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BLACKWOOD'S

EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

No. CCCLXIV. FEBRUARY, 1846. Vol. LIX.

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SERVIA AND THE "SERVIAN QUESTION."

The principality of Servia was, a few years since, scarcely known to the English public except as an obscure province of the Ottoman empire, into which few travellers had penetrated; and of the population, internal resources, &c., of which, little information existed, and little curiosity was felt. But the singular political drama of which it has lately been the theatre, and the patriotic resolution by which its people, though deprived of support from their legitimate suzerain, the Sultan, menaced by the power of Russia, and abandoned to their fate by the other great powers of Europe, have yet succeeded in establishing their independence, and maintaining in his place the ruler whom they had chosen, has invested Servia with a degree of interest in the eyes of Europe, which gives value to whatever tends to dispel our ignorance of a country, which, by the new position it has assumed, has shown good title to take rank as "the youngest member of the European family." A work, therefore, which should give the same clear insight, even to a limited extent, into the present condition and future prospects of Servia, as was given some years since in regard to Hungary and Transylvania, by the well-known volumes of Mr Paget, would at this time be a valuable addition to our literature; but we are compelled to say, that this desideratum is far from being adequately supplied by the publication now before us. The author's descriptive powers are by no means of a high order;—mountain and valley, castle and river, pass before us, in his pages, without any definite impression being produced of their features or scenery; and while page after page is filled with criticisms of the accommodations and *cuisine* at his different halting-places, and verbatim reports of dialogues, on trivial subjects, between *Author*, on the one part, and *Renegade*, *Cadi*, *Dervish*, *President*, and other *dramatis personæ*, on the other, we look in vain for that extent and accuracy of information which we might have expected from a traveller who has enjoyed more than ordinary opportunities of mixing familiarly with Servians of all ranks and degrees, from the prince to the peasant and making himself acquainted with their [Pg 130] feelings and national character. The deficiency of political information would appear even more remarkable. Though the author was personally acquainted with M. Petronevich, one of the leaders of the National party, whom he visited in his exile at Widdin; and though he was subsequently resident at Belgrade for some time after the restoration of this able minister and his colleague, M. Wucicz, to their country, scarcely an allusion escapes him throughout, to the political movements which led either to their banishment or their recall. As various circumstances and expressions, however, lead us to suppose that Mr Paton's tour may have had reference to objects which do not appear on the surface of the narrative, this mysterious silence may not be without good reasons; and we shall deal with him, accordingly, simply as a traveller in a hitherto untrodden track, which we hope, erelong, to see more fully explored. Mr Paget, we believe, is now a naturalized denizen of Transylvania: cannot he find leisure for an excursion across the Save?

Mr Paton announces himself, in the title-page, as the author of a work entitled "The Modern Syrians," with which it has not been our good fortune to meet; but from the conclusion of which we presume the thread of the present narrative is to be taken up, as he presents himself, *sans ceremonie*, on the pier of Beyrout, preparing to embark on board an Austrian steamer for Constantinople:—"I have been four years in the East, and feel that I have had quite enough of it for the present." On the third day they touched at Rhodes, "a perfectly preserved city and fortress of the middle ages, with every variety of mediæval battlement—so perfect is the illusion, that one wonders the warder's horn should be mute, and the walls devoid of bowman, knight, and squire." Though these ancient bulwarks of Christendom, within which the White-Cross chivalry, under d'Aubusson and L'Isle-Adam, so long withstood the might of the Osmanli, are thus briefly dismissed, Mr Paton immediately after devotes five pages to some choice flowers of Transatlantic rhetoric, culled from the small-talk of one of his fellow-passengers, whom he calls "an American Presbyterian *clergyman*"—though we grievously suspect him to have been a boatswain, who had jumped from the forecastle to the pulpit by one of those free-and-easy transitions not unusual in the "free and enlightened republic." At Smyrna, he signalized his return to the "land of the Franks," (which we had always imagined to be Europe,) by ordering a beefsteak and a bottle of porter, and bespeaking the paper of a Manchester traveller in drab leggings—and we at last find him safe in Constantinople. For all that concerns the city of the Sultan, he contents himself with referring his readers to the volumes of Mr White—and certainly they could not have been left in better hands; and so, "after a week of delightful repose," during which he was greatly indebted to the hospitality of the embassy, "I embarked on board a steamer, skirted the western coast of the Black Sea, and landed on the following morning in Varna."

We may pass over the "delightfully keen impressions" which Mr Paton records as produced by the contrast between the shores of Bulgaria and the Syrian climes he had lately left; the practical result of which was, that "a rattling blast from the Black Sea, more welcome than all the balmy spices of Arabia," made it advisable to don a pea-jacket! The fortifications of Varna, we are informed, were thoroughly repaired in 1843; "and from Varna to Roustchouk is three days' journey—the latter half of the road being agreeably diversified with wood, corn, and pasture, and many of the fields enclosed." A reference to the map will show that this "agreeably diversified" road passes under the famous lines of Shumla, and through many fields of fierce and stubborn fight between Turk and Russ, in the days before the Sultan was delivered over by his allies to his enemy, on the faith of a *military* report from a man who had never seen a regiment of regular troops under arms![1]—but Mr Paton appears to consider such matters as exclusively the province of *militaires*, and passes on at once to Roustchouk, which he found "a fortress of vast extent; but, as it is commanded by the heights from which I was descending, it appeared to want strength if approached from the south. The ramparts were built with great solidity; but rusty old dismounted cannon, obliterated embrasures, and palisades rotten from exposure to the weather, showed that to stand a siege it must undergo a considerable repair." Several days were devoted to a general reconnoissance of the place; but the result was not satisfactory—"I must say that Roustchouk pleased me less than any town of its size I had seen in the East. The streets are dirty and badly paved, without a single good bazar or café to kill time in, or a single respectable edifice of any description to look at." A dinner with a Bulgarian family led us to expect some details of domestic economy; but, in place of this, we are regaled with the bad French of a hybrid Frank, who assured *Author* that Bukarest was equal to Paris or London; and when forced to admit that he had never seen either of those capitals, covered his retreat by maintaining that it was at least far superior to Galate and Braila! Hearing, however, that the Defterdar, an Egyptian Turk, had resided many years in England, and spole English fluently, Mr Paton sought an interview; and after "taking a series of short and rapid whiffs from my pipe," while considering the best way of breaking the ice, opened his battery by telling the Defterdar, "that few Orientals could draw a distinction between politics and geography; but that with a man of his calibre and experience I was safe from misconstruction—that I was collecting materials for a work on the Danubian provinces, and that for any information which he might give me, consistently with his official position, I should feel much indebted, as I thought I was least likely to be misunderstood by stating clearly the object of ny journey, while information derived from the fountain-head was most valuable. The Defterdar, after commending my openness, said, 'I suspect that you will find very little to remark in the pashalik of Silistria. It is an agricultural country, and the majority of the inhabitants are Turks. The Rayahs are very peaceable, and pay few taxes, considering the agricultural wealth of the country. You may rest assured that there is not a province of the empire better governed than the pashalik of Silistria. We have no malcontents within the province; but there are a few Hetarist scoundrels at Braila, who wish to disturb the tranquillity of Bulgaria; but the Walachian government has taken measures to prevent them from carrying their projects into execution.'"

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Having thus put his readers in possession of this full, true, and particular account, derived from exclusive official sources, of all that is to be learned of the pashalik of Silistria, we next find Mr Paton, after two days steaming on the Danube, at Widdin, where the exiled Servian minister, M. Petronovich, was then resident, under the protection of the Pasha, whose name is known to all the world as the destroyer of the Janissaries and the defender of Shumla, the once formidable Hussein. To this redoubted personage, now apparently verging on eighty, Mr Paton was introduced by M. Petronevich at an evening audience, it being contrary to etiquette to receive visits by day during the Ramadan—and found him "sitting in the corner of the divan at his ease, being afflicted with gout, in the old ample Turkish costume. The white beard, the dress of the Pasha, the rich but faded carpet, the roof of elaborate but dingy wooden arabesque, were all in perfect keeping; and the dubious light of two thick wax candles rising two or three feet from the floor, but seemed to bring out the picture, which carried me a generation back to the pashas of the old school." Hussein has since retired from his government, to enjoy the immense fortune which he has accumulated by commercial speculations—the last specimen of the "malignant and turbaned Turk" of former days, whose war shout was heard under the walls of Vienna; and who will now be replaced by a smooth-faced hybrid in fez and frock-coat, waging a paper war with the ambassadors of the *protecting* powers in defence of the few sovereign rights still permitted to the Porte—such is the Pasha of the present day! The town of Widdin found even less favour in our traveller's eyes than Roustchouk. "Lying so nicely on the bank of the Danube, which here makes such beautiful curves, and marked on the map with capital letters, it ought (such was my notion) to be a place having at least one well-built and well-stocked bazar, a handsome seraglio, and some good-looking mosques. Nothing of the sort;"—and thus, sorely disappointed in his reasonable expectations, he proceeded on his way in a car drawn by two horses, which in six hours brought him to the banks of the Timok, the river which separates Servia from Bulgaria. The Servian population, among whom he now first found himself, struck him as a superior race, both physically and morally, compared with those whom he had just left, possessing a manliness of address and demeanour unknown to the serfs of Bulgaria; and, instead of the woolly caps and frieze clothes of the latter, the peasants wore the red fez, and were generally dressed in blue cloth. The plough cultivation of Bulgaria was now exchanged for the innumerable herds of swine, which form the staple commodity of Servia, fed in the immense oak woods which cover the country. "They form" (as Mr Paget informs us in his work on Hungary) "a very important article of trade between Servia and Vienna; and I doubt if Smithfield could show better shapes or better feeding than the market of a Servian village." Continuing his route along the banks of the Danube to New Orsova, where he crossed to the Hungarian bank, he again posted, with "an enormously

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stout Wallachian matron" for a travelling companion, to Drenkova, whence another steamer conveyed him to Semlin, and half an hour's pull down the Danube and up the Save (the line of the two rivers being distinctly marked at the confluence by the muddy colour of the former, and the clearness of the latter) landed him safe at Belgrade.

We may here mention an amusing anecdote, related in another part of the volume, in connexion with the town of Panczova below Semlin, where "the town-major, after swallowing countless boxes of Morison's pills died in the belief that he had not begun to take them soon enough. The consumption of these drugs at that time almost surpassed belief. There was scarcely a sickly or hypochondriac person, from the Hill of Presburg to the Iron Gates, who had not taken large quantities of them." *Mais voilà le mot d'enigme.* "'The Anglomania,"' was the answer to a query of the author, "'is nowhere stronger than in this part of the world. Whatever comes from England, be it Congreve rockets or vegetable pills, must needs be perfect. Dr Morison is indebted to his high office (!) for the enormous consumption of his drugs. It is clear that the President of the British College must be a man in the enjoyment of the esteem of the government and the faculty of medicine; and his title is a passport to his pills in foreign countries.' I laughed heartily, and explained that the British College of Health, and the College of Physicians, were not identical." We well remember a statement some years since among the innumerable puffs of the arch-quack, (now gone, we believe, to that bourn whither so many of his patients had preceded him,) that in gratitude for the countless cures of incurable diseases by the "Universal Vegetable Medicine," a statute of the Hygeist had been erected in Bukarest, not in his native brass, but 'in his habit as he lived;' and a woodcut was appended of the *ipsissimus* Morison, with his mustached phiz and tight frock-coat. As Bukarest is a long way off, we held this at the time for a pious fraud; but Mr [Pg 133] Paton's anecdote gives it at least probability. *Vive la charlatanerie!*

The hospitality of Mr Consul-general Fonblanque, and the attentions of the numerous friends of M. Petronevich, soon made Mr Paton quite at home at Belgrade, where he remained till the end of the year 1843, having arrived some time in the autumn, since the re-election of Prince Alexander, and the exile of Petronevich, and his colleague Wucziz, took place in July of that year. He found Belgrade much Europeanized since a previous visit which he had paid it in 1839,—"It was then quite an Oriental town; but now the haughty *parvenu* spire of the cathedral, a new and large, but tasteless structure, with a profusely gilt bell-tower in the Russian manner, throws into the shade the minarets of the mosques, graceful even in decay. Many of the bazar shops have been fronted and glazed; the Oriental dress has become much rarer; and houses, several stories high, in the German fashion, are springing up every where." The Turkish governor was at this time Hafiz Pasha, the unsuccessful commander at Nezib, lately appointed in the room of Kiamil, who had been displaced at the mandate of Russia for the share he had taken in the first election of Prince Alexander; but his jurisdiction is now confined to the fortress and the Turkish quarter, which lies along the Danube; the remainder of the town, lying piled street upon street up the steep bank of the Save, being under the Servian authorities. During his stay, Mr Paton paid frequent visits to the Pasha, whom he generally found in an audience room overlooking the precipitous descent to the Danube, "studying *at* the maps: he seemed to think that nothing would be so useful to Turkey as good roads, made to run from the principal ports of Asia Minor, up to the depôts of the interior, so as to connect Sivas, Tokat, Angora, Koniah, Kaiserieh, &c., with Samsoon, Tersoos, and other ports." The ramparts of the fortress are said to be in good condition, though "very unlike the magnificent towers it the last scene of the *Siege of Belgrade* at Drury-Lane,"—a piece of useful information for play-going Cockneys—and the *Lange Gasse*, or main street, with the palace of Prince Eugene, built during the Austrian occupation of Servia from 1717 to 1789, is still standing, though half choked up with bazar shops and Turkish houses. The Prince holds no formal levees; but Mr Paton was present at a dinner given to the *corps diplomatique* in the palace, and was received in a saloon "with inlaid and polished parquet; the chairs and sofas covered with crimson and white satin damask, which is an unusual luxury in these regions; the roof admirably painted in subdued colours, in the best Vienna style. High white porcelain urn-like stoves heated the suite of rooms. The Prince, a muscular, middle-sized, dark-complexioned man, with a serious composed air, wore a plain blue military uniform;[2] the Princess, and her *dames de compagnie*, wore the graceful native Servian costume; the Pasha the Nizam dress, and the *Nishan Iftihar*, (diamond decoration of his rank;) Baron Lieven, the Russian Commissioner, in the uniform of a general, glittered with innumerable orders;[3] Colonel Philippovich, a man of distinguished talents, represented Austria; the Archbishop, in his black velvet cap, a large enamelled cross hanging by a massive gold chain from his neck, sat in stately isolation; and the six feet four inches high Garashanin, minister of the interior, conversed with Stojan Simitch, the president of the senate, one of the few Servians in high office who retains his old Turkish costume, and has a frame that reminds one of the Farnese Hercules. Then what a medley of languages—Servian, German, Russian, Turkish, and French, all in full buzz! We [Pg 134] proceeded to the dining-room, where the *cuisine* was in every respect in the German manner. When the dessert appeared, the Prince rose with a creaming glass of champagne in his hand, and proposed the health of the Sultan, acknowledged by the Pasha; and then, after a short pause, the health of Czar Nicolay Paulovich, acknowledged by Baron Lieven; then came the health of other crowned heads. Baron Lieven now rose, and proposed the health of the Prince. The Pasha and the Princess were toasted in turn; and then Mr Wastchenko, the Russian Consul-general, rose, and in animated terms drank to the prosperity of Servia. The entertainment, which commenced at one o'clock, was prolonged to an advanced period of the afternoon, and closed with coffee, liqueurs, and chibouques, in the drawing-room: the Princess and the ladies having previously withdrawn to the private apartments."

At the end of the year, Mr Paton returned to England; and after an absence of six months, returned in August 1844 to the banks of the Save, reaching Belgrade at the moment when preparations were being made for the triumphal reception of the patriot ministers Wuczicz and Petronevich, who had at length been restored to their country by the tardy intervention of England. The day of their arrival was celebrated by a universal jubilee. Surrounded by an immense cavalcade, the exiles paraded the streets, amid the rapturous acclamations of the multitude, to the great portal of the cathedral, where they were received by the Archbishop and clergy:—"They kissed the cross and the gospels, which the Archbishop presented to them, and, kneeling down, returned thanks for their safe restoration. The Archbishop then advanced to the edge of the platform and began a discourse, describing the grief the nation had experienced at their departure, the universal joy for their return, and the hope that they would ever keep peace and union in view in all matters of state, and that in their duties to the state they must never forget their responsibility to the Most High. Wuczicz, dressed in the coarse frieze jacket and boots of a Servian peasant, heard, with a reverential inclination of the head, the discourse of the prelate, but nought relaxed one muscle of that adamantine visage: the finer but more luminous features of Petronevich were under the control of a less powerful will. At certain passages his intelligent eye was moistened with tears. Two deacons then prayed successively for the Sultan, the Emperor of Russia, and the Prince,—and now uprose from every tongue, and every heart, a hymn for the longevity of Wuczicz and Petronevich. 'The Solemn Song for Many Days' is the title of this sublime chant, which is so old that its origin is lost in the obscure dawn of Christianity in the East, and so massive, so nobly simple, as to be beyond the ravages of time, and the caprices of convention." The town was illuminated in the evening; and a ball was given at the new Konak or palace, built by the exiled Prince Michael, which was attended "by all the rank and fashion of Belgrade—senators of the old school, in their benishes and shalwars, and senators of the new school, in pantaloons and stiff cravats," which we agree with Mr Paton in considering as no improvement on the graceful costume of the East. The Servian ladies, however, have in general the good taste to retain the old national costume; and "no head-dress that I have seen in the Levant is better calculated to set off beauty. From a small Greek fez they suspend a gold tassel, which contrasts with the black and glossy hair, which is laid smooth and flat down the temple. The sister of the Princess, who was admitted to be the handsomest woman in the room, with her tunic of crimson velvet, embroidered in gold, and faced with sable, would have been, in her strictly indigenous costume, the queen of any fancy ball in old Europe."

While occupied by his preparations for a tour into the interior, Mr Paton one day encountered "a strange figure, with a long white beard, and a Spanish cap, mounted on a sorry horse"—this was no other than Holman, the well-known blind traveller, whom he had last seen at Aleppo, and who, having passed in safety, under the safeguard of his infirmity, through the most dangerous parts of Bosnia, was now on his way to Walachia. He instantly recognised Mr Paton's voice, and [Pg 135] mentioned his name on being told where he had last seen him; and after a walk on the esplanade, in which the objects in view were described to him, while turning his face to the different points of the compass, he appeared to have acquired a tolerably clear idea of Belgrade. Another visitor of Mr Paton, Milutinovich, the best living poet of Servia, on hearing the name of Holman, (of whose wanderings in the four quarters of the globe he had read in the *Augsburg Gazette*,) was so awe-struck at finding himself in the presence of even a greater traveller than Robinson Crusoe, (whose adventures Mr Paton found regarded as an authentic narrative by the monks of Manasia,) that he reverentially kissed his beard, praying aloud that he might return home in safety. When the day of departure approached, "orders were sent by the minister of the interior to all governors and employés, enjoining them to furnish me with every assistance, and with whatever information I might require;" and all preparations being completed, Mr Paton and his man Paul set off horseback, like Dr Syntax and Patrick, for the highlands and woodlands of Servia.

Shabatz (more correctly Czabacz,) a town on the Save, between forty and fifty miles above Belgrade, and one of the few garrisons still retained by the Turks, was the first point of destination; and reaching it on the second day, he was hospitably received by *Gospody* (Monsieur) Ninitch, the government collector, to whom he had an introductory letter from the minister Garashanin. Before the revolution, Shabatz numbered 20,000 Osmanlis, the sites of whose kiosks and gardens are still pointed out on the *Polje*, or open space between the town and the fortress,—at present the only Moslems are the garrison of Bosniak *Redif* or militia, occupying the dilapidated fortifications. It is the episcopal seat of one of the Archbishop's three suffragans; and the author, accompanied by his friend the collector, paid his respects to the Bishop, whom he had previously met at Belgrade. The conversation turned principally on the system of national education, by which, in a few years, reading and writing will be universal among the peasantry, while the sons of the better classes are prepared, by instruction in German, &c., for a further course of study in the Gymnasium of Belgrade, the germ of a future university. A proof of the taste now spreading for general literature was afforded by the library of the Archpriest, "Jowan Paulovich, a self-taught ecclesiastic: the room in which he received us was filled with books, mostly Servian, but among them I perceived German translations of Shakspeare, Young's *Night Thoughts*, and a novel of Bulwer's." The son of this priest was studying mining engineering at the expense of government, at Schemnitz in Hungary, a capacity in which he may one day do good service to his country, as the great mineral riches believed to exist in Servia are hitherto wholly unexplored. Having completed the circuit of all the notables in Shabatz, including Luka Lasaravich, a once redoubted lieutenant of Kara-George, and now an octagenarian merchant, with thirteen wounds on his body, Mr Paton prepared for a fresh start, drinking health and long life to his kind host and hostess in a glass of *slivovitsa*, or plum brandy, the national liqueur. But his good wishes were not destined to be fulfilled; for within a month an abortive attempt at a

rising was made by the partisans of the exiled Obrenovich family, a troop of whom, disguised as Austrian hussars, entered Shabatz, and shot the good collector dead as he issued from his house to enquire the cause of the disturbance. The attempt, however, was futile, and the whole party were taken and executed.

The road to Losnitza, whither our traveller was now bending his way, lay through the Banat of Matchva, a rich tract of land, with a "charmingly accidented" chain of mountains, the Gutchevo range, in the distance. "Even the brutes bespoke the harmony of creation; for, singular to say, we saw several crows perched on the backs of swine!" Towards evening we entered a region of cottages among gardens inclosed by bushes, trees, and verdant fences, with the rural quiet and cleanliness of an English village in the last century lighted by an Italian sunset. "In this sylvan [Pg 136] paradise he was encountered by a pandour, who conducted him to the house of the *Natchalnik*, or governor of the province, a gaunt, greyheaded follower of Kara-George, who had been selected for this post from his courage and military experience, since the hostile neighbourhood of the Bosniaks, on the other side the Drina, between whom and the Servians a deadly religious and national hatred exists, rendered it necessary to be always on the alert." But before pursuing his route to Sokol,[4] a sky-threatening fortress, respecting which his curiosity had been excited by the account given of it by M. Ninitch, he was persuaded by the Natchalnik to attend a peasant festival held at the monastery of Tronosha, to celebrate the anniversary of its consecration. The next day, accordingly, he set off with the Natchalnik and his companions, all gallantly armed and mounted, and in gala dresses covered with gold embroidery; and, dashing up hill and down dale, through the majestic forests which covered the ascent of the mountains, they arrived in due time at Tronosha, "an edifice with strong walls, towers, and posterns, more like a secluded and fortified manor-house in the seventeenth century than a convent; for such establishments, in former times, were often subject to the unwelcome visits of minor marauders." After returning thanks for their safe arrival, according to custom, in a chapel with paintings in the old Byzantine style, "crimson-faced saints looking up to a golden sky," they proceeded to inspect the preparations for the approaching fête, in a green glade running up to the foot of the hill on which stood the monastery, and dined with the Igoumen, (Ἡγουμενος,) or Superior, and the monks, in the refectory. The healths of the Prince, and of Wuczicz and Petronevich, were given after dinner as toasts—a laudable custom, which appears to be in orthodox observance in Servia—after which a song was sung in their honour by one of the monks, to whom Mr Paton (whose special aversion he seems to have incurred, for some reason not exactly apparent) applies the epithet of a "clerical Lumpacivagabundus," which we quote for the benefit of such of our friends as may chance to be skilled in the unknown tongue. Meanwhile the assembled peasantry outside were in the full tide of merriment; and, on the following morning, Mr Paton was roused from slumbers, in which "I dreamed I know not what absurdities," by a chorus of countless voices, and, hurrying out, found the peasants he had seen the evening before, with a large accession to their numbers, on their knees in the avenue leading to the church, and following "the chant of a noble old hymn. The whole pit of this theatre of verdure appeared covered with a carpet of crimson and white; for such were the prevailing colours of the costumes. The upper tunic of the women was a species of surtout of undyed cloth, bordered with a design of red cloth of a finer description. The stockings, in colour and texture, resembled those of Persia (?), but were generally embroidered at the ankle with gold and silver thread. When I thought of the trackless solitude of the sylvan ridges around me, I seemed to witness one of the early communions of Christianity, in those ages when incense ascended to the Olympic deities in gorgeous temples, while praise to the true God rose from the haunts of the wolf, the lonely cavern, or the subterranean vault."

