we ridden all this distance after a clodpole of Tours?”

“Watch the house and shoot any one attempting to escape by door or window,” said Bonnival; “meanwhile, come with me this way; I would speak with you, *compère* Robichon.”

He drew me aside.

“You have come to recapture me?” said I, in a voice which emotion rendered nearly inaudible.

“Far from it. Oh, think not so meanly of me. I knew nothing of your escape from Loches,” said he; “but now silence alone can prevent you from compromising yourself.”

“What, then, is your purpose?”

“The recapture of the assassin of Mademoiselle de Clisson, whom for several weeks we have been tracking from place to place.”

“He is at this moment asleep in that room, from the window of which I dropped to avoid him.”

“Good! So you have actually achieved an escape from the castle of Loches? *Diable*, you must be more than human!”

“Oh! Monsieur Bonnival, if you but knew——”

“Fear nothing from me; but say, on what rests your ultimate hope of getting out of France?”

“Reaching Beauvais, where a regiment of Irish are, or were, at least, some months ago, in quarters.”

"They are still there. The highway is open to you; but Chartres, the next large town, is about thirty miles distant. What money have you?"

"Only two livres."

"Here," said he, slipping two pistoles into my hand; "you take these, not from a Maréchaussée, but from François Bonnival, who has had the honour to wear an epaulette in the regiment of le Maréchal de Catinat. Adieu! And now to recapture our man, or devil, rather, and convey him back to Loches."

Arrested in his sleep, the wretched Falshaw would, no doubt, meet the fate I had escaped so narrowly; and I was far on the road to Chartres before I could realize the whole episode of the night, and deem it other than a startling and terrible dream; but I had the two pistoles of the generous brigadier to assure me of its truth, and that there were good souls in old France, after all.

CHAPTER LIX.

A HUNT BY TORCHLIGHT.

THESE two pistoles enabled me to bargain with the driver of a waggon, conveying goods, to carry me forward with him on the road to Paris ; for on the hope of being more ably succoured at Beauvais rested all my future plans for a final escape from France. This waggon, a large four-wheeled vehicle, like an English wain, was piled with rolls of tanned leather and bales of woollen stuffs from Châteaudun ; and as the driver was a chatty and pleasant fellow, I now travelled comfortably enough, though our route was slow, by Illiers and through the fruitful plain of Chartres, where we crossed the Eure by the celebrated bridge of the great Vauban, and then by Maintenon, which gave the title of duchess to the widow Scarron, the famous mistress, or, it may be, wife, of the Grand Monarque.

Then, as we drew near Marli, vague emotions of distrust and alarm came over me, with memories I sought in vain to stifle. Towards evening I recognized the wooded heights and the features of the same landscape which I had last seen from the porch of the Toison d'Or and the palace windows of Marli ; but as we proceeded the road gradually became thronged by crowds of horsemen in gay hunting dresses, with vast herds of dogs, all hastening to attend on the king and the grand huntsman of France, Monseigneur le Duc de Penthièvre, many of whose followers passed us, clad in light green, with his arms magnificently embroidered on their sleeves

—three *fleurs de lis* in a field azure, supported by hunting-horns, and surmounted by a large coronet.

Maréchaussées de France (my peculiar *bêtes noirs*) and escorts of cavalry passed also, amid clouds of dust, with tents and such a quantity of appurtenances, that one might have thought a campaign was about to open, instead of a hunting expedition.

I became thoroughly alarmed, and in the twilight quitted the waggon in which I had travelled for the entire day, thinking to avoid Paris, and endeavour to reach Beauvais on foot, as my blue smock was a garb that enabled me to proceed without exciting suspicion or observation.

Such numbers of Maréchaussées and horse patrols appeared on every road and pathway, that I resolved to quit them altogether, and penetrating into the forest of Marli, hoped to remain there until night fell and the avenues were open.

Though the forest was extensive, I encountered many of these horse-police in the very centre of it, on the look out, doubtless, for *chevaliers d'industrie*, who might be allured from Paris by news of the royal hunting and the grand *fête champêtre* which Louis XV. was about to give Madame de Pompadour under the green trees of Marli, which were now becoming covered with the pale leaves of an early spring.