After witnessing this interesting reunion of a regenerated and Christian nation, Mr Paton took leave of the Superior, who parted from him with the words—"God be praised that Servia has at length seen the day when strangers come from afar to see and know the people!" and, passing through the double ranks of the peasantry, who took leave of him with the valediction of *Srentnj poot!* (a good journey,) repeated by a thousand voices, he rode on through the never-ceasing oak-forests, broken here and there by plantations of every variety of tree, to Krupena. Here he was received by the captain of the district at the head of a small troop of irregular cavalry, and [Pg 137] hospitably entertained for the night. On the following day he started, "toiling upwards through woods and wilds of a more rocky character than on the previous day," to the ridge of the Gutchevo range, whence he looked down on Sokol, a fortress still held by the Turks, and which, on its inaccessible position, "built" (as described by M. Ninitch) "on the capital of a column of rock," was the only one never taken by the Servians; while the background was formed by the mountains of Bosnia, rising range over range in the distance. They reached the valley by a narrow winding path on the face of a precipitous descent, and entered the town; but their visit was ill-timed. It was Ramadan; the Disdar Aga was, or was said to be, asleep, and the castle could not be seen in his absence; and Mr Paton's enquiries from the Mutsellim, who acted as their cicerone, as to the height of the rock on which the citadel was built above the valley, only made him suspected of being an engineer surveying the stronghold with a view to its capture. After climbing up a pinnacle of rock which overlooked the abyss, he was compelled to return *re infectâ*; "and when we got a little way along the valley, I looked back; Sokol looked like a little castle of Edinburgh placed in the clouds; and a precipice on the other side of the valley presented a perpendicular stature of not less than five hundred feet."

A few hours travelling from Sokol brought Mr Paton to Liuhovia on the Drina, the precipitous banks of which, covered with wood, present numerous points of picturesque beauty; but at a short distance above this town, which is the quarantine station on the road between Belgrade and Seraievo it ceases to form the boundary of Servia and Bosnia, being entirely within the latter

frontier. Thence ascending the valley of the Rogaschitza, a small stream tributary to the Drina, and crossing a ridge which parts the waters flowing into the Drina and into the Morava, he descended into the tract watered by the Morava, the national river of Servia; the first town in which was Ushitza, one of the fortresses still garrisoned by the Turks, and the scene of desperate conflicts during the war of independence. In past times it was a place of great importance, and contained sixty thousand inhabitants, being the entrepôt of the trade between Servia and Bosnia; but this commerce has been almost ruined by the establishment of the quarantine; and most of the Servian inhabitants, in consequence of a bloody affray with the Turks, have transferred themselves to Poshega, a town at two hours' distance, and formerly a Roman colony, of which Mr. Paton found a relic in a fragment of a Latin inscription built into the wall of the church. From Poshega Mr P. continued his route down the rich valley of the Morava, here several miles wide, to Csatsak, the residence of a bishop and a *Natchalnik*; where the old Turkish town is in process of being superseded by a new foundation, which, "like Poshega and all these new places, consists of a circular or square market-place, with bazar shops in the Turkish manner, and straight streets diverging from it." Mr Paton waited on the bishop, "a fine specimen of the church-militant; a stout fiery man of sixty, in full furred robes, and black velvet cap," who had been, during the rule of Milosh, an energetic denouncer of his extortions and monopolies, and was consequently in high favour since the change of dynasty. The cathedral (we are informed) was "a most ancient edifice of Byzantine architecture," of which we should have been glad to have had some particulars; but Mr Paton's remarks are confined to complaints of the wearisome length of the mass, at which the bishop presided, "dressed in crimson velvet and white satin, embroidered with gold, which had cost £300 at Vienna; and as he sat in his chair, with mitre on head and crosier in hand, looked, with his bushy white beard, an imposing representative of spiritual authority." Taking leave of this formidable prelate, Mr Paton proceeded to Karanovatz, in the rich plain round which, surrounded by hills which are compared to the last picturesque undulations of the Alps near Vicenz or Verona, the river Ybar falls into the Morava, not far fron the ancient convent [Pg 138] of Zhitchka Jicha, where seven Servian kings of the Neman dynasty were crowned, a door being broken in the wall for the entrance of each monarch, and built up again on his departure: and here our traveller, turning to the right, and ascending the course of the Ybar, struck southwards into the highlands

The character of the mountains among which he now found himself, was widely different from the picturesque oak forests of the Gutchevo range, which he had traversed in the early part of his tour. "Tall cedars replaced the oak and beech; the scanty herbage was covered with hoar-frost; the clear brooks murmured chillingly down the unshaded gullies; and a grand line of sterile peaks to the south showed me that I was approaching the backbone of the Balkan. There is a total want of arable land in this part of Servia, and the pasture is neither good nor abundant; but the Ybar is the most celebrated stream in Servia for large quantities of trout." Still ascending the steep mountain-paths, while the scenery became wilder and wilder, they at length reached the convent of Studenitza, one of the most ancient foundations in Servia, having been built by Neman, the first monarch of the dynasty bearing his name, who died in 1195. Like most monastic edifices in Servia, it is a castellated building, with walls whose massive strength is well calculated to resist an attack not supported by artillery; and, on entering the wicket, Mr Paton was received "by a fat, feeble-voiced, lymphatic-faced superior, leaning on a long staff"—from whom he could get no other reply to all his inquiries than "*Blagodarim*, (I thank you.") The magnificent church of white marble, one of the finest specimens now existing of Byzantine architecture, was built in 1314 (as an inscription imports) by Stephen Vrosh; but it had suffered severely at different times from the bigotry of the Turks. "The curiously twisted pillars of the outer door were sadly chipped, while noseless angels, and fearfully mutilated lions, guarded the inner portal. Passing through a vestibule, we saw the remains of the font, which must have been magnificent; and, covered with a cupola, the stumps of the white marble columns which support it are still visible. Entering the church, I saw on the right the tomb of St Simeon, the sainted king of Servia; beside it hung his banner with the half-moon on it, the insigni*um*(!) of the South Slavonic nation from the dawn of heraldry; and near the altar was the body of his son, St Stephen, the patron saint of Servia." Another day's journey through the same rugged and sterile scenery, in a direction due south, during which they passed the Demir-kapu, on Iron Gate, on the bank of the Ybar, where there is only room for a single led horse in a passage cut through the rock, brought them to the quarantine station on the river Raska, two hours' distance from Novibazar in Bosnia, which it was Mr Paton's intention to visit, attended by a Servian quarantine officer.

The conversion of the Bosniaks to Islam was effected by force, on the conquest of the country in 1463, by Mohammed II., the only instance in the career of Turkish conquest in which the injunction of the Prophet against compulsory proselytism has been violated; but they have always held the faith, thus forced on them, with the zeal of renegades, and are now the most fanatic and bigoted Moslems in the empire. The Christians resident in their territory are subject to every species of tyranny and maltreatment, several instances of which, related by refugees in Servia, are given in the work before us. A Frank traveller is a sight scarcely known; and Mr Paton soon had abundant evidence, on his approach to Novibazar, which lies in a fertile plain about a mile and a half in diameter, surrounded by low hills, that his visit here would be even less favourably received than at Sokol. The gipsies, whose tents covered the plain, and who here profess Islamism, cried furiously after them, "See, how the Royal Servians now-a-days have the audacity to enter Novibazar on horseback!" Youssouf Bey, the governor, was said to be asleep in his harem, (the usual Not-at-home of an Oriental,) but, as they afterwards ascertained, was actually afraid to receive them; and while they were sauntering round the town, a savage-looking Bosniak [Pg 139] starting up, exclaimed, "Giaours, kafirs, spies! I know what you come for!—Do you expect to see

your cross one day planted on the castle?" The threat of a complaint to the Bey only provoked fresh insolence; and, warned by a Christian bystander that the whole town would soon be in commotion, they prudently beat a retreat, and reached the Servian frontier in safety.

After this narrow escape from Bosniak hospitality, Mr Paton's next object was the Kopaunik mountain, lying a little to the south, and from the top of which (as he had been informed at Csatsak) a panoramic view of all Servia might be obtained; and having prevailed on the captain of the district to accompany him, they crossed the Ybar, and reached the summit with little difficulty, if (as seems to be implied) the whole ascent was accomplished on horseback. "The Kopaunik is not much above 6000 English feet above the level of the sea. But it is so placed in the Servian basin, that the eye embraces the whole breadth from Bosnia to Bulgaria, and very nearly the whole length from Macedonia to Hungary. When at length I stood on the highest peak, the prospect was literally gorgeous. Servia lay rolled out at my feet. There lay the field of Kossovo, where Amurath defeated Lasar, and entombed the ancient empire of Servia. I mused an instant on this great landmark of European history, and following the finger of an old peasant who accompanied us, I looked eastwards, and saw Deligrad, the scene of one of the bloodiest fights that preceded the resurrection of Servia as a principality. The Morava glistened in its wide valley like a silver thread in a carpet of green, beyond which the dark mountains of Rudnik rose to the north; while the frontiers of Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, walled in the prospect."

After luxuriating to his heart's content in the contemplation of this magnificent panorama, and taking leave of his companion, Mr Paton descended the north-eastern slope of the mountain; and lodging for the night in a shepherd's hut, where he found an officer sent by the Natchalnik of Krushevatz to meet him, arrived next day at Zhupa. "Here the aspect of the country changed—the verdant hills became chalky, and covered with vineyards, which, before the fall of the empire, were celebrated;" and after partaking of a repast, in which choice grapes and clotted cream (a national dish in Turkey) formed the dessert, they pushed on in all haste, and reached Krushevatz (often marked in the maps by its Turkish name of Aladja-Hissar) late at night. He was hospitably received by the Natchalnik, whose wife kissed the visitor's hand on his arrival, in compliance with the old Servian customs, now fast wearing out, which assign to woman a social position intermediate between the seclusion of eastern manners and the graceful precedence which she enjoys in the west. The next morning, they walked out to inspect the town, which was the metropolis of the Servian kingdom immediately before its overthrow by the Turks; and which, lying as it does in the midst of the rich vale of the Morava, which here expands into a wide and fertile plain, extending from the foot of the mountains by which it is flanked to the river, occupies a site well adapted for all inland capital. The author here introduces a dissertation on the history, laws, and customs of the ancient monarchy; but as our own business is rather with Servia as it is, than Servia as it was, we shall pass unnoticed the glories of the house of Neman—the warlike trophies of Stephan Dushan the Powerful, at whose approach the Greek Emperor trembled within the walls of Constantinople—and the tragical fate of Knes Lasar, with whom Servian independence fell on the fatal plain of Kossovo, June 15, 1389. Of the palace of Lasar in Krushevatz, only the gateway and the ruined walls are now remaining; but the chapel, having been converted by the Turks into an arsenal, is still in perfect preservation. "It is a curious monument of the period, in a Byzantine sort of style, but not for a moment to be compared in beauty to the church of Studenitza. Above one of the doors is carved the double eagle, the insigni*um* (!!) of empire; but instead of having body to body, and wings and beaks pointed outwards, as in the arms of Austria and Russia, the bodies are separated, and beak looks inward [Pg 140] to beak. The late governor had the Vandalism to whitewash the exterior; but the Natchalnik told me, that under the whitewash fine bricks were disposed in diamond figures between the stones. This antique principle of tessellation, applied by the Byzantines to perpendicular walls, and occasionally adopted and varied *ad infinitum* by the Saracens, is magnificently illustrated in the upper exterior of the ducal palace of Venice."

A grand field-day against the bears and boars in the forest, with a couple of hundred peasants as beaters, had been arranged by the Natchalnik for his guest's amusement; but their plans were frustrated by the unpropitious state of the weather; and as soon as it became favourable, we find Mr Paton again in motion, ascending the eastern branch of the Morava to Alexinate, the quarantine station on the Bulgarian frontier, where the British govermnent has established a *konak* or residence for the Queen's messengers, who here await, on the extreme verge of the sanatory system, the return of the Tartars with despatches from Constantinople. He found it tenanted by Captain W——, whose guest he became for several days, to his infinite satisfaction: —"It seemed so odd, and yet was so very comfortable, to have roast-beef, plum-pudding, sherry, brown stout, Stilton cheese, and other insular groceries, at the foot of the Balkan. There was, moreover, a small library, with which the temporary occupants of the konak killed the month's interval between arrival and departure." He was compelled, however, to tear himself from the delights of an English cuisine; and on arriving at Tiupria, (more properly Kiupri-Ravenatz,) where he first heard tidings of the emeute at Shabatz, and the murder of his friend the collector Ninitch, he diverged from his route to visit the monasteries of Ravanitza and Manasia, the former of which was the burial-place of Lasar. But as his reminiscences of these saintly retreats are rather convivial than antiquarian, we shall pass on at once to Svilainitza, (the place of silk,) where he was entertained in the chateau of M. Ressavatz, the richest man in Servia; the only chateau-residence as he tells us, which he saw in the country. This part of Servia appears indeed to be, as Mr Paton says—"Ressavatz quà, Ressavatz là"—since to the patriotism and command of capital of this enlightened family, it owes not only the introduction of the growth of silk as above-mentioned, but the construction of an excellent macadamized road, by which Mr Paton travelled on the following day, through a country richly cultivated and interspersed with lofty oaks, to

Posharevatz, (commonly written Passarowitz,) where he was welcomed on his arrival by another of the name of Ressavatz, the Natchalnik of the place. Posharevatz is celebrated in history for the treaty there concluded in 1718, by which, in consequence of the victories of Prince Eugene, Bosnia and Servia passed under the dominion of Austria for twenty years, till restored to the Porte at the peace of Belgrade in 1739: in the present day it is a place of considerable importance, both as the capital of a province of ninety thousand inhabitants, and the seat of a court of judicial appeal for Eastern Servia. By the president of this court Mr Paton was entertained at dinner, where he met all the élite of Posharevatz; "and the president having made some punch, which showed profound acquaintance eith the jurisprudence of conviviality, the best amateurs of Posharevatz sung their best songs, which pleased me somewhat, for my ears had gradually been broken into the habits of the Servian muse. Being pressed myself to sing an English national song, I gratified their curiosity with 'God save the Queen,' and 'Rule Britannia,' explaining that these two songs contained the essence of English nationality; the one expressive of our unbounded loyalty, the other of our equally unbounded dominion." And now having extracted, to the best of our ability, the plums from the pudding of Mr Paton's *gastronomic* circuit of Servia, in which, (as he cordially admits,) "by inter-*larding* my discourse with sundry apophthegms of *Bacon*, and stale paradoxes of Rochefaucault, I passed current considerably above my real value," we shall here leave him to find his way by the beaten track through Semendria, Belgrade, and Vienna, to England. But before proceeding to the consideration of the "Servian Question," a point scarcely touched on in the volume before us, it will not be amiss to give a brief summary of the social condition and internal organization of the Servian nation, on which Mr Paton gives some valuable information in his concluding chapters.

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The Servian territory extends about one hundred and seventy miles from east to west, along the Danube and Save, the boundaries being the rivers Timok and Drina; and one hundred miles in extreme breadth from Belgrade to the frontier of Albania. The population, after the expulsion of the Turks, was roughly estimated, under Milosh, as somewhat exceeding half a million; but, from the internal peace which the country has since enjoyed, and the plenty and prosperity which prevails among the peasantry, there can be little doubt that it has since greatly increased. As not more than one-sixth of the soil is supposed to be in cultivation, there is abundance of excellent land undisposed of; as every man, therefore, with ordinary industry can support himself and his family, abject want and pauperism are almost unknown. The innumerable herds of swine, which form the staple commodity of the country, both for home consumption and export, rove freely through the oak and beech forests which cover great part of Servia, and in which every one is at liberty to cut as much timber as he pleases, only an inconsiderable portion being reserved as state property for the public service. There are no indirect taxes; and as the *poresa*, or capitation tax, paid by each head of a family, the maximum of which is six dollars a-year, is the only impost (except a trifling quit-rent for the land) levied by the government, "it must be admitted," (as Mr Paton observes,) "that the peasantry of Servia have drawn a high prize in the lottery of existence." The harvest is a period of general festivity; all labour in common in getting in the corn, the proprietor providing entertainment for his industrious guests; "but in the vale of the lower Morava, where there is less pasture and more corn, this is not sufficient, and hired Bulgarians assist." Though in a comparatively southern latitude, the vegetable productions are those of a more northern climate; Mr Paton never saw an olive-tree, and the grapes and melons, though abundant, are inferior to those of Hungary; but the plum, from which the national liqueur, *slivovitsa*, is made, every where abounds, almost every village having its plum-orchard. With all these means and appliances for good living close at hand, it is evident that there is not much prospect of a famine in Servia, till the productions of the soil fall short of the demands of the population—a consummation which cannot happen for many generations to come.

The national character of the Servian is compared by Mr Paton to that of the Scotch Highlander; and it is not without strong points of resemblance. "He is brave in battle, highly hospitable; delights in simple and plaintive music and poetry, his favourite instruments being the bagpipe and fiddle; unlike the Greek, he shows little aptitude for trade; and, unlike the Bulgarian, he is very lazy in agricultural pursuits."

In the cleanliness of their persons and houses, they present a favourable contrast to most of the other Slavic populations; and their personal appearance is also advantageous. "They are a remarkably tall and robust race of men; in form and feature they bespeak strength of body and energy of mind; but one seldom sees that thoroughbred look, so frequently found in the poorest peasants of Italy and Greece. The women I think very pretty. They are not so well-shaped as the Greeks; but their complexions are fine, their hair generally black and glossy, and their head-dress particularly graceful; and not being addicted to the bath, like other eastern women, they prolong their beauty beyond the average period." The spirit of nationality, and zeal for national improvement, which pervades the population almost as one man, is strongly marked by many incidents related in Mr Paton's pages, and one is so remarkable that we cannot forbear quoting it. An idiot boy, to whom he had given a glass of *slivovitza*, "taking off his greasy fez, said, 'I drink to our prince Kara-Georgovich, and the progress and enlightenment of the nation.' He was too stupid to entertain these sentiments himself; but if the determination to rise were not in the minds of the people, it would not be on the lips of an oaf in an insignificant hamlet." Nor is the progress of intellectual development behind this patriotic zeal for national independence in the march of regeneration. "In the whole range of the Slavic family, no nation possesses so extensive a collection of excellent popular poetry," with which the British public has been in some measure made acquainted by the translations of Dr Bowring. "The romantic beauty of their country—the relics of a wild mythology, which has some resemblance to that of Greece and Scandinavia—the adventurous character of the population—the vicissitudes of guerilla warfare—are all given in a

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dialect which for musical sweetness is to other Slavonic tongues what the Italian is to the languages of Western Europe." The Servian Anthology has been collected by Dr Wuk Stephanovich, the author of several works on national topics; and there are several living poets, among whom, Milutinovich, already mentioned, is reputed *facile princeps*. The only newspaper now printed at Belgrade is the *State Gazette*, which prudently avoids all remarks on Austrian or Russian policy; and the only annual is the *Golubitza*, (Dove,) a miscellany in prose and verse, neatly got up in imitation of the German Taschenbücher, and edited by M. Hadschitch, the framer of the code of laws. In the Lyceum, lectures on law are delivered by M. Simonovich, bred an Hungarian advocate, and formerly editor of the *Courier*, a newspaper now discontinued; but the study of law, as well as its practitioners, is said to be unpopular in Servia at present; and Professor John Shafarik is an able and popular lecturer on Slavic history, literature, and antiquities; of the latter, there is a collection in the museum of the institution, as well as a rich mineralogical cabinet collected by Baron Herder, and including specimens of silver, lead, and copper ore, as well as marble, white as that of Carrara. A Literary Society has also been formed for the encouragement of popular literature, and the formation of a complete dictionary of the language—the seal of which represents an uncultivated field, with the rising sun shining on a monument bearing the arms of Servia.

The administrative senate consists of twenty-one members, named by the Prince for life; four of whom are ministers. Stojan Simitch, who has been before mentioned, the present vice-president (the presidency being an imaginary office,) is a Servian of the old school, in whom talent and shrewdness have supplied the place of education; but the most remarkable member of the cabinet is M. Petronevich, now minister for foreign affairs. He was at one time in a commercial house at Trieste, and subsequently for nine years a hostage for Servia at Constantinople—"he is astute by nature and education, but has a good heart and a capacious intellect; and, in the course of a very tortuous political career, has kept the advancement of Servia constantly in view. He is one of the very few public men in Servia, in whom the Christian and Western love of *community* has triumphed over the Oriental allegiance to *self*; and this disinterestedness, in spite of his defects, is the secret of his popularity." His partner in exile, M. Wuczicz, is now commander of the military force and minister of the interior, in which latter office he succeeded Garashanin; the standing army is a mere skeleton force; but every Servian is a soldier, and bound to provide himself with arms, thus forming a national militia, of which the effective strength is estimated at little less than 100,000 men. The military command of each of the seventeen provinces is vested in the Natchalnik, under whom are the captains of the several cantons, usually three in each province; these officers superintend the police, and report to the minister at war. As minister of the interior, he is charged also with the superintendence of ecclesiastical affairs, the spiritual head of which, the Archbishop of Belgrade, though acknowledging the supremacy of the Greek [Pg 143] Patriarch, is virtually independent within the province; his salary, as well as that of the three bishops and the inferior clergy, is paid by the state, that of the primate being about £800 a-year, and of his suffragans half as much. The administration of justice (as settled by the Sultan's *hatti shereef* of 1838, which may be regarded as the Servian constitution) is vested in local courts in each province, consisting of a president and three members, from which an appeal lies to the supreme courts of Belgrade and Posharevatz; but reference is always made in the first instance, in minor cases, to the *Courts of Peace* (as they are called,) consisting of the village magnates, with whose patriarchal arbitration the litigants are usually satisfied, law and lawyers not being held in high estimation. "The courts of law have something of the promptitude of Oriental justice, without its flagrant venality;" but the salaries of the judges are small, that of the president of the appeal court at Belgrade not exceeding £300 a-year. But it is the financial department that presents the most striking contrast to other European states, in the unheard-of phenomenon of a national debt due not *from* but *to* the government; the revenue so much exceeding the expenditure, that a sum of a hundred thousand ducats has been lent to the people at six per cent, and forms an item on the credit side of the budget! The total annual outlay, according to the financial returns, including the tribute to the Porte and the civil list of the Prince, (the latter equivalent to about £20,000 English,) is 830,000 dollars; while the income reaches 887,000, principally derived from the *poresa*, or capitation-tax paid by heads of families, a separate tax being levied on bachelors. Such is at present the flourishing state of the principality of Servia, "the youngest member of the European family," the views of Russia on which, somewhat prematurely developed by the famous "Servian question," will be more clearly understood by a preliminary sketch of its previous history.

The political existence of modern Servia may be considered to date from 1804, in February of which year a general rising took place of the Christian population against the Moslems, provoked by the massacres and atrocities committed by the spahis, who held lands in the province by military tenure, and whose chiefs had thrown off the authority of the Pasha of Belgrade, and embraced the party of the famous Paswan-Oghlu, Pasha of Widdin, who was then in open revolt against Selim III., as the champion of the janissaries and the *ancien regime*, against the civil and military reforms which the Sultan was striving to introduce. The principal leaders of the Servians were Slavatz, (or as Mr Paton calls him, if the same person is intended, Glavash,) and George Petrovich, surnamed *Kara* or *Czerni*, (black,) the son of a peasant in the district of Kragejewatz, who afterwards migrated to Topola, which has therefore been held by the Servians as the place whence sprung their liberator,[5] and where an annual festival is held in his honour. He was in his youth a *Hayduk* or klepht; and having been forced to fly from Servia for taking part in an unsuccessful insurrection, had served several years in the Austrian army. His successes were at first viewed with satisfaction by the Porte; and the obnoxious chiefs, driven to take refuge in Belgrade, were there seized and put to death by the Pasha; but it soon became evident that the

Servians, once in arms and victorious, would not be satisfied without complete independence. Semendria and other fortresses fell into their hands; and Kara George, by the unanimous voice of his countrymen, was declared *hospodar* or prince. The Porte now directed an invasion of Servia by a mingled force of forty thousand Turks and Bosniaks; but the Moslem army was totally overthrown near Shabatz, Aug. 8, 1806, by seven thousand foot and two thousand horse under Kara George, and driven across the Drina with the loss of their commander and many other chiefs. It was now apparent that Servia was not to be reduced by force of arms; and conferences [Pg 144] were opened, by which the Sultan engaged to grant them a local and national government, with free exercise of their religion. But the negotiation failed, from the demands of the Porte that they should surrender their arms, and leave the fortresses in the hands of the Turks; and while it was yet pending, Kara George carried Belgrade with great slaughter, by a *coup-de-main*, on the night of Dec. 13, 1806, thus completing the expulsion of the Turks from Servia, with the exception of Szoko, (Mr Paton's Sokol,) and a few other strongholds which still remained in their hands.

The war which broke out in the following year between Russia and the Porte, secured Servia against any further attacks from the Turks; and Kara George, thus freed from apprehensions of invasion, endeavoured to introduce some degree of order and civil organization into the country. A sort of federal senate, to which each of the twelve districts into which the principality was then divided sent a member, met annually at Belgrade to regulate the finances and internal affairs of the country; and though the freedom of their deliberations was impeded by the presence of the *wayvodes* or military governors, at the head of their armed retainers, whom even the authority of Kara George was unable to coerce, the success of their efforts to establish schools and promote the interests of civilization, indicated a degree of enlightened policy little to have been expected from a people but half emancipated from Turkish bondage. Kara George, meanwhile, who had received from the Emperor Alexander the rank of lieutenant-general, did good service to his Russian allies; and though signally defeated in an invasion of Bosnia, repulsed with triumphant success every attempt of the Turks to enter Servia. But his energies were paralysed by the disaffection of the subordinate chiefs; and when Russia, pressed by the advance of Napoleon, concluded in 1812 the peace of Bukarest, there was only a nugatory stipulation, in the eighth clause of the treaty, that the internal administration should be left with the Servians, "as to the subjects of the Sublime Porte in the islands of the Archipelago;" the fortresses to remain in the hands of the Turks. But no sooner was the Porte relieved from the presence of the enemy, than an overwhelming force was poured into Servia; and Kara George, unable to resist, fled into Hungary, and afterwards took refuge in Russia.

The character of this remarkable man is well portrayed in a despatch, quoted by Mr Paton, of the afterwards well-known Diebitsch, who was the confidential agent of Russia in Servia, in 1810-11:—"His countenance shows a greatness of mind not to be mistaken; and when we consider times and circumstances, and his want of education, we must admit that his mind is of a masculine and commanding order. The imputation of cruelty appears to be unjust. When the country was without the shadow of a constitution, and when he commanded an unorganized and uncultivated nation, he was compelled to be severe; he dared not relax his discipline; but now that there are courts of law and legal forms, he hands every thing over to the tribunals. He has very little to say for himself, and is rude in his manners; but his judgments in civil affairs are promptly and soundly formed, and to great talents he joins unwearied industry. As a soldier, there is but one opinion of his talents, bravery, and enduring firmness." The portrait prefixed to the present volume, from a painting in the possession of the reigning Prince, the duplicate of one executed for the Emperor Alexander, bears out the character thus given of the Servian hero:—"The countenance expressed not only intelligence, but a certain refinement, which one would scarcely expect in a warrior peasant; but all his contemporaries agree in representing him to have possessed an inherent superiority and nobility of nature, which, in any station, would have raised him above his equals."

At this juncture, when Servia lay at the mercy of the Turks, Milosh Obrenovich appeared on the scene. He had originally been a swineherd, and afterwards an officer of Kara George; but he now sided with the Turks, to whom he rendered efficient aid in cutting off the other popular leaders who still continued in arms. But the execution of Slavatz, and other chiefs who had also made their submission, by order of Soliman Pasha of Belgrade, showed him that his own fate was only [Pg 145] deferred; and, escaping into his native district of Rudnik, he once more raised the standard of freedom. The peasantry rose *en masse*, and the campaign was generally to the advantage of Milosh, who displayed great bravery and military skill; but Soliman Pasha was at length recalled, and an accommodation effected, by which Milosh became hospodar, under the suzerainté of the Sultan, Belgrade and a few fortresses only remaining in the hands of the Turks. As the resident Turkish population had almost wholly disappeared during the war, Milosh was now absolute master of the country, and was delivered from all fears of a rival, by the death of Kara George, who, in 1817, misled by false representations, had returned from Petersburg to Servia; but was betrayed by Milosh, and put to death by the Turks.[6] Though unable to read or write, his rule was marked by ability and vigour. He repressed robberies and offences against property with merciless severity, frequently causing malefactors to be hung to the next tree, without form of trial;—and improved the internal communications by the formation of an excellent road through the forests, from the Turkish frontier at Nissa to Belgrade. In his political relations with Russia and the Porte, he steered a middle course with consummate dexterity, constantly maintaining a good understanding with the cabinet of St Petersburg; while, in 1830, he succeeded in obtaining from the Sultan a firman, by which the dignity of prince was declared hereditary in his family; and it was further provided, that such Turks as still retained land in Servia should dispose of

their estates within a limited period, and quit the province. Another firman, in 1833, released the Servians from the payment of *kharaj* (the capitation tax paid by rayahs) and all other dues and imposts, in consideration of an annual tribute of 2,300,000 piastres (£23,000) to be paid to the Porte; the right of levying taxes was conceded to the Servian government, and all fortresses erected by the Turks, since the commencement of the war in 1804, were to be rased.[7] These concessions, which rendered the dependence of Servia on the Porte little more than nominal, were doubtless granted through the secret influence of Russia, whose obvious interest it was to weaken the connexion between her destined prey and its titular suzerain; but the despotic power thus placed in the hands of Milosh, was exercised with a degree of arrogance and contempt of vested rights, which soon rendered him highly unpopular. No carriage but his was allowed to appear in the streets of Belgrade; and, while all political rights were withheld from the people, he amassed immense wealth by arbitrary confiscations, by levying heavy taxes and import duties, and by establishing oppressive monopolies of articles of necessary consumption, particularly salt, veins of which, discovered by Baron Herder near the Kopaunik mountain, he forbade to be worked under severe penalties, in order to keep in his own hands the importation from Walachia. The discontent of the national party, headed by the *primates* (as they are called) of the municipalities, at length broke out into flame—fomented (as it was then believed) by Russia, who was jealous of the influence acquired over Milosh by Colonel Hodges, appointed in 1836 consul-general for England, and with whom he was on the point of concluding a commercial treaty. A *hatti-shereef* at this juncture (December 1838) arrived from the Porte, obtained (as it is said) through the advice of Colonel Hodges, and containing a form of constitution for Servia, regulating the legal tribunals, the functions of the ministry, &c., and ordaining the formation of a [Pg 146] legislative council of seventeen members, as a check on the despotism of the Prince. But the crisis had already arrived. The senate took the initiative, by charging Milosh with embezzlement of the public property, and calling him to account; and, after a vain attempt to make a stand against the popular indignation, he fled with his treasures into Hungary. An attempt to recover his power having proved ineffectual, he at length abdicated in favour of his son, Milan; who, dying soon after, was succeeded by his brother, Michael, under the guardianship of his mother, Liubitza. But the same system still continued; and all efforts to procure any redress of grievances proving fruitless, a general outbreak took place in September 1842, the prime movers in which were Wucicz and Petronevich, who for several years had been the recognised heads of the popular party. As it was found that the few troops round the Prince were not to be depended upon, he quitted Belgrade, accompanied by his mother and the French and English consuls, and repaired to Semlin; and after some fruitless negotiation, the sovereignty was declared vacant by the representatives of the nation, with the concurrence of the Turkish governor, Kiamil Pasha.

As it was well known that the Obrenovich family had been for some time in bad odour at Petersburg, this movement was at first universally attributed to Russian influence; but it soon became apparent that its only motive was the spontaneous assertion by the Servians of the rights and liberties withheld from them; and the steps for a fresh election, in pursuance of the provisions of the *hatti-shereefs* were taken with perfect order and unanimity. A firman was issued by the Sultan, in right of his suzerainté; and the unanimous and enthusiastic choice of the nation fell on Alexander, son of the well-remembered Kara George, who was forthwith inaugurated in the cathedral of Belgrade, by the Archbishop, and received from the Porte the *berat* or patent, necessary for his confirmation in his new dignity. His accession was officially notified by the Ottoman ministers, to the Russian envoy at Constantinople but this evidence of good understanding and unity of interest between the Porte and her vassal, was a formidable and unexpected obstacle to the sinister designs of Russia which was to be counteracted at all hazards; and the course adopted for this purpose, unparalleled perhaps in the annals of diplomacy, cannot be better understood than from the able and lucid statement of Lord Beaumont in his place in parliament, on the 5th of May following. [It must first be well remembered that neither in the treaty of Bukarest, nor in any subsequent convention, was a shadow of a right of *veto*, or interference in any way in the election of a prince of Servia, conveyed to Russia, (as in the joint nomination with the Porte of the hospodars of the Trans-Danubian principalities,) and the only ground on which such interference could rest, was that enunciated by Baron Lieven, with somewhat remarkable frankness in a Russ diplomatist, to Mr Paton, that "Servia owed her political existence solely to Russia, which gave the latter a moral right of intervention over and above the stipulations of treaties, to which no other power could pretend"—a statement false both in fact and inference, since it was by their own good swords, unaided by Russia or any other European power with either men or money,[8] that the Servians won their freedom; and the nugatory stipulation in the treaty of Bukarest, had been all along left a dead letter.] "Russia, neglecting all international law, sent an agent of her own into Servia, to investigate the internal proceedings of an independent state, and, on receiving his report, directed that agent to state his complaints, without consulting any other power, to the Divan. Now, he would venture to say, that a greater or more direct insult than this, was never offered to an independent state, and he could not conceive any act that could be a more gross and positive [Pg 147] violation of the treaties of Bukarest, Akerman, and Adrianople, under which alone she could set up a right to be informed of what passed in Servia. Though Georgevich was elected by the people, according to the constitution of the province, and though the validity of his election was acknowledged by the Divan, and confirmed by the Porte, Russia demanded that the election should be set aside; and this demand was made by that power in such an overbearing manner, as to show to the world that Turkey was under the control of Russia, and must act in conformity with the dictates of the Czar."

In this extremity, the Porte appealed for support to Great Britain and Austria, two of the powers

who were parties to the quintuple treaty signed at London, July 15, 1840, for the express object of ensuring the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire; and the appeal was backed by strong representations from Sir Stratford Canning, the British ambassador at Constantinople, to his home government. But the British government was (as Lord Palmerston observed, with much sarcastic truth, in the House of Commons on August 15) "in the same condition in which they had too often of late been found in foreign affairs, without any opinion of their own on the subject, (hear;) and determined to act with Austria, thereby risking the sacrifice of our own interests for a remote Austrian interest in which we had no concern. Austria at first determined to support Servia; but there came an *urgent appeal* from Russia; and Austria recommended Servia to yield." The nature of this "urgent appeal" will be well understood by those who are aware of the morbid fear entertained by Austria of Russian extension among the Slavic populations in Hungary; and of which Russia availing herself, (as remarked by Mr Paget,) "by exerting the influence which similarity of language, and, in some parts, of religion, gives her over them, has hitherto frightened Austria into doing almost any thing she likes." "The Sultan" (continued Lord Palmerston) "was now forced to submit. He annulled the election of Prince Georgevich; he consented to a popular election; he recalled the two popular leaders, Wucicz and Petronevich, to Constantinople; and even appointed a Russian general, Baron Lieven, his commissioner, in conjunction with a Turkish officer, to go into Servia to see his orders carried into execution."

So far Lord Palmerston; and the accuracy of the information possessed by the British Cabinet to combat these strong facts, may be estimated, from Sir Robert Peel's calling Prince Alexander, a man of thirty-five, and the worthy inheritor of his father's great qualities, "an infatuated youth"—on the authority (it is said) of a letter from Mr Fonblanque! But we must return from the English debates to the progress of the drama in Servia, where the commissioners found the Servians, in defiance of the great powers, and in spite of the hopelessness of aid from Constantinople, preparing for national resistance. The Prince refused to abdicate, alleging that the firman by which he had been appointed had never been revoked, and that universal anarchy would result from his resigning the reins of government, since no *kaimakams*, or regents *pro tempore*, had been named by the Porte—an omission which is supposed not to have been altogether unintentional; and the whole nation rose in commotion at the bare mention of the recall of Wucicz and Petronevich; the crowd exclaiming, when Wucicz told them that 'the Servian forests would not be less green were two old trees cut down, "No! a thousand times no!" and rushing with arms in their hands to the presence of Hafiz-Pasha, (who had been appointed on Kiamil's recall on the mandate of Russia for his share in the revolution,) announced their determination to maintain their prince and his counsellors; to which Hafiz assented, no doubt, with secret gratification. While the proceedings were thus stayed by the unexpected resolution shown by the Servians, Russian emissaries were traversing the country in all directions, striving in vain to stir up a revolt in favour of the Obrenovich family, whose former partisans, it was found, were now their strongest opponents; and inciting the Christians in Bosnia and Bulgaria to rise against the Moslems, by the hope of obtaining independent governments under hospodars of their own, like the other principalities. On the other hand, the Servian population was ready to rise *en masse* in [Pg 148] defence of its liberties, and was further cheered by the report that thirty thousand of the Slavic races under Austrian dominion were ready to join them in the struggle for national freedom; while the Porte, roused to unexpected energy by the accumulation of wrong heaped upon it, reinforced the garrison of Belgrade with three thousand fresh troops, and formed encampments to the amount of near one hundred thousand men at Constantinople and Adrianople, for the ostensible purpose of overawing the spirit of revolt among the Bulgarians. The National Assembly, which had in the mean time met at Belgrade, declared the election of Prince Alexander legal and valid, and refused to abrogate it; and as the agents of Russia found that their original object could only be effected by an invasion, an act which (even had the season left time to march an army to the Danube) might have exceeded even the long-suffering of the other powers who were parties to the treaty of 1840, it was resolved, for the sake of appearances, to repair the false step as far as possible by a show of moderation. It was accordingly announced that the principal objections of Russia to the late election arose from the informality with which the proceedings had been conducted; that Prince Alexander would be admitted as a candidate, (a concession very distasteful to Austria, who apprehended that the talent and popularity of the prince might attract her own Slavic subjects under his rule;) and that the late prince, Michael, should be excluded from competition. This could only lead to one result; and Alexander, having *pro formâ* resigned his authority, a *hatti-shereef* was sent from the Porte, and he was again elected with even greater enthusiasm than before.

But Russia, though foiled in her main object, had still another move in reserve. The *berat*, or letter-patent of the Sultan, was still necessary for the confirmation of the new prince; and July 27, M. Titoff (who had succeeded M. Boutenieff as Russian envoy to the Porte) announced to the Divan the will of his master, that this important document should be withheld till Wucicz and Petronevich, "the authors of the late disturbances," had left the country. The ministers of the Porte, unsupported by the ambassadors of France and England, who remained passive, had no alternative but to yield to this audacious act of intervention, which was communicated by Baron Lieven to the Servian kaimakams appointed during the interregnum. "As soon as the intelligence was spread among the people, the universal exclamation was—'We will not suffer them to be taken from us—they are our protectors, our benefactors;'" but submission was inevitable, and, in the middle of August, the two ministers repaired to Widdin, where they were received with high distinction by Hussein Pasha. They remained in exile a year, when the interdict was withdrawn by Russia, as it is said in consequence of British intervention, but more probably from finding, that,

notwithstanding their absence, it was impossible to stir up faction against Prince Alexander. The circumstances of their return have been already given from Mr Paton's account; and we can little doubt, that on his next interview with the Prince, after his faithful counsellors had been restored to him, "he showed no trace of that reserve and timidity which foreigners had remarked in him a year before."

Such is the plain unvarnished account of the late transactions in Servia, in which the true character of Russian policy, and the means by which it is carried out, have been unveiled before the eyes of Europe in a manner sufficient to enlighten those which are not closed in wilful blindness. "Europe has been apprised, if she wishes to be so," (says the *Journal des Debats*,) "that there is in the East, independent of Turkey, a point of resistance against the encroachments of Russia;" and this *great fact* derives double value from that point being found in one of those Slavic populations which it is the grand object and aim of Russia to unite under her iron sceptre. But (in the eloquent language of Mr Paget) "we knew that if Europe did awake, the progress of Russia was stopped; we knew that her gigantic power would crumble away, and nothing remain but the hatred of the world, of the injustice and cruelty by which it had been raised."

F. H.

Servia, the Youngest Member of the European Family; or, a Residence in Belgrade, and Travels in the Highlands and Woodlands of the Interior, during the Years 1843 and 1844. By Andrew Archibald Paton, Esq., Author of the "Modern Syrians."

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THE STUDENT OF SALAMANCA.

Part IV.

"Y asi entre otras razones le dijo que no tuviese pena del suceso de Camila, porque sín duda la herida era ligera."—Cervantes. *El Curioso Impertinente.*

The unexpected and opportune appearance of Mariano Torres, at the moment of Herrera's escape, requires a few words of explanation. When Rodil, on the morrow of the skirmish with Zumalacarregui in the Lower Amezcoa, evacuated that valley, he proceeded to distribute a portion of his army amongst various garrisons; and then, with the remainder, marched to Biscay in pursuit of Don Carlos, who, having as yet no place of security from his enemies, was wandering about attended by a handful of followers. Amongst the troops left in Navarre by the Christino general, was the cavalry regiment to which Herrera and Torres belonged, and this was ordered to the plains of the Ebro. The day after its arrival at the town of Viana, a battalion marched in from Pampeluna, and with it came Sergeant Velasquez, who, after his escape from the Carlists, had taken refuge in that fortress. Great was the consternation of Torres on learning the surprise of the escort and capture of his friend, and his grief was warmly sympathized in by the other officers of the regiment, with whom Herrera was a universal favourite. But Torres was not the man to content himself with idle regrets and unavailing lamentations, and he resolved to rescue Herrera, if it were possible, even at the hazard of his own life. He confided his project to the colonel of his regiment, who, with some difficulty, was induced to acquiesce in it, and to grant him leave of absence. This obtained, he disguised himself as a private soldier, and boldly plunged into the centre of Navarre in quest of Zumalacarregui and his army. He had little difficulty in finding them: he announced himself as a deserter from the Christinos, and, without attracting unusual notice or suspicion, was enrolled in a Navarrese battaline, which, a day or two afterwards, marched to the village where Herrera was kept prisoner. Although by the interference of Count Villabuena, and the dexterity of Paco and the gipsy, Mariano's daring self-devotion was rendered superfluous, it had its uses, inasmuch as his disappearance with Herrera prevented the slightest suspicion from falling upon those who had really contrived and effected the escape. The gipsy, after guiding the two friends to Salvatierra, and receiving an ample reward from Herrera, performed the secret service with which Zumalacarregui had charged him, returned to that general with a ready framed excuse for the slight delay in its execution, and pocketed the ten additional onzas promised him by Paco. The muleteer, still weak from his wound, was the last man to be suspected; and of the Count's participation in the affair, no one, excepting Major Villabuena, for a moment dreamed. Don Baltasar, remembering his cousin's anxiety concerning Herrera, certainly entertained a notion that he had in some way or other facilitated his escape; but of this he could obtain no proof, nor, had he been able to do so, would it have been for his own interest to expose the Count, whom he was desirous, on the contrary, to conciliate. It was a vague and undefined apprehension of some attempt at a rescue, that had led him, at so late an hour on the night of the escape, to prowl in the vicinity of Herrera's prison.

The autumn and winter of 1834 passed away without any material change in the position of the personages of our narrative. The war continued with constantly increasing spirit and ferocity, and each month was marked by new and important successes on the part of the Carlists. The plains of Vittoria, the banks of the Ebro, the mountains of central and northern Navarre, were alternately the scene of encounters, in which the skill of Zumalacarregui, and the zeal and intrepidity of his troops, proved an overmatch for the superior numbers of the Christinos. In vain did the government of the Queen Regent, persevering in spite of its many reverses, send its best troops and most experienced generals to that corner of the peninsula where civil strife raged: it

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was only that the troops might be decimated, and the generals forfeit their former reputation in repeated and disastrous defeats. Although the country and climate were such as to render temporary repose in winter quarters most desirable for the contending armies, the idea of such an indulgence was scarcely for a moment entertained, and the winter campaign proved as active as the summer one. The arrival of Mina to take the chief command of the Queen's forces, and the severity of the measures he adopted, rendered the character of the war more sanguinary and cruel than it had been since its commencement; and although, in numerous instances, the nearest relatives and dearest friends were fighting on contrary sides, it became impossible for them to obtain intelligence of each other's welfare. It was by no means surprising, therefore, that eight months elapsed, and the spring arrived, without Herrera hearing any thing of Count Villabuena or his daughter; and that the Count, on the other hand, remained ignorant of the proceedings of the young man whose life he had saved, and in whose fate he could not but feel interested, save through the occasional rumour of some dashing exploit, by which Herrera maintained and increased the high reputation he had early acquired in the ranks of the Christinos. His gallantry did not go unrewarded, and the opening of the spring campaign found him in command of a squadron, and on the high-road to further promotion.