In every part of the fast darkening forest numbers of persons passed me on horseback, all hastening towards some point of rendezvous, and the air was filled with the sound of horns and distant music. Many of the courtiers wore the claret colour (then so much in vogue), with steel or Roman mosaic buttons and silver-spangled embroidery. The ladies, however young and beautiful,

were all rouged and patched, their waists pinched in, their skirts puffed out and tucked well up, to show their handsome limbs or embroidered stockings, I know not which—*both*, perhaps. Then they had high-heeled shoes, powdered hair, and little piquant hats all over roses and fluttering ribands.

Darkness had now closed in; still sounds of every kind seemed to increase—the baying of dogs, the neighing of horses, the twanging of horns; then I heard the sharp flourish of cavalry trumpets, and, while sword-blades flashed in the light of more than fifty torches, I saw a small gilt *calèche* pass the end of a vista of the forest, and instinctively I shrank behind a large tree, for within the vehicle I knew was Louis XV.

To me, a Scotsman, accustomed to stalk the bold red deer on foot, or on horseback to hunt the fox in the usual way, it seemed a most singular kind of sport this, for the hubbub was sufficient to scare every living animal out of the entire district for a year at least; and now, lest some of the many persons of all kinds who filled this wood of Marli (from which I could discover no exit) might question or molest me, on finding a large tree, the low drooping foliage of which offered a better concealment than any I had seen, I drew behind the broad and gnarled stem, and remained there irresolute, full of anxiety, and bitterly regretting my folly in quitting the waggon.

Now at intervals the remote vistas of the forest filled with lights; in the distance a thousand glow-worms or tropical fire-flies seemed to flash and glitter; and then the lights and sounds would die away together.

Now the many noises seemed to join in one united roar of sound, and from my hiding-place I beheld a wild

boar of great size, with his back bristling as if covered with steel pikes, rush past, followed closely by a pack of yelling and panting dogs, and by more than a hundred horsemen spurring like madmen along the narrow forest path, bearing each a lighted torch. They were all bareheaded, as they had lost their hats in the chase, and the flush of wild excitement was in their faces as they swept past with such fury that three were dismounted and ridden down by the foam-covered nags of their friends.

To hunt the wild boar by torchlight was one of the peculiar fancies of Louis XV.

The boar, a huge monster of a rusty black colour, with tusks at least ten inches in length, a long sharp snout, and flashing red eyes, was soon brought to bay, and speared about a pistol shot from my place of concealment. Then amid the blaze of brandished torches, in which the gnarled and knotted stems of the old trees took a thousand freakish and fantastic forms, and while an unearthly twanging of horns filled the air, I saw a splendidly attired huntsman, who proved to be the Grand Veneur, the Duc de Penthièvre, spring from horseback, and thrust his gold-hilted *couteau de chasse* into the bristly throat of the dying boar; and one of its fore feet was then hewn off, to be laid with all formality at the feet of Madame de Pompadour, the patroness of the night.

The dogs, all panting, with outstretched tongues, were now collected and led away in their leashes, while the slaughtered boar, preceded by twanging horns, was borne off on a species of sylvan litter.

Suddenly, at that moment, the shrill cries of a woman attracted all, and I saw a horse, scared to madness by

the flaming torches and the many noises that filled the midnight forest, coming along the narrow path at a furious rate, with its rider, a lady, clinging wildly to the pommel of the saddle by both hands, while the embossed bridle trailed between its fore legs. The whole was but the vision of a moment—the flying horse and the terrified rider, with her powdered hair all streaming in disorder, and her ample skirt waving like a cloud about her.

Close by the tree under which I stood, the horse trod upon his trailing bridle, and by stooping his head half stumbled. At that moment, regardless of risk and inspired by the mere instinct of humanity, I sprang forward, grasped the reins, and by hanging with all my weight and strength upon the curb completely arrested the maddened brute, and doubtless saved the life of the rider, a woman of great beauty, who seemed to be so exhausted by fatigue and terror that she drooped half senseless on my neck and shoulder, when I lifted her from the saddle and supported her in my arms.