Whilst Herrera was thus gaining fame and honour, his rival, Major Villabuena, had no reason to complain of his services being overlooked. His courage was undoubted, his military skill by no means contemptible, and these qualities had procured him a colonel's commission and a staff appointment. But, in spite of these advantages, Don Baltasar was dissatisfied and unhappy. His object in joining the Carlists had not been promotion, still less a zeal for the cause, but the appropriation to himself of the fair hand and broad lands of Rita de Villabuena. His prospect of obtaining these, however, seemed each day to diminish. The favour with which the Count regarded him had lasted but during the first days of their acquaintance, and had since been materially impaired by the discovery of various unpleasing traits in Don Baltasar's character, and particularly by his endeavours to urge the death of Herrera in opposition to the wishes of his kinsman. Moreover, there could be little sympathy or durable friendship between men of such opposite qualities and dispositions. Count Villabuena had the feelings and instincts of a nobleman, in the real, not the conventional sense of the term: he was proud to a fault, stern, and unyielding, but frank, generous, and upright. Don Baltasar was treacherous, selfish, and unscrupulous. He felt himself cowed and humbled by the superiority of the Count, whom he began secretly to detest; and who, whilst still keeping on good, or at least courteous, terms with his cousin, became daily more averse to his alliance, and more decided to support Rita in her rejection of his suit.

As a natural consequence of Zumalacarregui's successes, they of the absolutist party in Spain who had openly declared for Don Carlos, and who, during the first year of the war, had been hunted from post to pillar, and frequently compelled to seek concealment in caves and forests from the pursuit of the foe, found themselves, in the spring of 1835, in possession of a considerable tract of country, including a few fortified places. *El Lobo Caño*, the Grey-haired Wolf, as his followers had styled Don Carlos, in allusion to his hair having become bleached on the mountain and in the bivouac, began to collect around him the semblance of a court; and various ladies, the wives and daughters of his partisans, who had been in temporary exile in France, recrossed the frontier and hazarded themselves in the immediate vicinity of the scene of war. Amongst others, Rita de Villabuena, who had been residing with some friends at the French [Pg 151] town of Pau, implored, and with difficulty obtained, her father's permission to rejoin him. A house was prepared for her reception in the small town of Segura in Guipuzcoa, whence, in case of need, a speedy retreat might be made to the adjacent sierras of Mutiloa and Aralar, and here she arrived, under her father's escort, towards the commencement of the month of May.

One of the first who hastened to pay court to the young and beautiful heiress, was, as might be expected, Colonel Baltasar de Villabuena. But his reception was in the highest degree discouraging, and he was able to assure himself, that if any variation had taken place in Rita's sentiments, it was by no means in his favour. His only remaining hope, therefore, was in an appeal to the Count, whom he still believed to be, for the family reasons already adverted to, desirous of a union between Rita and himself. This appeal he resolved to take an early opportunity of making. A valuable estate, which Rita had inherited from her mother, lay within the tract of country already conquered by the Carlists; and although the revenue it yielded was greatly diminished by the disturbed state of Navarre, and the contributions levied for the carrying on of the war, it was still sufficiently important to excite the cupidity of Don Baltasar, and to render him doubly anxious to obtain, on any terms, the hand of his cousin.

It was on a bright May morning, three days subsequently to Rita's arrival at Segura, that a small train of horsemen was seen winding along the declivitous paths that lead across the sierra of Elgua, a part of the northern boundary of the province of Alava. The snows with which, during the long winter, the upper portion of these mountains had been covered, had disappeared in the warm rays of the spring sun, and disclosed peaks of grey rock, and patches of table-land strewn with flints, producing little besides a few Alpine plants, which, in defiance of the scanty nourishment they found, and of the keen air that blew over those elevated summits, boldly expanded their blossoms in the pleasant sunshine. Lower down, and on that part of the southern side of the mountain over which the cavalcade now proceeded, masses of forest-trees sprang out of the more plentiful soil, and overshadowed the rocky path that rang under the horses' feet; the dusky foliage of the fir-tree, the brighter green of the oak, and the broad angular leaves of the sycamore, mingling in rich variety. Now the path lay through some dried-up water-course, half filled with loose stones, whose elevated sides, over the edges of which the tendrils of

innumerable creeping plants dangled and swung, bounded the view on either hand; whilst overhead the interwoven branches afforded, through their thick leafage, but scanty glimpses of the bright blue sky. Presently, emerging from the ravine, the road, if such it might be called, ran along the shelf of a precipice, below which successive ranges of luxuriant foliage, varied here and there by a projecting crag, or enlivened by the dash and sparkle of a waterfall, continued to the level below. From the foot of the mountains, an extensive plain stretched out to a distance of several leagues, its smiling and fertile fields thickly sprinkled with villages and farm-houses. To the left front rose the old Moorish castle of Guevara; and at a greater distance, more to the westward, and near the centre of the plain, were seen the imperfect fortifications and lofty church-towers of the city of Vittoria.

The foremost of the horsemen, who, on the day referred to, were thus scrambling, to the great discomfort of their steeds, down the steep and rugged sides of the sierra, avoiding, for reasons of safety, the high-road from Salinas to Vittoria, which lay at a league or two on their right, was a man of middle age and tawny complexion, mounted on a lean and uncomely, but surefooted horse, whose long tail, which, if allowed to flow at will, would have swept the ground, was doubled up into a sort of club, about a foot long, and tightly bound with worsted ribands of bright and varied colours. The thick and abundant mane had been carefully plaited, with the exception of the foremost tuft, left hanging down between the ears, and from beneath which the wild eyes [Pg 152] of the animal glanced shyly at the different objects he passed, pretty much as did those of the rider from under his bushy and projecting eye-brows. The horseman was dressed in a loose jacket of black sheep-skin, the wool rubbed off in many places, fastened down the front by copper clasps and chains that had once boasted a gilding, and bound at edges with coarse crimson velvet, which, from time and dirt, had become as dark as the principal material of the garment. Between the loose short trousers and the clumsy half-boots, replacing the sandals that were the customary wear of the person described, several inches of lean and sinewy leg were visible. A coloured handkerchief, tied round the head, and from beneath which a quantity of shaggy black hair escaped, rusty iron spurs, with huge jingling rowels, and a well-stuffed leathern wallet slung across his body, completed the equipment of the horseman, in whom the reader will perhaps already have recognised Jaime, the gipsy esquilador, now acting as guide to the persons who followed. These consisted of Count Villabuena and his cousin, Don Baltasar, both well mounted on powerful chargers, and cloaked from chin to heel; for they had been early in the saddle, and, although now in the month of May, the morning air upon the mountains was keen and searching. They were followed, at a short distance, by an escort of forty Carlist cavalry, strange, wild-looking figures, whose scanty equipment, and the little uniformity of their clothing, might have excited the derision of better provided troops; but whose muscular forms and hardy aspect, as well as the serviceable state of their carbines and lances, gave promise of their proving efficient defenders and formidable foes.

Not having been bred to the profession of arms, Count Villabuena was, in a strictly military point of view, of little use to his party; but his intimate acquaintance with Navarre and the Basque provinces, with the customs, feelings, and prejudices of their inhabitants, rendered him invaluable in all administrative arrangements and combinations, and in these he cheerfully and actively exerted himself. It was on a mission of this nature that he was now proceeding, having left Oñate early that morning, to attend a meeting of influential Alavese Carlists, which was to take place at the village of Gamboa, on the north side of the plain of Vittoria. Although the country he had to pass through was not then occupied, and only occasionally visited, by the Christinos, an escort was necessary; and, besides this escort, Colonel Villabuena had volunteered to accompany his cousin. His object in so doing was to obtain an opportunity for an uninterrupted conversation with the Count, on the subject of his pretensions to the hand of Rita.

This conversation had taken place, and its result had been most unsatisfactory to Don Baltasar. The Count plainly told him that it was not his intention to force the inclinations of his daughter; and that, as she was averse to the proposed alliance, he himself had abandoned the idea of its taking place. A long and stormy discussion ensued, and Baltasar accused the Count of having deceived him, and induced him to join a cause, the ultimate triumph of which was impossible, by holding out hopes that he never intended to realize. The Count replied by reminding Don Baltasar, that when he had urged him to serve his rightful monarch, and not under the banner of a usurper, the only arguments he had used were those of loyalty and duty; and that the proposed marriage was a private arrangement entirely contingent upon his daughter's acquiescence. Sharp retorts and angry words followed, until the conversation was brought to a close by the Count's checking his horse, and allowing the escort, which had previously been at some distance behind, to come up with them. The cousins then rode on, still side by side, but silent, and as far apart as the narrow path would allow, the Count haughty and indignant, Don Baltasar sullen and dogged.

Whilst this occurred in the mountains, the persons whom Count Villabuena came to meet were assembling at the place of rendezvous in the village of Gamboa. From various country lanes and roads, substantial-looking men, wrapped in heavy brown cloaks, and riding punchy mountain [Pg 153] horses, were seen to emerge, for the most part singly, and at the careless, deliberate pace least calculated to excite suspicion of their going to other than their ordinary avocations. Some of these were alcaldes and regidores from the neighbouring villages, others landed proprietors in the vicinity. Now and then a lean, anxious priest, perched upon a high saddle, his feet encased in clumsy wooden stirrups, his head covered with an enormous hat, of which the brim, curled up at the sides over the crown, projected half a yard before and behind him, came ambling into the village, distributing his *benedicites* amongst the peasant women and children, who stood at the doors of the houses bowing reverently to the *padre cura*. One man, dressed in the coarsest and

commonest garb of a labourer, came up upon an ill-looking mule, and received a loud and joyful welcome from the persons already assembled. He was a wealthy proprietor, whose estates lay within the Christino lines, and had been compelled to adopt this disguise to avoid notice. The arrival of another person, to all appearance a charcoal-burner, with grimy face and hands, riding a ragged pony, across which a couple of sacks, black from the charcoal they had contained, were thrown by way of saddle, was hailed with similar demonstrations of joy. He was a rich merchant and national guardsman from Vittoria, secretly well affected to Don Carlos.

The place where the Carlists first assembled was not in a house, but on a paved platform, extending along one side of the large church, by which it was masked from the view of persons approaching from the direction of Vittoria. A sort of cloister, with stone benches beneath it, ran along the wall of the church, and in front of the platform was a broad greensward, used as a playground by the village children. Whilst the Carlists grouped themselves in the cloisters, talking eagerly together, and waiting the coming of Count Villabuena, their horses and ponies stood saddled and bridled upon the green, held by peasant boys, and in readiness for their owners to mount and ride away at a moment's notice, or on the first signal of alarm. Of the mountain path by which the Count was expected to arrive, only about a mile was visible from the platform, after which it disappeared over the brow of a low wood-crowned eminence that rose to the north, partially intercepting the view of the sierra. On this eminence a peasant was stationed to watch for the Count; whilst on the other side of the village, at a short distance upon the road to Vittoria, another vedette was posted, to give notice of the appearance of any of the foraging or reconnoitring parties which the Christinos not unfrequently sent out in this direction.

It was considerably past noon, and the members of the Junta, for such did the assembly style itself, were beginning to wax impatient for the arrival of the Count, without whom the business for which they had met could not be proceeded with, when the watcher upon the hill gave the concerted signal by waving his cap in the air, uttering at the same time one of those far-sounding cries, peculiar to the inhabitants of mountainous regions. Upon this announcement, the Carlists descended from the platform into the road that ran past one of its extremities, and took their way, with grave and dignified demeanour, to the dwelling of the priest, in which the meeting was to be held. This house, according to custom one of the most spacious and comfortable in the village, was situated at about musket-shot from the church, and a little detached from the other buildings. Annexed to it was a long garden, bordering the road, and divided from it by a low hedge; beyond the garden was a vast and level field, and, on the eastern side of that, a tract of marshy ground, thickly covered with a lofty growth of willow and alder trees, extended to a considerable distance. The Carlists had traversed nearly the whole length of the garden hedge, and the foremost of them were close to the door of the house, when they were startled by the loud blast of a horn, with which the peasant sentry upon the Vittoria road had been furnished, to give the alarm if needful. They simultaneously paused, and anxiously listened for a repetition of the sound. It came; a third and a fourth blast were sounded, and with such hurried vehemence of tone as denoted pressing danger. Yet the peril could scarcely be so imminent as the quick [Pg 154] repetition of the signal would seem to denote; for, from the place where the vedette was posted, he would command a view of any advancing troops nearly half an hour before they could reach the village, and those who had aught to fear from them would have ample time to effect their escape. But the horn continued sounding, ever louder and louder,—the Carlists gazed at each other in dismay, and some few made a movement towards their horses, as if to mount and fly. Suddenly a fat and joyous-looking alcalde, whose protuberant paunch and ruby nose were evidence of his love for the wine-skin, although the chalky tint that had overspread his features at the first sound of alarm, did not say much for his intrepidity, burst out into a loud laugh, which caused his companions to stare at him in some wonder and displeasure.

"By the blessed St. Jago!" exclaimed he, "the idiot has mistaken our friends for our enemies. He has been looking over his shoulder instead of before him, and has caught a sight of the Señor Conde and his escort. See yonder."

The Carlists looked in the direction pointed out, and on the top of the hill over which Count Villabuena was expected to approach, they saw three horsemen standing, one of whom was sweeping the village and the adjacent country with a field-glass, apparently seeking the cause and meaning of the violent fanfare that had so much alarmed the respectable Junta. Behind these three men, who were no others than the Count, his cousin, and their guide, the lance-flags of the escort were visible, although the soldiers themselves were still out of sight, having halted just here arriving on the crest of the hill. The countenances of the Carlists, which for a moment had contracted with alarm, were beginning again to expand, as the plausibility of their companion's explanation occurred to them, when suddenly they saw the Count and his companions turn their horses in all haste, and disappear behind the hill. At the same moment, and before they could guess at the meaning of this manoeuvre, a shout was heard, a troop of Christino dragoons debouched from behind the willow wood, deployed upon the field, and charged across it in open order, their lances levelled,[9] and the pennons fluttering above their horses' ears. In less time than it takes to write it, they had crossed the field, dashed into the garden, and, breaking through the hedge, clattered over the rough streets of the village in pursuit, of the unfortunate priests and alcaldes, who, taken entirely by surprise, knew not which way to run to avoid the danger that menaced them. Some few who had time to get on horseback, scampered off, but were pursued and overtaken by the better-mounted dragoons; others crept into houses and stables, or flung themselves into ditches; and the majority, seeing no possibility of escape, threw themselves on their knees, and, in piteous accents, implored mercy. This was not refused.

"Give quarter, and make prisoners," was the command uttered in the clear, sonorous tones of Luis Herrera, who led the party; "they are unarmed—spare their lives."

The order was obeyed, and only one or two of the more desperate, who produced concealed weapons, and endeavoured to defend themselves, received trifling sabre-cuts from the exasperated dragoons.

But although Don Baltasar, on first obtaining a view of the Queen's cavalry, and before he knew what force was approaching the village, had retired behind the brow of the hill. It was by no means his intention to make a precipitate retreat without ascertaining the strength of the enemy, and endeavouring, if possible, to rescue the captive Junta. Whilst the Count and the escort retraced their steps down the hill, and halted in the fields upon its north side, whence they had the option of returning to the mountains by the way they had come, or of striking off into the high-road to Salinas and Oñate, which ran at a short distance to their right, Colonel Villabuena and the gipsy, concealed amongst the trees that clothed the summit of the eminence, noted what [Pg 155] passed in the village. They at once saw how the surprise had occurred. The Junta had not expected an enemy to approach by any other road than that from Vittoria, and had consequently stationed sentries in no other direction. That such would be the case, had been foreseen by the Christinos, who having received, through their spies, information of the intended meeting had sent out troops upon the Pampeluna road, with orders, after proceeding a certain distance, to strike off to the left, and, availing themselves of the cover afforded by a large tract of wood and swamp, to take Gamboa in rear or flank. The manœuvre had been rapidly and skilfully executed; and Luis Herrera, who, with his squadron, had been sent upon this duty, arrived with one half of his men within a few hundred yards of the village before he was perceived by the Carlist vedette. His other troop he had detached to his right, in order that, by making a wider sweep, they might get in rear of Gamboa, and prevent the possible escape of any of the rebels. This detachment, ignorant of the country, and puzzled by the numerous lanes and paths which crossed each other in every direction, had lost its way, and was still at some distance from the village when Herrera charged into it.

When Colonel Villabuena had made his observations, and ascertained that the number of the enemy but little exceeded that of his own men, he rode out of the wood and rejoined the escort, resolved to take advantage of the Christinos being dispersed, and, unexpectant of an attack, to make a dash at them, which, he doubted not, would be fully successful. Previously, however, and although the Count had no military rank, it was a matter of common courtesy, not to say of duty, to communicate with him, and ask his consent to dispose of an escort which had been sent for his protection. But here the sullen temper of Don Baltasar, and the rankling irritation left by his recent altercation with his kinsman, showed themselves. Followed by the gipsy, he rode to the front of the lancers, who were drawn up in line, and, without addressing a syllable to the Count, or appearing to notice his presence, gave, in a sharp abrupt tone, the necessary words of command. The men moved off to the left. The Count, highly sensitive on matters of etiquette, and indignant at being treated by Don Baltasar as a person of no importance, unworthy of being consulted, allowed the troop to march away without giving any indication of an intention to follow or accompany it. Don Baltasar looked round, hesitated for a moment, and then seeing that the Count remained motionless, and took no notice of the departure of his escort, he rode back to him.

"The enemy are few," said he, abruptly; "I shall attack them."

Count Villabuena bowed his head coldly.

"Scant measure of courtesy, colonel," said he. "Angry feelings should not make you forget the conduct of a *caballero*."

On hearing himself thus rebuked, an expression of anger and deadly hate overspread the sombre countenance of Don Baltasar, and he scowled at the Count as though about to deal him a stab. But his eye sank beneath the calm, cold, contemptuous gaze of Count Villabuena. He said nothing: and again wheeling his charger, galloped furiously back to the head of his men, followed, at a more deliberate pace, by his cousin. Passing swiftly over a few fields, the little troop swept round the base of the hill, dashed across the level, and appeared upon the road at half a mile from the village. On obtaining a view of the latter, Don Baltasar at once saw that he was not likely to have so cheap a bargain of the Christinos as he had anticipated. Herrera had too much experience in this description of warfare to be easily caught; and although, upon first entering Gamboa, the dragoons had unavoidably dispersed in pursuit of the fugitives, he had lost no time in reassembling them; and, whilst a few men kept the prisoners already made, and searched the houses for others, he himself had formed upon the road a party fully equal in number to that commanded by Don Baltasar. Nothing daunted, however, at finding the enemy on his guard, the Carlist colonel drew his sabre and turned to his men.

"*A ellos!*" he cried. "At them, boys, for Spain and the King!"

The lancers replied to his words by a loud hurra, and the little party advanced, at first at a [Pg 156] moderate pace, in order not to blow the horses before the decisive moment should arrive. The Count, forgetting private animosity in the excitement and exhilaration of the moment, rode cheerfully at the side of his cousin, and drew the sword which, although a civilian, the perilous and adventurous life he led induced him invariably to carry. At the same moment Herrera's trumpeter sounded the assembly, and those of the dragoons who had dismounted hurried to their horses. Before, however, the distance between the opposite parties had been diminished by many

yards, the blast of the Christino trumpets was replied to by another, and, upon looking back, Don Baltasar saw a fresh party of dragoons just appearing upon the road, about a mile in his rear. It was the second troop of Herrera's squadron coming to the support of their leader.

"Curse and confound them!" cried Baltasar, his face darkening with rage and disappointment. "Halt—files about! And now, boys, legs must do it, for they are three to one."

And he led the way back into the fields, followed by his men at a rapid pace, but in good order.

Without a moment's delay, Herrera, leaving a few dragoons to guard the prisoners, dashed across the country in pursuit of the Carlists. His example was followed by Torres, who commanded the other detachment. The fugitives had a good start, and were soon behind the hill; but the Christino horses were fresher, and although less accustomed to climb the mountains, in the plain they were swifter of foot. Don Baltasar, now riding in rear of his men, cast a glance over his shoulder.

"They gain on us," said he, in a low tone, and as if to himself. "It is impossible to reach the sierra. If we could, we should be safe. There are positions that we could hold on foot with our carbines, where they would not dare attack us."

"We shall never reach them," said the Count. "Let us turn and fight whilst yet there is time."

"The bridge! the bridge!" cried the gipsy, who, notwithstanding the gaunt appearance of his steed, had kept well up with the soldiers. "If we gain that, we are safe. A child could pull it down."

"Right, by God!" cried Baltasar glancing in some surprise at the adviser of an expedient which he had himself overlooked. "Spur, men, spur; but keep together."

Every rowel was struck into the flanks of the straining, panting horses and the Carlists rapidly neared a small river, which, rising in some of the adjacent mountains, flowed in rear of the little hill already referred to, and parallel to the sierra whence Count Villabuena and his companions had recently descended. The land, for some distance on either side of the stream, was uncultivated, covered with furze and yellow broom, and sprinkled with trees and clumps of high bushes. Across the river, only a few months previously, a rude but solid stone bridge had afforded a passage; but the bridge had been broken down soon after the commencement of the war, and the stream, which, although not more than seven or eight yards broad, was deep, and had steep high banks was now traversed by means of four planks, laid side by side, but not fastened together, and barely wide enough to give passage to a bullock cart. Over this imperfect and rickety causeway, the retreating Carlists galloped, the boards bending and creaking beneath their horses' feet. When all had passed, Don Baltasar flung himself from his saddle, and aided by the gipsy and by several of his men who had also dismounted, seized the planks, and strove, by main strength, to tear their extremities from the clay in which they were embedded. The Christinos, who were within a couple of hundred yards of the river, set up a shout of fury when they perceived the intention of their enemies. By the sinewy hands of Baltasar and his soldiers, three of the boards were torn from the earth and flung into the stream. The fourth gave way as Herrera came up, the first man of his party, and, regardless of the narrow footing it afforded, was about to risk the perilous voyage. Violently curbing his horse, he but just escaped falling headlong into the stream. A shout of exultation from the Carlists, and the discharge of several carbines greeted the disappointed Christinos, who promptly returned the fire; whilst, as was usual when they came within earshot, the complimentary epithets of "Sons of Priests," and "*Soldados de la Puta*," accompanied by volleys of imprecations, were bandied between the soldiers on either side of the stream. [Pg 157]

"Is there any bridge or ford at hand?" said Baltasar hastily to the gipsy.

"None within a quarter of a league," was the reply.

"Then we will have a shot at them."

Herrera and Count Villabuena were again opposed to each other, and each acknowledged the other's presence by a brief smile of recognition.

A smart skirmish now began. All was smoke, noise, and confusion. The Count rode up to his cousin, who was on the right of his men.

"Let us retire," said he. "No advantage is to be gained by this idle skirmishing. Infantry may be at hand, and delay will endanger our retreat."

"Not so fast," replied Baltasar; "we will empty a few saddles before we go."

"The escort was sent for my safety," said the Count, haughtily. "You are not doing your duty in thus risking it."

"I have not been twenty years a soldier to learn my duty from you, sir," said Baltasar, fiercely. "Aim at the officers, men. A doubloon for him who picks off the captain."

Stimulated by the promised reward, several of the Carlists directed their fire at Herrera, who was on the left of the dragoons, exactly opposite to, and within sixty paces of, Don Baltasar. The bullets flew thick around Luis, but none touched him, and Baltasar himself drew a pistol from his holster to take aim at his opponent. Disgusted at his cousin's intemperate speech and imprudent

conduct, the Count contemptuously turned his back upon him and approached the stream, regardless that by so doing he brought himself into a cross fire of friends and foes.

"This is useless, Herrera," said he, "draw off your men."

The words had scarcely left his lips, when his hand relinquished its hold of the bridle, by a convulsive movement he threw himself back in the saddle, and fell heavily to the ground, struck by a ball. A cry of horror from Luis was echoed by one of consternation from the Carlists, on witnessing the fall of a man whom they all loved and respected.

"Where can we cross the stream?" demanded Herrera of one of his men, who knew the country.

"To our left there is a ford, but at some distance."

"Cease firing," cried Herrera. The trumpet sounded the necessary call, the Christinos hastily formed up and started at a gallop in the direction of the ford. Don Baltasar advanced to the spot where his cousin lay prostrate. Count Villabuena was lying on his back, his teeth set, his eyes wide open and fixed, his clenched hands full of earth and grass. Baltasar turned away with a slight shudder.

"He is dead," said he to the subaltern of the escort. "To take the body with us would but impede our retreat, already difficult enough. The living must not be endangered for the sake of the dead. Forward, men!"

And, without further delay, the Carlists set off at a brisk pace towards the mountains, which they reached before the Christinos had found and passed the distant ford. When the dragoons arrived at the foot of the sierra, Don Baltasar and his men were already out of sight amongst its steep and dangerous paths; and Herrera, compelled to abandon the pursuit, returned mournfully to the river bank, to seek, and, if it could be found, to convey to Vittoria the body of Count Villabuena.

Leaving Herrera to his mournful duty, let us conduct our readers to an apartment in a house on the outskirts of the town of Segura. The interior, which was plainly but commodiously furnished, indicated feminine tastes and occupations, breathing that perfume of elegance which the presence of woman ever communicates. Vases of flowers decked the sideboards; a few books, the works of the best Spanish poets, lay upon the table; and a guitar, unstrung, it is true, was suspended against the wall. Two persons occupied the apartment. One of them, who was seated [Pg 158] on a low stool at its inner extremity, near to the folding doors that separated it from an antichamber, was a robust, ruddy-cheeked Navarrese girl, whose abundant hair, of which the jet blackness atoned for the coarse texture, hung in a thick plait down her back, and whose large red fingers were busily engaged in knitting. At the other end of the apartment, close to the open window, through which she intently gazed, was a being of very different mould. On a high-backed elbow-chair of ancient oak sat Rita de Villabuena, pensive and anxious, her fair face and golden tresses seeming fairer and brighter from the contrast with the dark quaint carving against which they reposed. Her cheek was perhaps paler than when first we made her acquaintance; anxiety for her lover, and, latterly, for her father, was the cause; but her beauty had lost nothing by the change, for the shade of melancholy upon her features seemed, by adding to the interest her expressive countenance inspired, rather to enhance than diminish its charm. She was now watching for her father, who had led her to expect his return at about this time. Over the stone balustrade of her balcony, she commanded a view of the road along which he was to approach; and upon the farthest visible point of it, where a bend round a group of trees concealed its continuation, her gaze was riveted. Although the Count had assured her, before his departure, that his journey was unattended with risk, Rita's arrival upon the scene of war was too recent for her to escape uneasiness during his absence. Some hours before the time at which his return could reasonably be looked for, she had taken her post at the window, and although, at the persuasion of her attendant, a simple country girl, recently installed as her *donçella*, she had more than once endeavoured to fix her attention on a book, or to distract it by some of her usual occupations, the effort had each time been made in vain, and she had again resumed her anxious watch. In every horseman, or muleteer, who turned the angle of the road, she thought she recognised the guide, who, two days previously, had accompanied her father from Segura, and her heart throbbed with a feeling of joyful relief till a nearer approach convinced her of her error.

Could the vision of Rita de Villabuena have penetrated the copse that bounded her view in that direction, she would have perceived, towards four of the afternoon, not her father, alas! but another horseman, attended by the gipsy guide, riding at a rapid pace along the road. On reaching the trees aforesaid, however, they deviated from the track into a lane inclosed between hedges, which led round the town, and again joined the road on its further side. To explain this manoeuvre, it is necessary to retrace our steps, and to follow the movements of Colonel Villabuena after his return to Oñate on the preceding evening.

When the first excitement of the skirmish and subsequent flight had subsided, and the detachment of Carlists, after giving their horses a moment's breathing-time upon one of the higher levels of the sierra, resumed their march at a more leisurely pace, the thoughts of Don Baltasar became concentrated on the one grand object of deriving the utmost possible advantage from the death of his cousin. By that event the estates of the Villabuena family were now his own, those, at least, that lay within the Carlist territory. These, however, were comparatively of little value; and although the far more extensive ones, that had been confiscated by the Queen's government, might possibly be redeemed by a prompt abjuration of the cause of Don Carlos, a measure at the adoption of which Don Baltasar was by no means so scrupulous as to hesitate, yet

even that would not fully satisfy him. He had other views and wishes. As far as his selfish nature would admit of the existence of such a feeling, he was deeply in love with Rita; the coldness with which she treated him had only served to stimulate his passion; and he was bent upon making her his at any price, and by any means. He was sufficiently acquainted with her character to be convinced that his prospect of obtaining her hand was any thing but improved by her father's death and that to her the wealthy possessor of her family's estates would be as unwelcome a [Pg 159] wooer as the needy soldier of fortune. He did not doubt that, after the first violence of her grief should subside, she would return to France, where some of her mother's relatives were resident; and that, when next he heard of her, it would be as the bride of his fortunate rival. The picture thus conjured up caused him to grind his teeth with fury; and he swore to himself a deep oath that she should be his at any risk, and if, by the boldest and most unscrupulous measures, that consummation could be brought about. A plan occurred to him which he thought could not fail of success, and by which the obstinacy of the self-willed girl must, he believed, be overcome. It was a hazardous scheme, even in that unsettled and war-ridden country, where men were too much occupied in party strife to attend to the strict administration of justice; but Baltasar did not lack resolution, and the prize was worth the peril. One thing he wanted; a bold and quick-witted confederate, and him it was not so easy to find. No man had fewer friends in his own class than Don Baltasar, and by his inferiors he was generally detested on account of his harsh and overbearing demeanour. Of this he was aware; and he vainly racked his brain to find a man in whom he could confide. The details of his nefarious project were already arranged in his mind, and only this one difficulty had yet to be overcome; when, at two hours after dark, he entered the streets of Oñate. Hopeless of being served for affection's sake, he was meditating whom he could make his own by bribery, when a light from an open window flashed across the street, and illuminated the unprepossessing profile of Jaime the gipsy, who, in his capacity of guide, was riding in front, and a little on one side of Colonel Villabuena. The sight of those sinister features, on which rapacity and cunning had set their stamp, was as a sudden revelation to Don Baltasar, to whom it instantly occurred that the gitano was the very man he sought. The circumstance of his belonging to a race despised, and almost persecuted, by the people amongst whom they dwelt, was an additional guarantee against any compunctious scruples on his part; his occupation of a spy bespoke him at once daring and venal, and Colonel Villabuena doubted not that he should find him a willing and useful instrument.

The soldiers filed off to their quarters; and Baltasar, after desiring the gipsy to come to him in an hour's time, betook himself to the posada. When Jaime had given his horse an ample feed, and groomed him with a care that showed the value he set upon his services, he made a hasty meal in a neighbouring taberna, and repaired to the Colonel's quarters. His stealthy tap at the door was replied to by an impatient "*adelante*," and he entered the room.

A scarcely tasted supper was upon the table, and Don Baltasar was pacing the apartment, his brow knit and apparently deep in thought. On beholding the gipsy, he arranged his features into their most amiable expression, and advanced towards him with an assumed air of frank good-humour.

"I have to thank you, Jaime," said he, "for your promptness and presence of mind this morning. Had you not thought of what we all forgot, and suggested the pulling down of the bridge, few, if any of us, would have seen Oñate to-night. I shall report your conduct most favourably to the General, who will doubtless reward it."

The esquilador slightly bowed his head, but, with the exception of that movement, made no reply; nor did any expression of satisfaction at the praise bestowed upon him light up his dark countenance.

"Meanwhile," continued Don Baltasar, "I will discharge my personal obligation to you in a more solid manner than by mere thanks."

And he held out a handful of dollars, which, the next instant, disappeared in one of Jaime's capacious pockets. This time a muttered word or two of thanks escaped the lips of the taciturn esquilador.

"Whither do you now proceed?" enquired Baltasar. "Are you to rejoin the General? What are your orders?"

"I am no man's servant," replied the gipsy, "and have no orders to obey. When your General [Pg 160] requires my services, we make a bargain, I to act, he to pay. I risk my life for his gold, and if I deceive him I know the penalty. But the service once rendered, I am my own man again."

"So then," said Baltasar, "you are not bound to Zumalacarregui; and should any other offer you better pay for lighter service, you are free to take it?"

"That's it," replied the gipsy.

There was a short pause, during which Colonel Villabuena attentively scanned the countenance of Jaime, who remained impassive, and with eyes fixed upon the ground, as though to prevent their expression from being read. Baltasar resumed—

"Say then that I were to ensure you a large reward for the performance of services far less dangerous than those you daily render at a less price, would you accept or refuse the offer?"

"I must know what I am to do, and what to get," said the gipsy, this time raising his eyes to Don

Baltasar's face.

"Can you be silent?" said Baltasar.

"When I am paid for it—as the grave," was the reply.

"In short, if I understand you rightly," said the Colonel with an easy smile, "you will do any thing at a price."

"Any thing," returned the unabashed gipsy. "It is not a small risk that will frighten me, if the reward is proportionate."

"We shall suit one another charmingly," said Baltasar; "for what I require will expose you to little danger, and your reward shall be of your own fixing."

And, without further preamble, he proceeded to unfold to the gipsy the outline of a scheme requiring his cooperation, the nature of which will best be made known to the reader by the march of subsequent events.

The sinking sun and rapidly lengthening shadows proclaimed the approach of evening, and Rita de Villabuena, still seated at her window, watched for her father's arrival, when the trot of a horse, which stopped at the door of the house, caused her to start from her seat, and hurry to the balcony. Her anxiety was converted into the most lively alarm when she saw the Count's gipsy guide alighting alone from his horse; a presentiment of evil came over her, she staggered back into the room, and sank almost fainting upon a chair. Recovering herself, however, she was hurrying to the door of the apartment, when it opened, and Paco the muleteer, who had lately been attached to her father as orderly, and whom the Count had left as a protection to his daughter, made his appearance.

"The gipsy is here, Señora," said he; "he brings news of his Excellency the Conde."

"Admit him instantly," cried Rita, impatiently. "Where did you leave my father?" she enquired, as the esquilador entered the room. "Is he well? Why does he not return?"

"I left the Señor Conde at a convent near Lecumberri," replied the gipsy.

"Near Lecumberri?" repeated Rita; "it was not in that direction he went. He left this for the plains of Vittoria."

"He did so, Señora," answered the gipsy; "but before we were half-way to Oñate, we were met by a courier with despatches for the Señor Conde, who immediately turned bridle, and ordered the escort to do the same. It was past midnight when we again reached Segura; and, not to cause alarm, we marched round the town, and continued our route without stopping.

"And your errand now?" exclaimed Rita. The gipsy seemed to hesitate before replying.

"The Señor Conde is wounded," said he, at last.

"Wounded!" repeated Rita, in the shrill accents of alarm. "You are not telling truth—they have killed him! Oh, tell me all! Say, is my father still alive?"

And, clasping her hands together, she seemed about to throw herself at the feet of Jaime, whilst her anxious glance strove to read the truth upon his countenance. It was a strange contrast presented by that lovely and elegant creature and the squalid, tawny gipsy; an angel supplicating some evil spirit, into whose power she had temporarily fallen, might so have looked. [Pg 161]

"The Señor Conde's wound is severe," said Jaime. "On his way yesterday afternoon to attend a meeting of the Navarrese Junta in the valley of Lanz, he fell in with a party of Christino cavalry, and, although his escort repulsed them, he himself received a hurt in the skirmish."

"My father wounded and suffering!" exclaimed Rita in extreme agitation, passing her hand over her forehead in the manner of one bewildered by some stunning and terrible intelligence. "I will go to him instantly. Quick, Paco, the mules! Micaela, my mantilla! We must set out at once."

The servants hurried away to obey the orders of their mistress, and prepare for instant departure, and the gipsy was about to follow, when Rita detained him, and overwhelmed him with questions concerning her father's state, to all of which Jaime replied in a manner that somewhat tranquillized her alarm, although it produced no change in her resolution to set off immediately to join him. This, indeed, the esquilador informed her, was her father's wish, as he found that he should be detained some time in his present quarters by the consequences of his wound.

Although all haste was used in the necessary preparations, the sun was close to the horizon before Rita and her attendants left Segura, and took the road to Lecumberri, at about two leagues from which, as Jaime told them, and in the heart of the sierra, was situated the convent that was their destination. The distance was not great; but, owing to the mountains, the travellers could hardly expect to reach the end of their journey much before daybreak. Paco, who viewed this hasty departure with any thing but a well-pleased countenance, urged Rita to postpone setting off till the following morning, alleging the difficult nature of the roads they must traverse, and which led for a considerable part of the way over a steep and almost trackless sierra. But Rita's anxiety would brook no delay, and the little cavalcade set out. It consisted of Rita and her waiting-maid, mounted upon mules, and of the gipsy and Paco upon their horses; Paco leading a third mule, upon which, by the care of Micaela, a hastily packed portmanteau had been strapped.

The gipsy rode in front; thirty paces behind him came the women, and the muleteer brought up the rear. Jaime had betrayed some surprise, and even discomposure, when he found that Paco was to accompany them; but he did not venture to make any objection to so natural an arrangement.

Taking advantage of the goodness of the road, which for the first league or two was tolerably smooth and level, the travellers pushed on for nearly two hours at a steady amble, which, had the nature of the ground allowed them to sustain it, would have brought them to their journey's end much sooner than was really to be the case. The sun had set, the moon had not yet risen, and the night was very dark. Jaime, who continued to maintain a short interval between his horse and the mules of Rita and her attendant, kept shifting his restless glances from one side of the road to the other, as though he would fain have penetrated the surrounding gloom. He was passing a thicket that skirted the road, when a cautious "Hist!" inaudible to his companions, arrested his attention. He immediately pulled up his horse, and, dismounting, unstrapped the surcingle of his saddle. On perceiving this, Rita stopped to enquire the cause of the delay, but the gipsy requested her to proceed.

"My horse's girths are loose, Señora," said he in explanation. "Be good enough to ride on, and I will overtake you immediately."

Rita rode on, and Paco followed, without paying any attention to so common an occurrence as the slackening of a girth. Scarcely, however, had he passed the gipsy some fifty paces, when the latter left his horse, who remained standing motionless in the middle of the road, and approached the thicket. Just within the shadow of the foremost trees, a man on horseback, muffled in a cloak, was waiting. It was Colonel Villabuena.

"All is well," said the gipsy; "and you have only to ride forward and prepare for our reception." [Pg 162]

"Who is with you?" said Don Baltasar, in a dissatisfied tone.

"The lady and her donçella, and Paco, her father's orderly."

"Fool!" cried Baltasar; "why did you let him come? His presence may ruin my plan."

"How could I help it?" retorted Jaime. "If I had objected he would have suspected me. He's as cunning as a fox, and did not swallow the story half as well as his mistress. But her impatience decided it. Nothing would serve her but setting out immediately."

"He must be disposed of," said Baltasar. "There's many a mountain precipice between this and our destination," he added meaningly.

Jaime shook his head.

"I might do it," said he; "but if I failed, and he is a wary and active fellow, the chances are that he would do the same kind office for me, and return with the lady."

"Humph!" said Baltasar. "Well, he shall be cared for. And now ride on. I shall be at the convent an hour before you. Remember to take the longest road."

The gipsy nodded, returned to his horse, and, springing lightly into the saddle, galloped after his companions. Don Baltasar remained a short time longer in the thicket, and then emerging upon the road, followed Rita and her party at a deliberate pace. From time to time he stopped, and listened for the sound of their horses' footsteps. If he could hear it, he halted till it became inaudible, and then again moved on. His object evidently was to keep as near to the travellers as he could without allowing his proximity to be suspected.

It was nearly midnight, and Rita and her companions had been for some time amongst the mountains, when they reached a place where the road, or rather track, they followed, split and branched off in two different directions. Jaime, who, since they had entered the sierra, had abridged the distance between himself and his companions, and now rode just in front of Rita's mule, was taking the right hand path, when Paco called out to him that the left was the shortest and best.

"You are mistaken," said Jaime abruptly, continuing in the direction he had first taken.

But Paco would not be put off in so unceremonious a manner, and he rode up to the gipsy. "I tell you," said he, "that I know this country well, and the left hand road is the one to take."

"How long is it since you travelled it?" inquired Jaime.

"Only last autumn," was the reply, "and then for the twentieth time."

"Well," said the esquilador, "it may be the shortest; but if you had ridden along it this morning, as I did, you would hardly call it the best. The winter rains have washed away the path, and left the bare rocks so slippery and uneven, that I could scarcely get my horse over them in daylight, and by night I should make sure of breaking his legs and my own neck."

"I know nothing of this convent you are taking us to," said Paco, in a sulky tone; "but if it stands, as you tell me, to the north of Lecumberri, this road will lengthen our journey an hour or more."

"Scarcely so much," said Jaime. "At any rate," added he doggedly, "it is I who answer to the Count for the Señora's safety, and I shall therefore take the road I think best."

Paco was about to make an angry reply, but Rita interfered, and the discussion terminated in the gipsy having his own way. Three minutes later Don Baltasar arrived at the division of the roads, paused, listened, and heard the faint echo of the horses' hoofs upon the right hand path. With an exclamation of satisfaction, he struck his spurs into the flanks of his steed, and at as rapid a pace as the uneven ground would permit, ascended the contrary road, the shortest, and, as Paco had truly asserted, by far the best to the convent whither Rita de Villabuena was proceeding.

Over rocks and through ravines, and along the margin of precipices, Don Baltasar rode, threading, in spite of the darkness, the difficult and often dangerous mountain-paths, with all the confidence of one well acquainted with their intricacies. At last, after a long descent, he entered a narrow valley, or rather a mountain-gorge, which extended in the form of nearly a semicircle, [Pg 163] and for a distance of about three miles, between two steep and rugged lines of hill. Upon finding himself on level ground, he spurred his horse, and passing rapidly over the dew-steeped grass of a few fields, entered a beaten track that ran along the centre of the valley. The moon was now up, silvering the summits of the groups of trees with which the narrow plain was sprinkled, and defining the gloomy peaks of the sierra against the star-spangled sky. By its light Don Baltasar rode swiftly along, until, arriving near the further end of the valley, he came in sight of an extensive edifice, beautifully situated on the platform of a low hill, and sheltered to the north and east by lofty mountains. The building was of grey stone, and formed three sides of a square; the side that was at right angles with the two others being considerably the longest, and the wings connected by a wall of solid masonry, in the centre of which was an arched portal. In front, and on one side of the convent, for such, as a single glance was sufficient to determine, was the purpose to which the roomy structure was appropriated, the ground was bare and open, until the platform began to sink towards the plain; and then the sunny southern slope had been turned to the best account. Luxuriant vineyards, a plantation of olive-trees, and a large and well-stocked orchard covered it, whilst the level at its foot was laid out in pasture and corn-fields. The space between the back of the convent and the mountains was filled up by a thick wood, affording materials for the blazing fires which, in the winter months, the keen airs from the hills would render highly acceptable. The forest also extended round and close up to the walls of the right wing of the building. From the roof of the left wing rose a lofty open tower, where was seen hanging the ponderous mass of bronze by whose sonorous peal the pious inmates were summoned to their devotions.

Urging his horse up the steep and winding path that led to the front of the convent, Don Baltasar seized and pulled a chain that hung beside the gate. The clank of a bell immediately followed, and Baltasar, receding a little from the door, looked up at the windows. No light was visible at any of them, and the most profound stillness reigned. After waiting for about a minute, the Carlist colonel again rang, and he was about to repeat the summons for a third time, when a faint gleam of light in the court warned him that some one was afoot. Presently a small wicket in the centre of the gate was opened, and the pinched and crabbed features of the lay-sister who acted as portress showed themselves at the aperture. In a voice rendered unusually shrill and querulous by vexation at having her rest broken, she demanded who it was thus disturbing the slumbers of the sisterhood.

"I come," said Baltasar, "to speak with your lady abbess, Doña Carmen de Forcadell, upon matters of the utmost importance. Admit me instantly, for my business presses."

"The lady abbess," peevishly returned the portress, "cannot be disturbed before matins. If you choose to wait till then, I will tell her you are here, and she will perhaps see you."

"I must see her at once," replied Baltasar, waxing wroth at this delay, when every moment was of importance to his projects. "Tell her that Don Baltasar is here, and she will give orders to admit me."

Whilst he spoke, the lay sister raised her glimmering lantern to the wicket, in order to take a survey of this peremptory applicant for admission. The view thus obtained of his features apparently did not greatly impress her in his favour, or at any rate did not render her more disposed to open the solid barrier between them.

"Baltasar or Benito," cried she, "it is all one to Mariquita. You may wait till the matin bell rings. Fine times, indeed, when every thieving guerilla thinks he may find free quarters where he pleases! No, no, señor, stay where you are; the fresh air will cool your impatience. It will be daybreak in an hour, and that will be time enough for your errand, whatever it is."

It was with no small difficulty that Don Baltasar restrained his spleen during the old woman's harangue. When it came to a close, however, and he saw that she persisted in leaving him on the [Pg 164] outside of the gate till the usual hour for opening it, he lost all patience. Before the portress could shut the wicket, close to which she was standing, he thrust his hand and arm through it, and grasped her by her skinny throat. The lay sister set up a yell of alarm and pain.

"Jesus Maria! *Al socorro!* Help, help!" screamed she; the last words dying away in a gurgling sound, as Don Baltasar tightened his hold upon her windpipe.