Then I found a brilliant and wondering group were round us; the grand huntsman and his followers, with all their torches upheld, were murmuring their well-bred congratulations and inquiries, when suddenly the Duke de Charost exclaimed,—

“Place, messieurs—place, pour sa majesté le roi !”

And while every head was reverently uncovered, I found myself again close to Louis XV., who rushed forward with anxiety depicted in his face, and hurriedly took the lady in his arms, exclaiming,—

“You are safe, madame ?”

“Yes, sire—yes,” she replied, in an agitated voice, “safe, thanks to heaven and to this brave fellow.”

Louis looked steadily at me with eyes expressive of mistrust and that hauteur which formed, at times, a part of his character. I was too young to please him, perhaps, for the service I had performed.

"Approach," said he. "You have saved the life of Madame la Marquise de Pompadour; that might in itself be reward enough, but it shall not be so. Who are you, my brave friend?"

CHAPTER LX.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR.

THE king repeated his question; but my voice was gone. Intense dread of him and of his despotic power deprived me of utterance, for Loches, with all its terrors, the stern old governor, the humpbacked and hideous Goullard, with the still more hideous Gargousse, and that vaulted chamber of terrible memory, all seemed to rise up before me.

"Speak, my friend; who are you?"

"An unfortunate prisoner of war, sire," said I; and added—for I wished to win French favour—"a *Scottish* officer, taken prisoner at the battle of Fontenoy."

"You are strangely attired for a prisoner of war; but such have often poverty for a paymaster. Are you on parole?" questioned Louis, knitting his severe but royal brows in a very formidable manner, as he recognized me, not by face or figure, but through some undefinable suspicion, and having, doubtless, heard of my escape from Loches by official sources.

"Yes, sire, I am on a parole of honour, granted at

Bourquenbrai, in Flanders, by Colonel Mongeorge of the battalion of Angoumois."

"*Ah, diable!* I remember now," said he, angrily.

"From that parole, for the service of to-night, I beseech you, sire, to release him," said Madame de Pompadour, taking my hand in hers.

"Ah, marchioness," said Louis, with a deeper knit in his brows, "do *you* plead for him?"

"Most earnestly, sire."

"From whence came you last, monsieur?" asked Louis, almost imperiously.

"From the neighbourhood of Tours," said I, evasively.

"Good," replied Louis, almost with a smile, as he shook the white plumes in his gold-laced hat; "there is no use in being *too* particular, especially in public. I release you from your parole; you are free to quit France in two days; but be alike discreet and *silent*."

The king turned away, and I, the centre of some hundred curious eyes, stood as one in a dream; but Madame de Pompadour still held my hand in hers.

"Marigny—where is Monsieur de Marigny?" said she, raising her voice and looking round.

"Here, my dear sister, close by you," said a handsome but rather flippant young man, in a splendid green velvet hunting dress, the sleeves, pockets, and lapels of which were covered with gold embroidery.

"Take this gentleman in your carriage to Marli—to your own apartments in the palace I mean—and do not leave him until we return. To-morrow you must see him far on the road to Calais or Dieppe, if not to Calais itself."

Marigny eyed me somewhat superciliously through his

gold eye-glass for a moment; but the command of his intriguing sister, to whom he owed his fortune, was absolute, and his carriage was immediately summoned. Seeing the embarrassment of my position, Madame Pompadour said, while a kind smile spread over her beautiful face, and with charming grace she ran her white fingers through her dishevelled hair to re-arrange it—

“Fear nothing, Monsieur Lauriston. You were sent to Loches, I know *why*, and you have escaped, I know *how*; but you will be amply protected henceforth, and I leave you in charge of my brother the Marquis de Marigny.”

The courtiers followed the king and madame to an open place on the border of the forest, where the *fête champêtre* was to be held. There garlands of coloured lamps and of artificial roses wreathed the trees; there groups of fashionable shepherdesses in scarlet satins and gorgeous brocades, all looped up with ribands and flowers; and with the royal colours streaming also in ribands from their hats and silver crooks, fluttered about the king, their skirts being all so short as to remind one of the couplet:—

“From Eve’s first fig-leaf to brocade,
All dress was made for fancy’s aid.”