"Silence, you old jade!" cried the fierce soldier in a suppressed tone, "you will alarm the whole convent. You have the keys in your hand—I heard them clank. Open the gate instantly, or by all the saints in heaven, I throttle you where you stand."

The increased pressure of his fingers warned the old woman that he would keep his word; and, yielding to so novel and convincing a mode of argument, she made use of the keys whose jingle

she had imprudently allowed to be heard. Two heavy locks shot back, and a massive bar was withdrawn; and when, by pushing against it, Don Baltasar had convinced himself that the gate was open, he released the gullet of the trembling sister, and entered the paved court. In grievous trepidation the portress was retreating to her lodge, which stood just within the gate, when an upper window of the convent opened, and a female voice enquired, in commanding tones, the cause of the uproar. Don Baltasar seemed to recognise the voice, and he rode up beneath the window whence it proceeded.

"Carmen," said he, "is it you?"

"Who is that?" was the rejoinder, in accents which surprise or alarm rendered slightly tremulous.

"Baltasar," replied the officer. "I must see you instantly, on a matter of life or death."

There was a moment's pause. "Remain where you are," said the person at the window; "I will come down to you."

The portress, finding that the intruder was known to the lady abbess, for she it was whom Baltasar had addressed as Carmen, now refastened the gate, and crept grumbling to her cell. Don Baltasar waited. Presently a door in the right wing of the convent was opened, a tall female form, clothed in flowing drapery, and carrying a taper in her hand, appeared at it and beckoned him to enter. Tying his horse to a ring in the wall, he obeyed the signal.

The room into which, after passing through a corridor, Colonel Villabuena was now introduced, was one of those appropriated to the reception of guests and visitors to the convent. The apartment was plainly furnished with a table and a few wooden chairs; and in a recess hung a large ebony crucifix, before which was placed a hassock, its cloth envelope worn threadbare by the knees of the devout. But if the room of itself offered little worthy of note, the case was far different with the person who now ushered Don Baltasar into it. This was a woman about forty years old, possessed of one of those marked and characteristic physiognomies which painters are fond of attributing to the inhabitants of southern Europe. Her age was scarcely to be read upon her face, whose slight furrows seemed traced by violent passions rather than by the hand of time: she had the remains of great beauty, although wanting in the intellectual; and the expression of her face, her compressed lips, and the fixed look of her eyes, went far to neutralize the charm which her regular features, and the classical oval of her physiognomy, would otherwise have possessed. The outline of her tall figure was veiled, but not concealed, by her monastic robe, from the loose sleeves of which protruded her long thin white hands. After closing the door, she seated herself beside a table, upon which she reposed her elbow, and motioned her visiter to a chair. A slight degree of agitation was perceptible in her manner, as she waited in silence for Don Baltasar to communicate the motive of his unseasonable arrival. This he speedily did.

"You must do me a service, Carmen," said he. "My cousin Rita is now within an hour's ride of this place. She comes hither expecting to find her father. She must be detained captive." [Pg 165]

"What!" exclaimed the abbess, "is your suit so hopeless as to render such hazardous measures adviseable? What is to be gained by such an act of violence? Her father will inevitably seek and discover her, and disgrace and disappointment will be the sole result of your mad scheme."

"Her father," replied Baltasar gloomily, "will give us no trouble."

"How?—no trouble! If all be true that I have heard of Count Villabuena, and of his affection for his only surviving child, he is capable of devoting his life to the search for her."

"Count Villabuena," said Baltasar, "now stands before you. The father of Rita is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed the abbess with a start. "How and when did he die?"

"He was shot in a skirmish."

"In a skirmish!" repeated Doña Carmen. "He held no military command."

"I was escorting him with a few men to attend a junta. We were attacked by a superior force, from which we escaped, thanks to an intervening river. A few shots were exchanged, the Count thrust himself into the fire, and fell."

The abbess seemed to reflect a moment, and then fixed a keen and searching look upon the countenance of Baltasar.

"Was your loss in men severe?" said she abruptly.

"No—yes—" replied Baltasar, slightly confused. "I believe there were several wounded. Why do you ask?"

"And the Count's death gives you the Villabuena estates?"

"It does so," answered Baltasar.

The dark penetrating eyes of the abbess still remained fixed, with a peculiar expression of enquiry and suspicion, upon the countenance of Colonel Villabuena. He tried at first to sustain their gaze, but was unable to do so. He looked down, and a slight paleness came over his features.

"I have no time to answer questions," said he, with a rough brutality of manner which seemed

assumed to veil embarrassment. "My plan is arranged, but promptness of execution is essential to its success. Rita must be detained here, where none will think of seeking her, till she becomes my wife. Your power in this place is unlimited, and your word law; you will have no difficulty in secluding her in some corner where none shall see her but those in whom you can fully confide. Make the necessary preparations. Each moment she may arrive."

Whilst Baltasar was speaking, Doña Carmen remained with her brow supported on her hand, silent and sunk in reflection. She now sprang impetuously from her chair.

"I will have naught to do with it," cried she; "you would entangle me in a labyrinth of crime, whence the only issue would be ignominy and punishment. You must find others to aid you in your machinations."

In his turn Baltasar rose from his seat, and, approaching the abbess, led her back to her chair.

"Carmen," said he, in a suppressed voice, and from between his set teeth, "is it to me that you say 'I will not?'—Carmen," he continued, speaking low, and with his face very near to hers, "there was a time when, for love of you and to do your bidding, I feared no punishment here or hereafter. Have you already forgotten it? 'I hate him,' were your words, as I sat at your feet in yon sunny Andalusian bower—'I hate him, and in proportion to my hatred should be my gratitude to him who rid me of his odious presence.' That night the *serenos* found the body of Don Fernando de Forcadell stiff and cold upon the steps of his villa. He had had a dispute at the *monté* table, and two men were sent to Ceuta on suspicion of the deed. Only two persons knew who had really done it. Ha! Carmen, only two persons!"

During this terrible recapitulation, the abbess sat motionless as a statue, for which indeed, in her white robe and with her marble pale complexion, she might almost have been taken. She covered her face with her hands, and her bosom heaved so violently, that the loose folds of drapery which shrouded it rose and fell like the waves of a troubled ocean. When Baltasar ceased speaking she removed her hands, and exhibited a countenance livid as that of a corpse. Her almost preternatural paleness, the dark furrows under her eyes, and the tension of every feature, added ten years to her apparent age. [Pg 166]

"Is that all?" she said, in a hollow voice, to her tormentor.

> "And one of those persons," resumed the pitiless Baltasar, without replying to her question, "swore by earth and by heaven, and by the God who made them both, never to forget the service that I—that the other person, I would say—had rendered her, and to be ready to requite it whenever he should point out the way. Years have flown by since that day, and the feelings that united those two persons have long since changed; but a promise made as that one was—a promise sealed with blood—can never pass away till it has been redeemed. Carmen, I claim its fulfilment."

Baltasar paused. "Fiend!" exclaimed the abbess, "what would you of me?"

"I have already told you," said Villabuena. "It is no crime, nothing that need alarm your conscience, recently grown so tender; but a good deed, rather, since it will prevent the daughter of a noble house from throwing herself away on an adventurer and a rebel, and give her hand to him for whom her father destined it. She is as yet unaware of the Count's death. She will learn it here, and no place fitter. Your pious consolations will soothe her grief. I shall leave her in your guardianship, and, when the first violence of her sorrow is over, return, to find means of overcoming her puerile objections to my suit. But I am a fool," exclaimed he, interrupting himself, "to lose in idle talk time that is so precious! They must already be in sight of the convent. Lead me to a window whence we may observe their approach, and whilst watching for it we can make our final arrangements."

He took the hand of the abbess, and she led the way, mechanically, to the door of an inner room. Passing through two other apartments, they reached one at the extremity of the wing, from the window of which a view was obtained for a considerable distance down the valley. The prospect that presented itself to them on pausing before this window, was so enchantingly beautiful, that it seemed to produce an effect, and to exercise a softening influence, even upon the depraved and vicious nature of Don Baltasar. At any rate, a full minute elapsed during which he stood in silence and contemplation.

The view afforded by the valley in question, upon that pleasant May morning, was indeed of almost unparalleled loveliness. The sun, which had already risen behind the eastern hills, but not yet surmounted them, threw its first rays across their summits, and illuminated the opposite mountains, bathing their pinnacles in a golden glow, whilst their lower steeps remained in comparative darkness. In the depths of the valley the last shades of twilight still seemed to linger, and masses of thin grey vapour rolled in billows over the rich vegetation and vivid verdure of the fields. The most fantastic variety of form was exhibited by the surrounding mountain wall; here it rose in turrets and towers, there spread out into crags, then again fell in blank abrupt precipices, their edges fringed with shrubs, the recesses of their sides sheltering wild-flowers of the most varied hues, whose sprays and blossoms waved in the sweet breath of morning. Equally varied, and as delicately beautiful, were the ethereal tints of the mountain tops, to which the cloudless sky seemed to impart a tinge of its azure. On the edge of a ravine, midway up a mountain, were seen a few crumbling walls, and a fragment of a broken tower, sole remains of some ancient stronghold, which, centuries before, had frowned over the vale. The hut of a goatherd or

charcoal-burner, here and there dotted the hill-side; and at the southern limit of the valley, just before its change of direction took it out of sight of the convent, were visible the houses of a small hamlet, surrounded by plantations, and half buried amidst blossoms of the tenderest rose-colour and most dazzling white. Masses of beech and ilex clothed the lower slopes of the mountains, and from out of their dark setting of foliage the grey walls of the Dominican convent arose like a pale and shadowy spectre. The fresh brightness of spring was the characteristic of [Pg 167] the whole scene; the year seemed rejoicing in its youthful vigour, and to express its delight by millions of mute voices, which spoke out of each leaf and twig that danced in the breeze. Nor were other and audible voices wanting. The lark was singing in the sky, the grasshopper had begun its chirp, the rills and rivulets that splashed or trickled from the hills, gave out their indistinct murmur; whilst, heard far above these voices of nature, the toll of the matin bell resounded through the valley, calling the devoutly disposed to their morning thanksgiving.

The angelus had ceased to ring when Rita and her party came in sight of the Dominican convent, their horses and mules giving evidence, by their jaded appearance, of having been ridden far, and over rough and painful roads. The gipsy rode in front, vigilant and unfatigued—although he had now been in the saddle, with little intermission, for a whole day and night—and was followed by Rita, to whose delicate frame the long ride had been an exertion as unusual as it was trying. But a resolute spirit had compensated for physical weakness, and, uncomplaining, she had borne up against the hardships of the preceding ten hours. She was pale and harassed; her hair, uncurled by the night fogs, hung in dank masses round her face, and her fragile form was unable to maintain its upright position. Micaela, the waiting-maid, yawned incessantly, and audibly groaned at each rough stumble or uncomfortable movement of her mule. Several times during the drowsy morning hours, she had nearly fallen from her saddle, and had to thank Paco, who had taken his station beside her, for saving her from more than one tumble. Paco, either out of respect to the presence of Rita, or concern for the Count's misfortune, rode along, contrary to his custom, in profound silence, and without indulging in any of those snatches of muleteers' songs with which it was his wont to beguile the tedium of a march.

Upon nearing the place where she expected to find her father, Rita's impatience to behold him, and to ascertain for herself the exact extent of the injury he had received, increased to a feverish degree, and on reaching the convent gate, already open for her reception, she sprang from her mule without assistance. But she had over-rated her strength; her limbs, stiffened by the long ride and the cold night air, refused their service, and she would have fallen to the ground had not Paco, who was already off his horse, given her the support of his arm. The portress and another old lay sister were the only persons visible in the court, and the last of these invited Rita to accompany her into the convent. Paco held out his horse's bridle and those of the mules to Jaime, intending to follow his young mistress, but the gipsy hesitated to take them, and the lay sister, perceiving Paco's intention, interposed to prevent its execution.

"You must remain here," said she; "I have no orders to admit men into the convent, nor can I, without express orders from the lady abbess."

Paco obeyed the injunction, and the three women disappeared through a door of the right wing of the building. They had been gone less than a minute, when the lay sister again came forth, and, approaching the gipsy, desired him to follow her. He did so, and Paco remained alone with the horses.

With eager step, and a heart palpitating with anxiety, Rita followed her guide into the convent, making, as she went, anxious enquiries concerning her father's health. To her first question the old woman replied by an inarticulate mumble; and upon its repetition, a brief "I do not know; the lady abbess will see you,"—checked any further attempt upon a person who either could not or would not give the much wished-for information. Passing through a corridor and up a staircase, the lay sister ushered Rita into an apartment of comfortable appearance.

"I will inform the abbess of your arrival," said she, as she went out and closed the door.

Five minutes elapsed, and Rita, to whom this delay was as inexplicable as her impatience to see her father was great, was about to leave the room and seek or enquire the way to his apartment, when the abbess made her appearance. [Pg 168]

"Holy mother!" exclaimed Rita, advancing to meet her with clasped hands and tearful eyes, "is my father doing well? Conduct me to him, I beseech you."

Struck by the beauty of the fair creature who thus implored her, and touched, perhaps, by the painful anxiety expressed in her trembling voice, and pale and interesting countenance, Doña Carmen almost hesitated to communicate her fatal tidings.

"I have painful intelligence for you, Señora," said she. "The Count, your father"—

"He is wounded; I know it," interrupted Rita. "Is he worse? Oh, let me see him!—This instant see him!"

"It is impossible," said the abbess. "The bullet that struck him was too surely aimed. Your father is dead!"

For an instant Rita gazed at the speaker as though unable fully to comprehend the terrible announcement, and then, with one shriek of heartfelt agony, she sank senseless to the ground.

The shrill and thrilling scream uttered by the bereaved daughter, rang through the chambers and

corridors of the convent, and reached the ears of Paco, who had remained in the court, waiting with some impatience for the return of the gipsy, and for intelligence concerning the health of the Count. Abandoning his horse, he rushed instinctively to the door by which Rita had entered the building. It was closed, but not fastened, and passing through it he found himself in a long corridor, traversed by two shorter ones, and at whose extremity, through a grated window, was visible the foliage of the forest surrounding that side of the convent. Not a living creature was to be seen; and Paco paused, uncertain in what direction to proceed. He listened for a repetition of the cry, but none came. Suddenly a door, close to which he stood, was opened, and before he could turn his head to ascertain by whom, he was seized from behind, and thrown violently upon the paved floor of the corridor. The attack had been so vigorous and unexpected, that Paco had no time for resistance before he found himself stretched upon his back; but then he struggled furiously against his assailants, who were no others than Don Baltasar and the gipsy. So violent were his efforts, that he got the gipsy under him, and was on the point of regaining his feet, when Colonel Villabuena drew a pistol from the breast of his coat, and with its but-end dealt him a severe blow on the head. The unlucky muleteer again fell stunned upon the ground. In another minute his hands were tightly bound, and Don Baltasar and his companion carried him swiftly down one of the transversal corridors. Descending a flight of stone steps, the two men with their burthen entered a range of subterranean cloisters, at whose extremity was a low and massive door, which Don Baltasar opened, and they entered a narrow cell, having a straw pallet and earthen water-jug for sole furniture. Close to the roof of this dismal dungeon was an aperture in the wall, through which a strong iron grating, and the rank grass that grew close up to it, allowed but a faint glimmer of daylight to enter. Placing their prisoner upon the straw bed, Don Baltasar and Jaime took away his sabre and the large knife habitually carried by Spaniards of his class. They then unbound his hands, and, carefully securing the door behind them, left him to the gloom and solitude of his dungeon. [Pg 169]

SOMETHING MORE ABOUT MUSIC.

We mused on music some while ago; and as the subject still haunts us—very much after the manner of an obstinate ghost that refuses to be laid, even by the choicest Latin—we are strongly disposed to try the effect of giving it full swing for once; and in idle mood, too idle to oppose ourselves to its tyranny, letting it carry us whither it will, in the hope that, in return for our complacence, it may in future suffer us to conduct our meditations according to our own pleasure, and give that sad and serious thought, which their merits demand, to the gravities of this life—to corn-laws and *poor*-laws, (of all sorts!) and the Irish question, and the debates to which all these give occasion, in reading which we have already worn out we know not how many pairs of spectacles, and one pair of excellent eyes; and last, not least, to the marchings and counter-marchings of the House of Commons, in which we are deeply interested.

With such a course of study before us, we are disposed to make the most of our holiday; and should we chance to be a little too frisky, it must be borne in mind that retribution is at hand, and that we shall speedily become as solemn as ever a fool in the land, as dull as an owl bathing its eyes in the morning sunshine, which—having overslept itself—it takes for the full moon, and dismal enough to satisfy the most ardent advocate of the religious duty of being miserable,—eschewing laughter as we would the tax-gatherer, and refreshing our oppressed spirits alone with serious jokes, and such merriment as may be presented to us under the sanction and recommendation of a college of dissenting divines!

But our harp will be a mingled one, for so is our theme; having a sympathy alike for our mirthful and sorrowful moments, which it alike spiritualizes; striking the light, gleesome chord to the one, and attuning the soul to more ethereal joy; while by its soft influence it tones down the harshness of bitter, *unavailing* sorrow, and woos the heart, misanthropizing under the pangs of grief or unrequited love—pent up in its own solitude, unpitied and uncared for—and filled with dark thoughts, and sad sounds, and tones of plaintive winds, sighing through the cypress and doleful yew with mournful melody around the resting-place of the loved and lost, to submissive lamentings, and slow stealing tears that assuage its aching anguish and tranquillize the spirit, leading it to the hope of a brighter future, in whose dawning beams it will, ere-long, show like "the tender grass, clear-shining after rain"—more glistening and beautiful for the invigorating dews of the cloud which had overhung it, and beneath whose gloom its beauty faded away—for very trouble!

How often have we found that hard, *bitter* mood into which the mind under the pressure of suffering which is irremediable, and which has to be borne alone, is so apt to decline—feeling the harder and the bitterer for the careless, galling gaiety of all around—softened, subdued, yea, utterly broken up by the sweet notes of "some old familiar strain," that steal on the willing ear, freshening and exhilarating the spirit like a breezy morning in June, when it seems a sin to be wretched; the twittering birds on dancing boughs crying shame on us, for what is not only wrong, but, as we begin to feel, needless—not to say foolish; and we return from our stroll, wondering what in the world we have done with that load on our chest with which we began our walk—ending in a regular ramble—and which it then seemed incumbent on us, nay, a sacred duty, to pant under for the term of our natural lives; relieving ourselves by such sighs and groans as appeared to us the appropriate forms of expression for all human beings under the sun—made on purpose to be unhappy; we especially, fulfilling the end of our creation. And as we mark the

change that has passed upon us—the bounding circulation in place of flagging energies—full, calm breathing, instead of the slow, short respiration of sadness—with reverent heart we bless nature, and, may we say also, nature's great Architect, all-merciful, all-loving! [Pg 170]

Such on us is frequently the effect of music; the heaviness of heart, caused by the weary rubs of this rough world, or the result of a temperament that has a constitutionally jarring string in it, is as it were *drawn out*, and sweetness and calm-breathing tranquillity infused in its stead; while our nerves become as the harmonious strings of a harp, that respond in sympathy with the master chords of one with which it is in unison, and whereon the fresh breeze of morning lightly plays, calling forth sounds of joy and gladness. Therefore do we *love* it, with a warmth of affection that may perchance appear extravagant to those whose robust, well-balanced minds, clothed with strong, healthy, unsusceptible bodies—people who are always in good spirits, unless there be a reason for the contrary—may render them independent of such external influences, for we must acknowledge, that we do at times express this our affection in somewhat unmeasured phrase, as one who stays not accurately to calculate, and weigh with cool precision, the virtues of a friend, thus laying ourselves open to the unmitigated condemnation of those who soar above, (or sink below!) such sympathies.

Be it so! We are not about to enter into any vindication of ourselves; we shall not even attempt to convince these dull souls, that it is possible for elevated feeling, and repose and tenderness of mind, to be indebted for their origin to such insignificant and material sources as catgut and brass wire—and that they are not therefore to be undervalued; though by way of illustration of the influence of matter over spirit, we would remind them of their own humane and charitable feelings *after* dinner, compared with the fierce, nay, atrocious sentiments, which their consciences convict them of having entertained, before the pangs of their raging hunger had been appeased by that inestimable mollifier of men's hearts and tempers. For the cause of their insensibility to such impressions—a natural incapacity for receiving them—it is vain to seek a remedy, however willing we might be to apply one; but where cure is impracticable, palliatives are frequently admissible, and we would suggest that one may be found in this case, in the patients' treating the unhappy privation under which they labour with greater tenderness than has been their wont, throwing over it that veil of oblivion and charity with which they so gracefully conceal their other defects, instead of obtruding it on public observation, under the singular misconception of its being an admirable feature in their character, a something of which a man ought to be proud. Conduct like this, they may rest assured, will not fail of being appreciated and rewarded by the corresponding delicacy with which all, who are not utterly barbarous, invariably treat him who, by the deprecating humility with which he seeks to conceal his deficiencies, betrays his painful cognisance of their existence.

We are aware that this is a turning of the tables upon them which they may not be disposed to admire—to be placed at the bar, when they expected a seat on the Bench, and were just smoothing down their ermine, and adjusting their wigs, in order to enter on their duties with the greater impressiveness and dignity; but they must believe us when we tell them, that we, too, have an opinion on this subject, to which we must be permitted to attribute as high authority as they possibly can to their own; and that, tried by this standard, they, being found wanting, would inevitably have been brought up for judgment, but for a merciful leaning, (sanctioned by legal precedent,) which prompts us rather to try the salutary effect of admonition and good counsel, than to proceed at once to inflict extreme penalties on the offenders—in short, that we are not in a hanging humour, or they should swing for it!

Grim, rough Luther, laying about him with his ponderous mace, and making giant Pope tremble in the deepest recesses of his stronghold, lest he should grow utterly savage with his perpetual warfare—albeit a "Holy war"—humanized and spiritualized himself with his lute—(who does not sympathize with his unfailing "Deus noster refugium," that divine stay of his stout heart that trembled not at men or devils!) Ken, undaunted opponent of the tyranny of a king—meek sufferer for that monarch's lawful rights, rose at day-dawn, or so soon as the first brief slumber had recruited his exhausted frame, to give thanks unto the King of kings in strains that, handed down to us, yet thrill the heart by their fervent piety, and plain, vigorous verse, and animate it to a stricter more manly rectitude. Herbert—saintliest of men and priests—after his sacred toils, refreshed his spirit with "divine music;" the more melodious to his ear, that his heart was teeming with the harmony of that "good-will towards man," which seeks and finds its due expression in active exertions on their behalf—disdaining not the lowliest occasion of serving with hearty zeal the lowliest of his neighbours. Rest assured, then, O reader! whosoever thou art, that it is not for *thee* to pretend to despise it! [Pg 171]

Ponder the rather on the *power* of that art, that could soothe the perturbed soul of Israel's wrath-sent king—mad and moody—and even expel the evil spirit that goaded him; and on its *dignity*—for prophets of old, when the Divine inspiration came upon them, revealing to their purified eyes the "vision of the Almighty," uttered their "dark sayings upon the harp."