Then there were the dukes of Mazarine, Villeroi, and Charost, the Marquis d’Ango, and others of high rank, attired as shepherds, with satin coats and vests of cloth of gold, with diamond buckles and well-powdered wigs, resting on their crooks, or with flutes and reeds affecting to make soft sylvan music, that was drowned by a band of the French Guards, which played airs from Lulli’s favourite

opera in a thicket close by, the performers being all dressed like satyrs, with horns and tails, to complete this royal mummary.

I was too excited by all I had undergone, by alternate hope and fear, and too bewildered by the whole adventure, even to apologize to M. de Marigny for depriving him of all participation in this brilliant *fête*, as we bowled along the forest glades in his *calèche* towards Marli. I had but one thought.

“In two days I shall be out of France!”

I have already said that my new acquaintance was Madame Pompadour's brother. He was that younger brother of the royal mistress to whom Louis XV., in his first fit of love and extravagance, gave the marquisate of Vandière; but when the wits of the court, in quizzing “young Poisson,” called him *le Marquis d'Avant-hier* (or yesterday), he was allowed to assume the title of Marigny.

With this night in the woods of Marli closes all that is worth recording of my adventures in France.

I supped and sat late with the marquis in his apartments at the palace—under the same roof with Louis XV.; and during our conversation I related to him the details of my escape from Loches, which filled him with wonder, as it was a prison from the central keep of which no man had ever escaped before.

He told me that on the day after my arrest the resignation of Julie d'Anterroche, as maid-of-honour, had been accepted by the queen, who permitted her to set out at once for Rheims, where, in *two* months after, she was married to Pierre de Clisson, at whose mansion, near Compiègne, she was now residing; that her brother was with the army in Flanders, where he had married a

celebrated beauty, the Countess Clara of Gleichen, whose husband, an old colonel of cuirassiers, had been killed at Fontenoy.

And now Marigny told me of those terrible events, which I heard for the first time, and which stirred my soul with many sorrowful emotions.

He told me some of the more important particulars of the Scottish campaign of 1745—how, led by Prince Charles Edward Stuart, his devoted adherents, consisting mainly of some five thousand half-armed Highlanders, had, at Preston and Falkirk, routed the royal forces, and, following up their successes, had actually penetrated to the heart of England—of the panic in London, and how King George's yacht lay off the Tower, laden with treasure and valuables, awaiting his flight when the devoted clansmen were at Derby. He told me how this extraordinary tide of prosperity had turned, and how, on the fatal field of Culloden, the brave followers of Prince Charles Edward were outnumbered and overcome, and the cause of the Stuarts by that disaster crushed for ever—not omitting to point out, with horror and indignation, the cruel butcheries and confiscations that ensued.

On hearing this sad recital, I thanked God that during the horrors I now heard of for the first time, my loyalty had not been put to the *test*, and that I had been a prisoner in the castle of Loches!

* * * * *

Before the noon of the next day I had kissed the hand of Madame Pompadour, who replaced the sum of which I had been robbed in Loches, and leaving Marli le Roi, in care of her brother, was riding fast along the road by Pontoise for Dieppe.

There we arrived two days after, and I soon found myself embarked on board a French ship, *La Lauraguais*, of five hundred tons, having the British flag flying, as she was crowded with prisoners of war belonging to nearly every regiment in our service. Among them was Stanhope of Battereau's Foot, now a brevet lieutenant-colonel, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Laffeldt by Lord Drummond's Royal Scots.

All were now returning home, many of them minus legs and arms; all war-worn, and bearing traces of what they had endured in French military prisons; thus all the more heartily did we send three ringing cheers across the rolling sea when, after a fine run before a south-west wind, we saw the setting sun shedding his farewell rays on the snow-white cliffs of Dover, as they rose from the blue waves on our lee bow.

We were on board of a French ship, yet we all turned in that night with happy hearts, for the union-jack was flying overhead, and we had "old England on our lee!"

We ran up the Thames without anchoring, and a vast crowd assembled at Woolwich to see us disembark, and to give us a right English welcome.

In landing on the quay, so great was the excitement and rush of the released prisoners to tread the land of liberty, that I was nearly thrown into the water, but was saved by a young man of very prepossessing appearance, who was attired in a complete suit of black velvet, with a steel-hilted sword; and it was not until some years after that I discovered my preserver to be my countryman, Dr. Tobias Smollett, the author of "Roderick Random," who had recently returned from the unfortunate expedition to Carthage, and the bombardment of Bocca Chica.

CHAPTER LXI.

CONCLUSION.

ON arriving in London I found the duke and duchess of Queensberry were in Scotland with all their family.

I will hasten over the hearty congratulations, the dinners and suppers, &c., of my brother officers of the Household Brigade, and other friends; but I cannot omit to state, that even after all I had undergone, it required a memorial, presented by Field-Marshal John duke of Argyle and Greenwich, and by the earl of Stair, to procure me the simple rank of captain, for the Scots were not much in favour, and the "Hero" of Culloden ruled all at the Horse Guards.

I rejoined my regiment as captain, and the drummers of the three corps of Guards assembled in the good old fashion to welcome me, and to honour my new commission by beating the "Point of War" under the windows of my quarters, and each received from me the usual gratuity of a day's pay to drink my health. At that time this ceremony was always performed when an officer was promoted, when he mounted his first guard, and when he first took post at the head of a company.

The fruitless war was over now; the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had been signed; the Guards were again in London, and again I was engaged in the routine of every-day life and regular duties at the Tower, Whitehall, and Windsor, with all my former friends—Lord Panmure, Sir Henry Rose of Roseburn, Home, old Stuart of Harewoodlee, and others who survived the battles in Flanders.

Two months after my return Lord Drumlanrig, with Lady Elizabeth Hope, now his countess, arrived in London, and I hastened to Queensberry House to visit them.

They received me with kindness and warmth, and heard with astonishment and indignation the story of my life in France, subsequent to the battle of Fontenoy.

On the other hand I soon perceived that the story of *their* life was aught but a happy one. Whether this arose from the earl's previous attachment to Letty Hyde, to some incompatibility of temper in both, or in Lady Elizabeth in particular, I know not; but they seemed an unfortunate and ill-matched couple, and they spoke with intense repugnance of the lonely life they had spent at the old castle of Drumlanrig, and hoped for a change in London.

In a young pair so recently wedded all this appeared to me most singular.*

Lady Elizabeth was the same pale, white, moping and sweetly inanimate being as ever; while Drumlanrig had grown less soldierly and more sad, thoughtful and grave; but what was the secret of their unhappiness, whether indifference or repugnance, I know not and never did know.

It seemed as if the memory of his uncle, Earl James, and the terrible story of his fate, haunted Drumlanrig,

* Lord Drumlanrig "had contracted himself to one lady, when he married another. The lady who became his wife was a daughter of the earl of Hopetoun, and a most amiable woman. He loved her tenderly, but owing to the unfortunate contract which he had formed, they were never happy; and they were often observed in the beautiful pleasure grounds of Drumlanrig, weeping bitterly together."—*Traditions of Edinburgh*.

who recurred to it more than once when we were alone, especially when over our wine.

By a silent but tacit agreement the name of Letty Hyde never escaped us; though, to me, that quaint mansion in Old Burlington Street was filled with tender and stirring memories of her.

After being a few weeks in London, and finding themselves quite unsuited to its gaieties, the gentle countess and restless earl of Drumlanrig proposed a visit to the seat of his grandfather, Henry Earl of Clarendon and Rochester. They pressed me to accompany them, and though I would rather have remained in town I felt myself constrained to acquiesce, and we left London together on a journey which we were not destined to accomplish.