What a plague it sometimes is to be hag-ridden by a tune, racing through one's head, with a never-ending always-beginningness, as though a thousand imps were singing it in one's ears. Wherever you may be, whomsoever with, whatsoever doing, still ring on those incessant tones of perchance the merriest of all jigs, till—it is Sunday morning, and you are preparing for church—you leave your house with the entire and miserable conviction, that, seated in your pew in the very face of the congregation-genteel sinners in silks, and satins, and feathers—you will betray your long-concealed suffering by giving vent to that interminable "Rory O'More," the moment you open your lips for the emission of "All people that on earth do dwell;" so ensuring your rapid

transfer to the street, under the escort of the man with the parti-coloured coat and black wand, whose Sabbath duties of jerking the Sunday scholars, and rapping their heads with that authoritative cane, are unceremoniously interfered with on your behalf. Misery and disgrace stare you in the face, and all through an undue titillation of that part of your sensorium that takes cognisance of musical sounds; a titillation not to be subdued by endeavouring to direct your attention from it to the very gravest of all subjects; nor propitiated even by audibly chanting the offending strain, previously retiring into the furthest corner of your coal-cellar, to prevent your unwilling profanity on shocking the strictly conscientious ears of your household. This is bad—and yet it is but a mild form of this morbid affection, which, in its most intense degree, torments the sufferer from fever, (or one stunned by some sudden and violent grief,) when certain sounds, words, or tunes, accidentally determined, thrill through the head with the steadiness and vehement action of the piston of a steam-engine—beat, beat, beat!—every note seeming to fall on the excited brain like the blow of a hammer; while, as the fever and pain increase, the more rapidly and heavily do those torturing notes pursue their furious chase. We well remember, under an attack of disorder in the neighbourhood of the brain, causing severe suffering, lying—we know not how long, it might be a thousand years for any thing we knew—singing over and over again *in our mind*, for we were speechless with pain, the 148th psalm, which we had just chanced to hear sung, in Brady and Tate's version, to a new and somewhat peculiar tune. Oh, how those "dreadful whales" and "glittering scales" did quaver and quiver in our poor head! Lying like a log—for pain neither permitted us to stir nor groan—still rattled on, hard and quick, the rumbling bass and shrill tenor of that most inappropriately jubilant composition—"cherubim and seraphim," "fire, hail, and snow," succeeding each other with a railway velocity that there was no resisting; no sooner had we got to "stands ever fast," than round again we went to the "boundless realms of [Pg 172] joy," and so on, on, on, through each dreary minute of those dreary hours, an infinity, or perchance but twenty-four, according as time is computed by clocks or by agonised human beings. It made a capital Purgatory; one which we have even deemed every way adequate to those slight delinquencies of which we may have been guilty, and which are appointed, as it is understood, to be expiated in this way.

At times some simple air, or even a single chord of unusual, but apparently obvious harmony, will haunt us with a peculiar sweetness, producing a soothing, gentle sadness, as though we listened to distant bells, whose music is borne in surges on the breeze that sways the golden corn on a sunny Sabbath, when our pathway lies through the undulating fields, already "white unto the harvest;" where the pleasant rustling of the ripened grain, as it is stirred by the soft wind, is sweet and soothing; and the gay poppy, and other less obtrusive, though not less beautiful wild-flowers, bloom at our loitering feet. In the power of exciting such feeling, what can equal our old English ballads? There is an inexpressible charm in these, and we would almost give our fingers to be able to describe that indescribable *something*, which constitutes their peculiar fascination and power over the imagination. Most plain, most artless, does their composition appear; like the natural out-breathing of the heart in its sunny moments; and yet—as with all earthly brightness—with a trace of cloud on that sunshine. They are redolent of the "olden time;" and as they fall softly on the ear, the antique hall, with its groined roof, and mullioned window, glowing with rich heraldic devices, through which the many-tinted lights fall tenderly on arch and pillar, and elaborately fretted walls, studded with ancestral armour, rises up before us; and with the melting tones of the lute, mingles the low, clear voice of a gentle maiden, whose small foot and brocaded train are just seen from behind yonder deeply sculptured oaken screen. What innocence is in that voice! and how expressive are the chords that accompany it—less elaborate and fantastic, perchance, than might win favour in our vitiated ears; but natural, harmonious, full, and in exquisite subordination to the air, which they fill up and enrich, instead of overpowering with misplaced beauty.

And now a movement of the singer reveals still more of the quaint, beautiful costume, with its heavy, yet graceful folds, while—aha! what else do we see?—a plumed hat thrown carelessly on the ground; the armed heel, glittering rapier, and slashed sleeve, just visible, betokening that its owner is not far off, and that the lady fair has not, as we had thought, been wasting her sweetness, either of voice or countenance, on that comfortable-looking pet dog or caged linnet. Sing on, pretty one! for well do gallant knights love to hear their stern deeds sung by innocent lips; and *right well*, to listen to the strain that tells how the heart of "lady-bright" is won by noble daring. But what means that sudden break in the song, and the confused sweep of the strings, as though the lute had slipped from its owner's grasp; while the masculine paraphernalia which we had just discovered disappears altogether behind that most impervious and curiosity-mocking screen? No great harm done, or that light laugh had not escaped the lips so suddenly silenced; and the offending cavalier is doubtless forgiven on the spot, as they amicably retreat to that deep oriel, framed apparently for the express purpose of excluding *intrusionists* like ourselves, who would fain follow, where, it is evident, we are marvellously little wanted! Well, well!—maidens will be maidens, we trow, and lovemaking in the olden time is, we suppose, after all, vastly like the same performance by more modern actors. Leave we them to their light-heartedness:—and yet we could linger long in this ancient chamber,

"With quaint oak-carving lined and ceiled;"

so calm, so cool, so repose-breathing,—the shrill twitter of the swallow the only sound now heard amid its silence; the fleecy clouds, throwing that rich interior into alternate light and shade, as they sail lazily along the deep blue sky—the only moving objects, save the long wreaths of ivy, [Pg 173] that, green as the tender buds of spring, tap lightly against the casement, as they are swayed by the impulses of the summer breeze. Beyond, is an old-fashioned garden—a *pleasance*, as it would

be called—and truly is it one; with its trim walks, its terraces, and moss-grown urns, around which luxuriant creepers are entwined—its impervious hedges—its close-shorn lawn, decked with appropriate statues, and its yew-trees, clipped into fantastic shapes; while the ivy-covered walls that bound it, afford a shelter from the blasts that too often allay the sunshine of our northern climate, and render it a spot where 'tis sweet to saunter, in idle or quiet contemplative mood, at glowing sunset; or chaster beauty of summer evening, when the pure, cold moon mingles her passionless lustre with the gorgeous hues that still linger around the portals of the west—bright train of the departing monarch that has passed to the sway of a new hemisphere!

Here could we linger in genial meditation, while from the dark pannelled walls look down upon us lovely countenances of those who, centuries ago, have called this *home*—portraits whose calm, meek dignity so far transcends the more active style in which it too often pleases us moderns to glare from our gilt frames, "looking delightfully with all our might, and staring violently at nothing;" costume and truth being utterly outraged,—the *roturier's* wife mapped in the ermine of the duchess, and perchance dandling on her maternal lap what appears to be a dancing dog in its professional finery, but which, on closer inspection, turns out to be an imp of a child, made a fool of by its mother and milliner; and my lady—in inadequate garments, and a pair of wings, flourishing as some heathen divinity or abstract virtue! Look at those girlish features, just mantling into fairest womanhood, with their sweet serious look, exhibiting all the self-possession of simplicity; the drapery and other accessories natural, and in perfect keeping with the unpretending character of the whole; and then turn to some recent "portrait of a lady," with what toleration you may. Contrast for one moment that fine ancestral face, dignified and unmoved as the mighty ocean slumbering in his strength, with the eager visage of one of the latest "batch," (cooked, without much regard to the materials, for some ministerial exigency,) who would appear to be standing in rampant defence of his own brand-new coronet, emulative of the well-gilt lion which supports that miracle of ingenuity rather than research, his brightly emblazoned coat-of-arms; whose infinitude of charges and quarterings do honour to the inventive genius of the Herald's Office, and are enough to make the Rouge Dragon of three centuries ago claw out the eyes of the modern functionary.

But, oh dear, dear! where are our ballads all this while? Drifted sadly to leeward, we fear, according to a bad habit of ours, of letting any breeze, from whatever point of the compass it may chance to blow, fill our sails, and float us away before it, utterly unmindful of our original purpose and destination. Thus have we, to the tune of an old Hall and its garniture, sailed away from that which we were aiming—trying to find out, and describe the peculiar fascination of our loved old ballads; flattering ourselves, perhaps, that we were escaping a difficulty which we feared to meet.

There is a quaint cheerfulness in them, toned down with a shade—the shadow of a shade—of the most touching melancholy, effected, we can scarcely tell how, by an exquisitely felicitous, though but slight introduction of the minor key, perchance but a single note or chord. But that suffices, and it is as a sudden vision of our home, far off among the mountains, or in the "happy valley" of our fathers, passing before us in the gay crowded city, bringing plaintive thoughts of remembered joys, and quietude, and childish innocence. Old ballads are like April skies, all smiles and tears, sunshine and swift-flitting clouds, that serve but to heighten the loveliness they concealed for a while. They are like,—nay, we despair; none but our own Shakspeare can express what we should vainly puzzle ourselves to describe, the essence of the "old and antique song." [Pg 174]

"Mark it, Cesario; it is old and plain;
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chaunt it; it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love,
Like the old age."

Ay! like gray eld fondling sunny childhood, gazing on the wavy hair, and pure brow, and calm yet kindling eye, with a fond sad pleasure; for in that young exulting spirit he sees the sure inheritor of his own fading honours, the usurper of his strength, and influence, and worship, rapidly passing away from his feeble grasp; and as he gazes, though his lips pour willing benedictions on the unconscious supplanter, there lingers in his heart the sorrowful, "He shall increase, but I shall decrease."

Something akin in their sad soothing effect, are the *waits*, (dear reader, you do not need to be told what these are? Wordsworth has immortalized them;) simple, rude, and inharmonious as they would be in the clear, truth-telling daylight, but strange, witching, and half unearthly, when heard between the pauses of some fantastic dream in the deep midnight; when,

"All around,
The stars are watching with their thousand eyes;"

those same stars that peered down on this earth, in "earnest gaze," on the first act of that most awful drama, when, in "the winter wild, the heaven-born child"—Him in whom all nations of the world were blessed—was placed in his rude cradle at Bethlehem: in commemoration of whose advent—and *this* is one secret of their pathos, waking high thoughts in the soul, too long brooding over and degrading itself with the mean cares and hopes of this life—the humble musicians make night tuneful, "scraping the chords with strenuous hand."

A blessing on them as they go, softening our hard, unloving hearts! In our childhood it was one of

our most cherished pleasures to lie—half-sleeping, half-waking—listening to them, as the sounds, at times discordant enough, though of that we recked not, rose and fell in pleasing cadence, as the winter wind rose and fell, wafting the notes that, faint and fainter still, at last died away in the distance.

We and our room-companion were under a solemn engagement, each to other, to waken the little sleepy thing beside him, when the more watchful became aware of the approach of the itinerant minstrels; and woe to the one who had forgotten this duty! It would have required no little "music" to soothe the "savage breast" of the aggrieved one; for—as we are pathetically reminded by the old song—"Christmas comes but once a-year," and so often, but no more, did we know that our chance of hearing this seductive harmony occurred. Hence our wrath, if through the neglect, the "breach of promise" of another, so solemnly pledged, we missed it. And even now, dear as is the oblivion of night and dreamless sleep to the spirit, harassed and world-worn, that in outgrowing its child-like feelings and happiness, has, alas! also out-grown what its increase of worldly wisdom can hardly make amends for—the child-like purity, and intense enjoyment of simple pleasures, which marked its earlier years—even now, weary and dull-hearted as we are become, we would not willingly lose this delight of our happier days, although it fall on the still darkness like wail for a departed friend, unsealing the fount of mournful memories, whose bitter waters gush from their stricken rock; sad as are its associations, they are of that sadness whereby the "heart is made better."

What think ye of the drum as a musical instrument? Is there not something magnificent in it, albeit suggestive of a distant wheelbarrow on rough paving-stones, or heavily laden cart in the distance? This latter, by the way,—we appeal with confidence to any musical soul present for confirmation of our assertion—being decidedly its equal, in effect, any day; as in our *happy* infancy we found out to our sorrow, from being frequently deceived by its dull booming, which our vivid imagination at once pronounced to be its parchment representative; as we writhed and wriggled with agony on our unhonoured bench (selected, and adhered to, for constancy was our *forte*, chiefly on account of its being out of the reach of the cane, and commanding a good view of [Pg 175] the street) in a perfect fever, poor little soul, to squirl away books and slates, and scamper after the soldiers. Scarlet has been said to be like the sound of a trumpet; surely then a drum must be taken as the exponent of that ferocious mixture yclept thunder and lightning, erst dear to country bumpkins, and rendered classical by Master Moses Primrose's coat. It can scarcely be described as *music*, but rather as sound with an idea in it—the connecting link between mere noise and musical expression. Kettle-drums,

> "Whose sullen dub,
> Is like the hooping of a tub,"

we hate; and never see them in a concert-room without heartily wishing they and their tatooer might tumble, helter-skelter, from their topmost perch into the very lowest depth, if there be one lower than another, of the orchestra; and thereby sustain such a compound fracture, attended by loss of substance, as should put it out of their power, for that night at least, to torture our fastidious ears. Being of a melancholy temperament, we are unfortunately, at times, subject to most ludicrous fancies; and as these ungainly instruments loom on our disgusted eye, we cannot, for the life of us, help imagining them moulds for a couple of enormous gooseberry puddings; and we verily pant at the idea of the sea of melted butter, or yellow cream, requisite to mollify their acidity—and then we laugh like a hyena at the nightmareish vision, and so are disgraced, for it is at a "serious opera:" therefore, we repeat it, do we hate them, cordially and perseveringly. They are horrid things, and ought to be excommunicated. And when employed in military bands—why, a horse looks a complete fool between a couple of these gigantic basins, each with its long tag-rag of unmeaning velvet, beplastered and bedizened with lace and gold, streaming from it; and the unlucky performer perched between them, exactly like an old market-woman, bolstered up between a brace of paniers or milk-pails;—any thing but a fierce dragoon, or most chivalrous hussar. But peace be to the kettle-drums,—ay, *peace be to them*, say we! and may our ears never again be subjected to the torture of hearing Handel's massive chorus, or Beethoven's fearfully dramatic harmony, disfigured by their most abominable bangs, or villanous rumble-grumble.

Now all this is rank nonsense—we are fully aware of it; and it is a most foolish, unjust prejudice of ours against drums—kettle or otherwise, as it may please Apollo—which are most respectable members of musical society, and good—very good—in their way; were it only as a foil to the enchanting, inspiriting, maddening strains of the horn, the shrill pipe, the regal trumpet, and the various other instruments of our military music, of which we are more passionate admirers, almost ready to follow the drum ourselves. Oh, the supreme delight of having one's arms and legs shot off to such soul-elevating sounds, to the tune of Rule Britannia, and somebody or other's march! "Britons strike home" thrills through the air, and you scarcely feel that you are spitted by a Polish lancer; a flourish of trumpets, and enter a troop of horse, that trot briskly over you as you lie smashed by a round-shot, but heedless of the exhibition of their unceremonious heels to your injuries, for are you not sustained by that "point of war"—mercilessly beaten at your elbow, without the slightest regard to the effect it may have on your cracked head, for which you are indebted to the last trooper who spurred his charger over you: who would care for his vulgar limbs under such excitement? But if this part of our military economy be intended to inspire cowards with courage, and string them up to a disregard of all the chances of warfare, in the way of bullet and sabre, why—*why* is not so valuable an idea carried out to the full extent of its requirement, and a military band instituted for the comfort and encouragement of the patients (every whit as nervous as if they were under arms) of Guy's Hospital? Why should not the case of

poor bedfast wretches in cap and gown, and pale faces, meet with as much consideration as that of your clodpole in scarlet and an 'Albert hat?' (Heaven forgive the prince for making such simpletons of our handsome Englishmen!) Look to it, ye governors of such institutions, and look [Pg 176] to it, ye charitable and humane, who empty your purses into the blandly presented plate to buy shoes and stockings for the kangaroos. Consider the case of your afflicted countrymen, and relieve the plethora of your coffers by providing them music, every way equal to that enjoyed by troops going into action; music so entrancing that an arm or leg whipped off shall, under its influence, be no object to them; and let them drink down their odious physic to such masterly compositions of the first artists as shall sweeten the bitterest potion, and elicit a chorus of blessings on the taste and liberality of their munificent benefactors. But we fear that our pleading will be vain—Englishmen, poor, sick, and suffering, are intolerably uninteresting; not to be named on the same day with the happy possessors of woolly locks, flat noses, and copper-coloured skins; these being personal qualifications calculated to excite the intense sympathies of the many whose charity neither begins nor ends "at home." Yet, in the spirit of the little girl, who, on the denial of her request that she might be married, substituted the more modest one of a piece of bread and butter; if unsuccessful in this particular, we will be content to lower our tone, and, in place of the luxury we have recommended, simply require all whom it may concern to give the poor—their own!—honest wages for their honest labour.

We may perhaps be accused of having a Turkish taste in music (after the pattern of that Sultan's, who was chiefly fascinated with the jarring process of tuning the instruments, a thing abhorred by "gods and men") if we venture to own the strange, thrilling effect once produced on us by the discordant, yet withal imposing clangour of some half dozen regimental bands (all of them, mark you, playing different tunes!) which struck up simultaneously as my Lord ——, the then commander-in-chief, (whose spirit has since mingled with the shades of the heroes who had preceded him, not to the hall of Odin, but we trust to a more Christian place,) made his appearance, with his brilliant staff, on —— Moor; whither he came down ostensibly for the purpose of reviewing the troops—really, to marry his nephew and heir to the grand-daughter of a manufacturing millionnaire. (Commercial gold, or heraldic *or*, is a good modern "tricking;" though we query whether our ancestors would have countenanced such bad heraldry, or been content with such abatements of honour on their old shields!)

The wild sounds streamed on the crisp morning air—'twas one of those September days whose mature beauty rivals the budding grace of spring—with a strange wayward beauty, a barbaric grandeur, that carried away both our heart and ears; and we enjoyed it to the full as much as did the steed of a military lady present, that verily danced with the tingling delight. We had a fellow feeling with the brute, and could ourselves, grave and sensible as we are, have pranced about in an ecstasy of admiration, which was by no means allayed when the deep-toned sullen music—for such it is to us—of the artillery uttered its majestic bass to the sharp ringing fire of musketry. While, as wreath after wreath of the light morning mist floated away before the breeze, the glittering files and compact bristling squares, the centaur-like cavalry, and stealthy riflemen gliding along the windings of the copse, became apparent, stretching far into the distance; now hidden for a moment by the rolling vapour from a discharge of firearms, then, as it curled above them, dimming the clear sky, glancing bright in the sun, which blithely kissed sabre and epaulet, and dancing plume, and the knightly-looking pennoned weapon of the picturesque lancer. Truly the scene was beautiful, and one to breathe a warlike spirit into the most unexcitable. And we gazed in a paroxysm of admiration at the exquisite evolutions and fierce charges that seemed as though they must bear all before them, till this perfection of discipline came to an end, and the long files of troops had taken their slow dusty departure; when, hot and fagged, and with bright colours still dancing before our eyes, we returned to our home. There, as each "pleasure has its pain," we found that one was superinduced on ours, in the shape of a robbery of our plate committed while we were staring ourselves out of countenance at the gay spectacle; our faithless [Pg 177] domestics having taken that opportunity of indulging their own taste for the "sublime and beautiful." 'Tis to be hoped they got enough of the "beautiful" at the show, as we indulged them with a touch of the "sublime" (which has one of its sources in *terror*) when we discovered our loss. But we enjoyed the review thoroughly for all that, and are ready for another to-morrow, first taking the precaution to "lock up all our treasure," warned by a catastrophe which nearly reduced us to wooden spoons and hay-makers.

Military music! But to feel its power fully, let it be heard when the exulting strains that are wont to fill the air with exuberant harmony are saddened into the sweet, mournful, heart-breaking notes that steal on the ear at a soldier's funeral, and the gaudy splendour of military array has passed into the drear pomp of that most touching, most monitory sight. Faint mournful bugle-notes are wafted fitfully on the wind, plumes and glittering weapons glance and disappear as the procession advances, now hidden by the hedge-rows, now flashing on the sight, in the autumnal sun, as it winds slowly along the devious road; louder and louder swell those short abrupt trumpet-notes as it draws near, till the whole sad array, in its affecting beauty, is presented to the eye. The *life in death* that pervades the melancholy ceremonial!—"Our brother is not dead, but sleepeth," seems written on the impressive pageant; and we almost expect, while we gaze, to see the deep slumber chased from the closed eyelids, and the recumbent form start up again to claim the warlike weapons with which it was wont to be girt, and that now lie, as if awaiting their master's grasp, in unavailing display on the funereal pall. But a mightier than he has for ever wrenched them from his hold, and vain the sword, the helm, the spear, in that unequal conflict. The last contest is over, and "he is in peace."

"Brother, wrapp'd in quiet sleep,

Thou hast ceased to watch and weep;
Wipe the toil-drops from thy brow,
War and strife are over now;
Bow the head, and bend the knee,
For the crown of victory."

But suppose not pathos confined to the "bugle's wailing sound," and the sad subdued bursts of well-modulated military music—to the long files of slow-pacing troops with reversed arms, and the riderless steed, vainly caparisoned for the battle, that proclaim the obsequies of a chief. We are not ashamed to confess that the tear has been wrung from our eye by the plaintive notes of the few rude instruments that alone lament over the poor private's simple bier—the inharmonious fife, and the measured beats of the muffled drum; while the dull tramp of the appointed mourners following a comrade to his obscure resting-place falls chilly on the heart. Though even he, lowly in death as in life, shares with his leader in the brief wild honours of a soldier's grave—the sharp volleys of musketry pealing over his narrow home, a strange farewell to its passionless inhabitant, on whom the sanctity of the tomb has already passed; the unholy sound falls voiceless on his dull ear, fast closed until

"The last loud trumpet-notes on high
Peal through the echoing sky,
And cleave the quivering ground"—

breaking, with dreadful summons, "the eternal calm wherewith the grave is bound."