The countess and her maid occupied the carriage; the earl and I, with two valets, all well armed with pistols at our holsters, rode behind, as the roads swarmed with masked highwaymen and footpads; but without any accident, not even a break down, we proceeded northward by easy stages for about fifty miles, and next evening, when the sun of May was setting in great beauty amid a cloudless sky, we found ourselves traversing that rich tract of country named Bedford Vale, where a fertile and peaceful landscape, thoroughly English in its pastoral and luxuriant greenness, spread far away to where low and undulating hills, tufted with copsewood, closed the mellow distance.

Here at a pretty village, the roadside cottages of which were almost smothered under green masses of ivy, hop, and wild vine leaves, one of the carriage wheels came off, for the axle broke in the bush, so the services of the village Vulcan were at once put in requisition

to repair the damage. The countess and her attendant were left at the inn, while the earl and I walked into the fields to spend the time until the carriage would be again ready for the road.

Let me hasten over what remains to be told.

Near a rustic stile in a rough low wall, which bounded the village church—one of those quaint old Norman structures that are so common in England, and which usually have their traceried windows and deep buttresses covered with ivy and woodbine—sat a lady, with two children, who played by her side, and were wreathing garlands of daisies and other wild flowers.

She wore a hoop petticoat, but was plainly attired; her dark hair was unpowdered, and it rolled in long and wavy curls from under the straw hat which was then worn gipsy-fashion, and tied under the chin. Round it was a wreath of false flowers, and she wore a smart apron, with large pockets, all edged with frills. A book she had been reading lay beside her on the grass.

Her figure was graceful, full, and round, and the great beauty and delicacy of her arms and ungloved hands, as she linked the wild flowers for her young companions, excited my attention, though not that of the listless earl, who was gazing at the low grassy mounds and mossy stones of the village burial-ground.

Ere long the lady turned to address the children; then her air and her figure grew suddenly familiar to me, and caused a strange throb in my heart.

Drumlanrig and I approached nearer, and politely raised our hats, as we were about to cross the stile, when an exclamation escaped her, and—oh, Heaven! how was my soul stirred within me, when we found ourselves face to face with—Letty Hyde!

For a few moments we were all silent, and Miss Hyde stood like a pale marble statue. On the dark swarthy cheek of Drumlanrig there burned a red spot, and I turned wistfully from the sweet face of Letty to the faces of the children, for in my confusion I had become oblivious of *time*, seeking to trace some likeness between them, but in vain. We were all irresolute, and knew not how to speak or act.

"You can still look me calmly in the face, Miss Hyde?" said Drumlanrig, with a cold smile, in which anger and sorrow were strangely mingled.

"I can look you in the face with probity and rectitude, my lord," said she, trembling and blushing at the sound of her own voice; "yet I feel not the less pain and humiliation when I recall your treatment of me—of one who at that time loved you but too well."

"Sdeath, madam, I do not understand you!" said the earl, haughtily.

"You cruelly cast me off, my lord, by ceasing to answer my letters," said Letty, tremulously.

"You, madam, ceased to answer *mine*!"

"A poor excuse, my Lord Drumlanrig. I wrote you many, many, tearful, prayerful, and loving letters addressed to camps and towns in Flanders—many, as her grace, your mother, to whose care I committed them, can assure you."

The earl smote his pale forehead, as a new light—a terrible suspicion—began to break upon him and on me. He stammered—

"And of mine to you——"

"I never received one!"

"Yet I wrote you dozens, full of bitter reproaches, at last, addressed under cover to my mother. Alas! I see

how it is—we have been cruelly, wickedly—but you quitted Queensberry House for the arms of a worthless villain,” said the earl, as his dark eyes flashed, “and are now, at least, I hope, the wedded wife of Mr. Falshaw?”

“Falshaw!” reiterated Miss Hyde, with genuine astonishment, “I never heard of such a name until this moment. Married? No, I am not married! though the newspapers duly informed me that your lordship was so; but that information could add no bitterness to what I already had endured. On learning that you had ceased to love me and had cast me off, though I had refused the affection of one who loved me well and devotedly (these words, uttered so tremulously, and with downcast eyes, thrilled through my heart), I left the mansion of your mother, because I scorned to be longer even *her* dependant.”

“Left it for what purpose, madam?”

“To earn my bread by my own talents and industry,” said Miss Hyde, bursting into tears, which she had long striven to repress.

“And these children?” said I.

“Are the vicar’s; I am their governess, Mr. Lauriston.”

“Great Heaven!” exclaimed Drumlanrig; “how deeply have we all been deceived! Oh, Lauriston, of all the dark stories connected with my family, this one alone is infamous! The duchess had seen the story of Falshaw’s degradation in the *Gazette*, and given him a brother, for purposes of her own, and to complete still further the deep plot she laid to destroy the happiness of her son. God may forgive her, but I never shall!”

Letty gazed at us alternately with a sad but earnest

expression in her truthful and beautiful dark eyes, while the two children, scared by the earl's vehemence, clung fearfully to her skirts, and peeped at us as if we were ogres.

"Oh, Lauriston," he resumed, "who could have believed that the artful letters we received at Brussels, were but fabrication all? Who could have imagined that a mother who loved would so deceive me, or, knowing my fiery spirit, would dare to do so? Yet her words are still before me when she, a traitress, falsely wrote of Letty's elopement:—*let this teach him that there are no limits to the treachery of the human heart!* I leave you, Godfrey, to explain all this. Adieu, Miss Hyde, for you and I, on earth at least, must never meet more."

He lifted his hat, bowed low, and walked hastily back to the village with an unsteady step, as if intoxicated.

I know not what, in such limited time, I said to Letty; however, I explained all and obtained her address, left her deeply agitated in tears, and hastened after my friend.

Letty's voice had stirred the inmost chords of my heart. The memory of hours long past, with all their tender episodes, their fond and deep anxieties, came over me again; and once more she was the Letty Hyde of my early lover days in London, and in that quaint old house in Burlington Street. The present disappeared, and in all its strength and flush the past returned.

On reaching the village I found the countess seated in the carriage, the horses traced to it, and the earl transferring his pistols from his holsters to the sword-case which projected at the back, beneath the rumble. In the latter he desired the lady's maid to take a place, saying that he felt ill and giddy, and would travel beside the

countess for that night at least; and so we resumed our journey.

The sun had set now, and as we crossed an eminence, I looked back at the ivy-covered tower of the little rural church, near which we had left Letty Hyde in tears. I was gazing earnestly at it, as its outline stood clearly defined against the bright saffron of the western sky, when the sharp explosion of a pistol within the carriage and a shrill shriek from the countess made my blood curdle!

I leaped from my horse, and found that Lord Drumlanrig, after tenderly kissing the countess, had placed a pistol to his head and shot himself by her side.

His body was lying back in the carriage, and the unhappy countess lay under him, insensible, and covered with his blood.*

* * * *

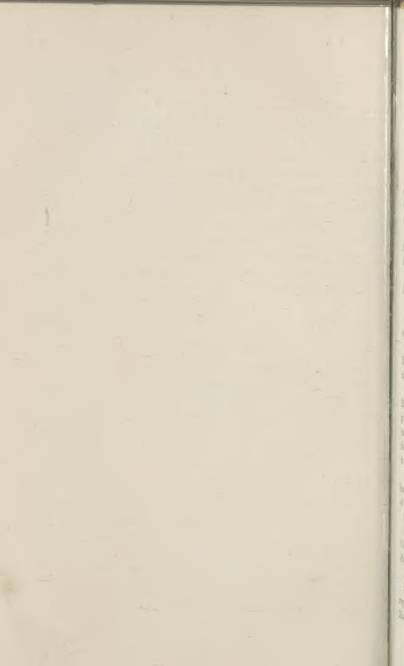
"I have observed," says a clever writer, "more than once, and in the most critical events of my life, that when fortune appeared to thwart me, her *future* arrangements were more favourable than the instant gratification of my own wishes."

The conclusion of this chapter will show that such too has been my case.

Had I not been sent to Loches, I would doubtless, in the first flight of fancy and pique, have married Julie

* "This young noble," according to Burke, "was killed by the accidental discharge of his own pistol, a few months only after his lordship's marriage with Lady Elizabeth Hope;" but Scottish tradition unvaryingly describes his death as having taken place in the manner related in the text. His widow survived him but a short time, and he was succeeded in the earldom of Drumlanrig by his brother Charles, who made a miraculous escape during the great earthquake at Lisbon, in 1755.

d'Anterroche—she who had forgotten me so very soon, and with a facility peculiarly French, just as we forget the last summer leaves, or the last winter snow ; and I should never have obtained (about a year after the tragic event just narrated) the love and the hand of Letty Hyde, who is now the mistress of my old ancestral house of Lauriston ; and who, with a wedding ring on her pretty hand, sits beside me as I pen these concluding lines on a soft summer evening, when the sun, that sets beyond the rocky ridges of Corstorphine, is casting his farewell rays in rosy tints on the green tossing leaves of the Warrender woods, and the long blue wavy line of the lovely Pentland Hills, which bound the fertile landscape that lies around our home.



NOTES.

I.

The Scots.

As a proof of the strong animus which existed against them and the Irish in London in those days, I shall quote two orders which were issued by the commander of the Coldstream Guards, and placed at the gates of the Tower and elsewhere.

"1745, *September 9.*—It is the general (Folliott's) positive order, that no *Irishman* nor *Papist* be entertained in any of the *four* battalions of Guards."

"1745, *September 21.*—Instructions to officers recruiting:—No *Scotch, Irish, or vagabond*, will be approved of.

"Coldstream Orderly Room."

Some other orders for the Coldstream Guards, about this time, are equally amusing.

"1745, *Oct. 25.*—If the militia are reviewed to-morrow by his Majesty, the soldiers of the *three* regiments of Guards are to behave civilly, and not to *laugh* or make any *game* of them."

"1747, *3 Feb.*—No soldier will be permitted to wear a wig after 25 March next. Ordered that officers do, for the future, always mount guard in queue wigs, or their own hair done in the same manner. Any men who cannot wear hair, through age or infirmity, are to provide themselves with wigs made to turn up like the hair, which they are to wear on mounting (*i.e.* guard) days."

"1749, *Feb. 27.*—Lord Albemarle orders, that all those men who have *bad breeches*, be immediately furnished with red ones, made out of the remnants of the last clothing."

On another occasion it was ordered that—

"Particular care be taken that all the men for the Hampton Court party, on Monday morning, have *good* blue breeches, *because their clothes are to be looped up.*

"Coldstream Orderly Room."

Many interesting details of the old uniforms, &c., of the three regiments of Guards, will be found in the appendix to Colonel Mackinnon's "*History of the Coldstream Regiment.*"

II.

The Scots Fusilier Guards.

IN the narrative of my hero I have given a short sketch of the early history of this distinguished regiment; but it is somewhat singular that neither in the annual "Army List," nor at the orderly room of the corps, can a correct list of its successive colonels be found; so the following, made up from other sources, with the dates of their appointment as colonel, may prove of some interest to the Household Brigade:—

Archibald, 8th Earl of Argyle; Colonel 18th March, 1641.
(Beheaded 1661.)

Archibald, 9th Earl of Argyle, 1650. (Beheaded 1685.)

Interregnum.

George, 3rd Earl of Linlithgow, 23rd Nov., 1661; resigned 1681; died 1690.

James Douglas, Lieut.-Gen. 1681; died at Namur 1691.

George Ramsay, Lieut.-Gen., 2nd son of Earl Dalhousie, 1st Sept. 1691.

William, Marquis of Lothian, K.T., Major-Gen. 25th Aug., 1707.

William, Earl of Dalhousie, Brig.-Gen. 1710; died in Spain in October.

John, Earl of Dunmore, Governor of Plymouth, 10th Oct., 1710.

John, Earl of Rothes, Lieut.-Gen. and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, 29th April, 1752.

William, Duke of Gloucester, K.G., 16th Dec., 1767.

John, 4th Earl of Loudoun, Lieut.-Gen., 30th April, 1770.

John, Duke of Argyle, 9th May, 1782.

William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester, 26th May, 1806.

Those that follow, in this century, are correctly given in the "Army Lists," and need not be repeated here.

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