"Facilis descensus!" We cannot say that we admire the hurdy-gurdy, that synthesis of a grindstone and a Jew's-harp, yea, of all that is detestable, musically speaking, which must have owed its origin to a desire on the part of Jupiter *Musicus*, in a bad temper, to invent a suitable purgatory for expiating the sins of delinquent musicians; affording, on this supposition, an exquisite illustration of the perfect adaptation of means to an end—one well worthy the attention of all future writers on that subject. Independently of the nuisance of its inexpressibly harsh-jingling tones, (as, if you were being hissed by a quantity of rusty iron wire,) it always gives us the fidget to hear it for the sake of poor Abel, (surely its only admirer,) grinding away for dear life, to the extreme exacerbation of the bears growling beneath, under the combined irritation of no supper and his abominable tinkling. How they must have longed to gobble him up, were it only for the sake of popping an extinguisher on the "zit zan zounds" overhead! It was the reverse of the old tale, "no song no supper;" for they got the song, instead of a supper on the nice plump artist, which they would have liked much better. We wish he had stuck to his text, and persisted in his refusal to play; for then the fate that awaited him would but have been poetical justice for his utter and criminal want of taste—an adequate retribution on a wretch patronising an instrument whose demerits transcend every adjective that occurs to us at this present moment. [Pg 178]

But as we cannot, even in the wildest freaks of our imagination, conceive of any one really liking the hurdy-gurdy—nay, we are prepared to demonstrate much affection absolutely impossible—we incline to think there must have been some corruption of this tradition in the course of its being handed down to us, so far at least as concerns the name of the instrument played at such a price; and on the antiquarian principle that consonants are changeable at pleasure, and vowels go for nothing, we take leave for hurdy-gurdy (what a vulgar sound it has!) to read flute, violin, lute, or, in short, any other presentable musical instrument that may chance to find the greatest favour in our eyes. A change which has the twofold merit of saving Abel's character for taste, and preserving so excellent a story from carrying a lie on the face of it; and for this service of ours, we desire alike the thanks of musicians and moralists, to whom we most respectfully present our improved version, as suitable for circulation by the most fastidious artist, or rigid precisian.

Mercy on us! What a rattling and clattering of doors and windows! The windows will certainly be blown in at last, for they strain and creak like a ship at sea; and how the wind roars and bellows in the chimney, as if Æolus and all his noisy crew were met on a tipsy revel! There—that last gust shook the house! It is to be hoped the chimneys stand with their feather-edge to it, or we shall have a stack or two about our ears in a trice. We wonder whether the cellars would be the safest place, or, indeed, whether there is a safe place about the house at all! We have often heard of the music of the wind, but never felt less disposed to admire it in our life—for the gale has been howling in our ears all day; and this last hour or two, there has been, as the sailors say, a fresh hand at the bellows; so that we are in no humour to sentimentalize on what is, within a few yards of us, curling the dark waves, that, since the day in which their fluctuation was first decreed, have swallowed up so much of what is goodly and beloved of this earth, and that now roar as if for their prey! of which may the great God that ruleth over the sea, as well as the dry land, disappoint their ravening jaws! We shrink and are half appalled at their clamour, while we are on the point of uttering a hasty vow never again to locate ourselves at the sea-side, though it were prescribed by fifty physicians; or, at all events, not so very near that dun mass of troubled waters, blending on the horizon in strange confusion with the lowering, tempestuous sky. Who could believe, as he views them in their milder mood, as we did yesterday—lying placid as a clear lake among the mountains, wherein the bright face of heaven is mirrored, reflecting each light cloud that floats in the deep azure, or the many-tinted hues of evening—that anon, lashed into foaming wrath, they should devour "rich fruit of earth, and human kind," the gold, and the gems, and the priceless treasures wrung from both hemispheres; and the young, the brave, the loved—the bright locks, and the manly beauty, and the hoary head; crushing their diverse hopes into one watery ruin, surging a wild tumultuous dirge over their one fathomless tomb! And then, sated with destruction, smile and glisten beneath the morning sunbeams with all the sportiveness of

child-like innocence.

No, no—speak not to us of the "music of the wind." For to us, in our gloomy moods, it breathes but of desolation, sorrow, and suffering; while, as the blast rises higher, its sentimental mournfulness is mingled with painful thoughts, which press on our spirit, of the peril in which it places so many of our fellow-creatures; and, "God help the poor souls at sea!" rises earnestly in [Pg 179] our heart, and even unconsciously passes the barrier of our lips, as we retire, utterly unsympathizing with the selfish enjoyment of those who delight to wrap up themselves, warm and cozy, in their curtained and downy repose, lulled to deeper slumber by the blustering cold in which others are shivering, or, haply, contending with the winds and waves so soon to overwhelm them. And in our more ordinary everyday humour—if it chance to rise above what in our humble opinion ought to be its maximum, a gentle refreshing breeze, just enough to waft sweet woodland sounds, or ripple the quiet stream—why, it discomposes and discomforts us, whistling, howling, and rattling among slates and chimney-tops, and making whirligigs of the dust, in the town; and in the country, *soughing* among the boughs, as though the trees had got some horrible secret which they were whispering to each other, while their long arms lash each other as if for a wager; the whole exciting in us a most uneasy and undefinable sensation, as though we had done something wrong, and were every minute expecting to be found out! A sensation which might fairly be deemed punishment sufficient for all the minor offences of this offensive world, and which we most decidedly object to having inflicted on us for nothing.

"The music of the wind!" Why, what can be more detestable than the wind whistling through a key-hole? or singing its shrill melancholy song among the straining cordage of the storm-threatened ship? Then, uninteresting accidents happen during squally weather: hats are blown off; coat-tails, and eke the flowing garments of the gentler sex, flap, as if waging war with their distressed wearers; grave dignified persons are compelled to scud along before the gale, shorn of all the impressiveness of their wonted solemn gait, holding, perchance, their shovel-hat firmly on with both hands; and finally, there is neither pathos nor glory in having your head broken by a chimney-pot, or volant weathercock. No, the wide sea is an emblem of all that is deceitful and false, smiling most blandly when preparing to devour you; and the wind is only one shade more respectable—nay, perchance the worse of the two; for the waters, in the self-justifying, neighbour-condemning spirit, apparently inherent in human nature—and for which Father Adam be thanked—may very possibly lay the blame of their fickleness upon it, and bring a host of witnesses into court to testify to their general good behaviour—their calmness, and amenity, and inoffensiveness, till exposed to the evil influence of Æolus's unruly troop—the most wholesale agitators going, and never so happy as when raising a riot.

N.B.—The whole tribe of zephyrs, gentle airs, and evening and morning breezes, will please to consider themselves as *not* included under the term *wind*; to which alone, in its common-place hectoring style, this tirade is meant to apply.

(We hate any thing important being popped within a parenthesis, but as the literary sin pinches us less than the immorality, we must here state what truth requires us to say—that the above, being written during a fit of the spleen, induced by the hubbub of winds and waters adverted to, must be received by the candid reader with considerable allowance.)

So much for the wind, which has blown *music* completely out of our head for a while. What a pity we did not bethink us of placing our Æolian harp in the window, before it had sunk into those short angry gusts which are now alone heard—the mere dregs of the gale; and so have drawn our inspiration from that which puffed it out! But, somehow or other, our bright thoughts generally present themselves too late to be of any use; and this is one in that predicament!

Some people profess to be never tired of music, but to enjoy it *à l'outrance*, at all times and in all places. With such, we must own, we have no sympathy. With all our *love*—not mere liking—for the art, we still hold that it is indebted for its charm to the categories of time and place, at least as much as its neighbours; for (but this confession should be made in the smallest, most modest-looking type in the world) there are both times and places when we hate it cordially, and fervently wish that neither harmony, nor its ancestor, melody, had ever been invented. In some [Pg 180] such mood as made the very heavens themselves odious and pestilential to Hamlet, does music appear to us as unlike itself, as they really were to his crazed imagination of them; and we look forward with malicious pleasure to the time when, if Dryden is to be believed—but your poets are not always prophets—"music shall untune the sky," as a period when all the miseries it has inflicted on us shall be amply revenged by its perpetrating, or assisting at, this gigantic mischief. 'Tis then that your first-fiddle is but impertinent catgut—your fluent organ a vile box of whistles, fit representative of its *Tube*-al inventor—and the sweetest pipe ever resonant with the clear, music-breathing air of Italy, or bravely struggling against the damper atmosphere of our humid isle, sounds harsh and shrilly in our ears, instead of soothing our "savage breast," which seems to marshal all its powers the more emphatically to give the poet the lie. This—now that we are in the confessional—we are free to own—yea, it is incumbent on us to do ourselves this justice—is only when we are in one of our unamiable moods, luckily about as rare as snow at mid-summer, but correspondingly chilling and shocking to the genial ones around us,—ourselves usually most so, like quiet sunshine in November. We are, by nature, the meekest of individuals—a "falcon-hearted dove," or anything else, pretty and poetical, that might give the idea of our possessing a brave heart under a most gentle exterior; but when roused, then indeed are we a very dragon; or rather, to keep up our former simile, (which we think a taking one, though, alas! it is not our own,) and delineate, by one expressive phrase, a mouldering, rage kept in check; by the constitutional cowardice on which it is superinduced—then are we a pigeon-hearted hawk,

wanting only the courage to be desperately cross! (An impertinent friend, who has been looking over our shoulder, suggests that ourselves, under the two above-named phrases, would be better adumbrated by the figure of a dish of skimmed milk, and that same milk curdled! A plague on friends, say we! the most impertinent impertinencies that fall to our lot in this cross-cornered world are sure to emanate from them.)

Another of our sins which—to make "a clean breast"—we must confess, is that of fickleness in our loves; an occasional flirting with other arts and sciences, in their turn—for we protest against the profligacy of making love to more than one at once! We string together fearful and unreadable lengths of iambics, and dactyles, and trochaics, and write sonnets to the bright queen of night, beginning "O thou!" and stick fast in the middle of sorely-laboured and at length baffling extempores to this, that, and t'other; and, wickeder still, then we din them into the ears of a wretched friend, who having once, in the extremity of his courtesy, unhappily proved himself a good listener, is, for his sins, fated to continue so to the end of the chapter—*i.e.*, our interminable rhymes; til, tired of exchanging our bad prose for worse poetry, (and having the fear of his maledictions before our eyes,) we throw it aside in a pet. Then comes a change over our spirit; and we dabble in paint-pots, and flourish a palette, and are great on canvass, and in chalks, and there is a mingled perfume of oil and turpentine in our *studio* (whilome study) that is to us highly refreshing, and good against fainting; and we make tours in search of the picturesque, climbing over stone walls, and what not, to gain some hill-top whence we may see the sun set or the moon rise, haply getting soused in a peat-drain for our pains—and we pencil sketches from nature, really very like; and the blue mountains, the solemn sunsets, and purple shadows among the woods, or falling on the tawny sands, girdling the sea, whose blue-gray melts into the horizon, throw us into quick ecstasies of delight that almost paralyse the adventurous hand as it seeks, often vainly, to transfer the quick-changing loveliness to the enduring canvass. And then we fling away our pencils in despair, and worship, with all the devotion of which ignorance is the mother, (for we never handled the chisel,) the serene beauty of sculpture; most passionless, most intellectual art, breathing the repose of divinity, the grand inaction of the All-powerful; shadowing forth in this its perfection, sublime truth, with its faint, troubled, yet still sublime [Pg 181] reflection, error;—the "without passions" of Divine revelation, and its perversion, its undue development, the unconsciousness, issuing in the final perfection of annihilation, of Braminical deity. So are the extremes of truth and error linked—the error depending for its existence on its antagonist truth. Painting is objective, sculpture subjective, throwing the mind more upon itself, to seek there the hidden forms of grace and beauty yet unmanifested by pencil or chisel. The one appeals more to the senses, the other to the imagination and the mind; exciting ideas rather than presenting them. Painting, sublimate it as you will, is still of the earth; albeit a purer one than this desolated habitation in which the sons of Adam mourn their exile—even the unviolated Eden; of which it is one of the fairest, tenderest emanations, reaching forward to the angelic, yet still a child of earth with mortality on its brow. Sculpture is of the gods, with its Titanic majesty, and calm, celestial grace.

But next succeeds one of our hard, stern, misanthropical fits, in which verjuice and aloes might be taken as the type of our condition, and we propound strange heresies concerning the affections, social and domestic; the leading one being that they are greater inlets to misery than happiness, and that mankind would have been less wretched had they grown up, like blades of grass, alone and separate; a cheerless doctrine, but one which misanthropical logic legitimately deduces from the more comprehensive one, that in this world evil is more potential than good—more active and influential in its own nature. And we bitterly call to mind all the treachery with which our trustfulness has been met—our leaning on that broken reed, friendship—the placing our whole hope and stay on some loved one who has failed us in our extremity;—we call up (and how they throng at that call!) these gloomy recollections, clad in all the terrors of the dark and indistinct past, to build ourselves up in our gloomy creed. And in our utter weariness of soul, the thought of an uninterrupted sentient existence is oppressive: and we passionately wish that the rest of the grave might not be vouchsafed to our body alone, but that our spirit also might sleep a deep, tranquil sleep, until the great day of awakening. 'Tis a dreary mood—like clouded moonlight on troubled, turbid waters! And we could roast Love with his own torch—and we see every thing through crape spectacles, and have no clarity for the softer, more refined emotions and contemplations; so we plunge our head and ears into a chaos of most musty, dusty metaphysics; and by the time we are nearly choked with them, and have reasoned ourselves, first, out of all intercourse with an external world, secondly, out of its existence, thirdly, out of our own, we are right glad to be brought back to our senses, and our old love, whom we embrace with all the ardour of reconciliation after a lover's quarrel, and willingly yield ourselves to the humanizing effect of music—grave or gay, as our mood may dictate, either perfect after its kind.

Reader, should you haply be of the extreme North, has it ever chanced to you to be present at our glorious English cathedral service? If not, congratulate yourself on this enjoyment in reserve for you; and when you next visit our end of the little island, pass not, we beseech you, those Gothic towers, massive and rich, or taper spires rising majestically above the cloistered arches, buttresses, and pinnacles, of these monuments of the piety, consummate skill, and humility of our ancestors; for no modern black board, with gilt letters, proclaims the name of their founders, who have sought a simple, perchance a nameless, tomb within the sacred walls they have reared. Pass within that lofty doorway; and the silence, the stillness, the vastness within, awe the heart! From the care and turmoil without, one step has placed us lonely as in a desert;—from the surges of life to the presence of the dead, who sleep around as if under the more immediate keeping of the Mighty One in His holy temple! And if, entering, a solitary memorial of the more clouded faith which they inherited from their fathers—the jewel, dimmed by its frail setting—should meet the

eye, start not, with the pride of knowledge, from the meek petition, "Ora pro me," enscrolled beneath that mitred effigy, worn by the thoughtless feet of the generations passed away; but believe, and fear not to do so, that "it is accepted according to that a man hath," and that the sincere devotion of the heart, even when erroneously expressed, through *involuntary* ignorance, shall not be rejected by that just Being who seeks not to reap where He hath not sowed; but that it may come up as holy incense before Him, when our cold, unloving, orthodox prayers, backed by our heathenish lives, and meaner offerings on the altar of our God, shall return, blighted and blighting, into our own bosoms. Or should you be too petrified with pious horror at this—Popery, as with your longest, dismalest face, you will style it—to think with any charity of those who dwelt but in the twilight of your open day—the very verger, sleek, round, and smiling, as he stands by you in his sake-robes, shall, in his honest zeal, supply an antidote for the evil, moralizing on the vanity of such supplications, and winding up his simple homily with the significant—"Where the tree falleth, there it shall lie!" Think on that, rigid critic, and take heed how *you* fall!—nor, if you have the capacity for finding "good in every thing," will you disdain to learn the lesson of instruction, which your own heart had failed to supply, from so lowly a source. [Pg 182]

But you still curl your sanctimonious lip, and shrug your pious shoulders, in intimation of your knowing vastly better than your poor, ignorant forefathers! Ah, well—then *live* better; that is all we have got to say to you!

Our very parish churches are now emulating the impressive ceremonial and exquisite musical service of the cathedral. Enter, then, with us one that has seemed, in some degree, to revive the glory of the olden time, when men, as they received, gave lavishly for the service of the altar; nor meted out their offerings with the niggard hand that is moved by the heart of this generation; unmoved, unwarmed, but boastful of its *light*—the light of a moonbeam playing on an iceberg! There is the long sweep of the nave, with the open chancel (not separated from the former by the richly carved and fretted screen, which, however beautiful in itself, mars the grand effect of the whole) leading to the altar—we are old-fashioned people, and fear not to offend by this old-fashioned term—whose sacred garniture glows beneath the many tints of the fine eastern window, with its monograms and emblems, and flowing-robed apostles, through which the mellowed summer sun shines obliquely, throwing strange, grotesque, many-coloured shadows on the walls and pavement; while on either side tall lancet-shaped windows, thickly covered with heraldic devices, bear modest record to the willing service of those whose munificence has reared the pile, and give increased light and richness to the scene. The great western window, also covered with armorial bearings, throws a dim, yet kindling, tint on the stone font aptly placed beneath it, as figurative of its character—initial to that further sacrament, meetly celebrated where the star of Him who first blessed it proclaimed His advent to the expectant world. While throughout the holy building, high-springing arch, and sombre aisle, and vaulted ceiling, and curiously-wrought oaken roof; all combine to impress the mind with awe and admiration, with thoughts of the past and hopes for the future.

But this is not all: these are but the glories of art, worthily employed, indeed, in the service of the temple; 'tis but the body without the life, the soul that animates it. Return at the decline of day, when "man, who goeth forth unto his labour even unto the evening," has received a respite from his ordained toil, and seeks to refresh and elevate his spirit, wearied and worn down with the low, inevitable cares of the day, with the mingled prayer and chant, "rising and falling as on angels' wings," that duly, at each appointed eve, swell through the consecrated structure, filling its concave with solemn melody. The last flush of evening has died in the west, and the scattered worshippers are indistinctly seen by the dim lights, which, bringing out into strong relief the parts immediately adjacent to the massive yet graceful pillars to which they are attached, throw the rest of the interior into deeper gloom, brought into sharp contrast with the illuminated portions, by intersecting arch, clustered shaft, and all the endless intricacies of Gothic [Pg 183] architecture; exuberant with profusely decorated spandrils, sculptured bosses, light flying buttresses, and delicate fan-like tracery. How beautiful and hushed is all around! Now the stillness is broken by approaching footsteps, and the white-robed train of priests and choristers is seen advancing along the aisle, the organ uttering its impressive modulations to soothe the heart, and still its tumult of worldly care and feelings, that these may not, "like birds of evil wing," mar the sacrifice about to be offered on its unworthy altar. And then, amid the succeeding silence, fall on the ear—ay, on the very soul!—the words of Holy Writ, deprecating the wrath of an offended Creator, announcing pardon to the repentant, and cleansing from the pollution of guilt to the heart, vexed with the defilement of this evil world, and yearning after the purity of that higher existence for which, erst designed, the inherited frailty of its nature, and the threefold temptations that unweariedly beset it, have rendered it unfit and unworthy.

How clear, simple, yet most thrilling, is the enunciation of those words! and mark the superb harmony with which, proceeding in the sacred service, the single plaintively modulated voice of the officiating minister is answered by the choral supplications of the assembled worshippers—swelling out in joyous exulting tones, and dying away in sorrowful minor cadence, as though the shadow of sin and suffering fell on those pathways to the highest heaven, clouding the radiance unmeet for mortal eye! And if rude tremulous notes, from some of the lowly ones who, still habited in their garb of daily toil, kneel by our side—for, in that house, distinctions are there none—mingle with the harmony, they mingle not harshly, for there is melody in the heart, and it is the voice of a brother; not the less "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," that the blessings of this life have been more sparingly bestowed on him—perchance to crown him more abundantly with glory and honour in that which is to come. Succeeding each other, the antiphonal chant—venerable with the port of near eighteen centuries; yea, with the hoar of Jewish, as well as

Christian antiquity—the exuberant anthem with its ponderous chorus, and again, the joyous, melancholy, choral response, wherein blend the voices of childish innocence, strong manhood, and plaintive age, hear us on to the close;—that threefold blessing which none may hear unmoved, and whose magnitude seems to transcend our poor belief, as we reverently bow, in awed silence, musing on its unfathomable import; while the deep, mellow voice that pronounced it still lingers on the ear.

How imposing is the sight! One kneeling throng around—the indistinct light, that clothes with mysterious grace the beautiful lineaments of the Gothic structure—the bright gleam on the white and flowing vestments;—and the *stillness!* broken at length by a low, sad melody, in accordance with the subdued tone resting on all, gradually rising into the more swelling chords of the solemn organ, that, earthly strains though they be, seen not unmeet to mingle with those exalted ones that have gone before—rousing the heart from its more celestial contemplations, and by gentle transition—like a descending dove—bringing it down from its heavenward flight to that earth with which its present daily and active duties are concerned, the more fitly and cheerfully performed when thus hallowed; for, be it remembered, the preparation for that unseen world to which we are tending, is the best preparation for our continuance in this.

But the last wave of harmony has died away in the sounding aisles; one by one the lights are extinguished, throwing the varied beauty of arch, and niche, and pillar, into indistinguishable and fast deepening shade; and, last of the train, we, with heart tranquillized and elevated by the service of that evening hour, slowly follow the departing worshippers into the still, clear night.

M. J.

MARTHA BROWN.

By an Ancient Contributor.

TO THE EDITOR OF BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

Sir,—It is twenty years since I first contributed to your Magazine;—it was rather a brief article, and was not inserted in the early part of the work. In short, it consisted of a few lines in the Obituary at the end of the Number, and was as follows:—"Died at Bunderjumm, in the East Indies, Thomas Sneezum, Esq., much and justly regretted by a numerous circle of friends and acquaintances." He was my uncle, sir, and I was his heir,—a highly respectable man, and a remarkable judge of bullocks. He was in the Commissariat, and died worth forty thousand pounds. If you saw his monument, on the wall of our parish church, and read his character, you would know what a beautiful sympathy exists between a dead uncle and a grateful nephew. I took the name of Sneezum in addition to my own—bought an estate, and an immense number of books—and cultivated my land and literature with the greatest care. I planted trees—I drained meadows—and wrote books. The trees grew—the meadows flourished—but the books never came to an end. Something always interfered. I never could get the people in my novels disposed of. When they began talking, they talked for ever; when they fought duels, they were always killed; and, by the time I had got them into the middle of a scrape, I always forgot how I had intended to get them out of it. In history, it was very nearly the same. Centuries jostled against each other like a railway collision. I confused Charlemagne with Frederick Barbarossa, and the Cardinal Richelieu with M. Thiers. So, with the exception of the article I alluded to, in your Magazine, and a few letters on the present potato disease in the Gardener's Guide, I am a Great Unpublished—in the same way as I understand there are a number of extraordinary geniuses in the dramatic line, who have called themselves the Great Unacted. I can only hope that advancing civilization will bring better days to us both—types for me—actors for them.

At the time of the lamented death of my uncle, I was about thirty years of age, and for ten years before that, had been sleeping partner in a house in Liverpool; and I can honestly say I did my part of the duty to the perfect satisfaction of all concerned. I slept incessantly—not exactly in a house in Liverpool but in a very comfortable one—the drawing-room floor, near the Regent's Park. Twice a-year a balance-sheet came in, and a little ready money. I put the money carefully away in a drawer, and threw the balance-sheet in the fire. It was a very happy life, for I subscribed to a circulating library, and wrote the beginnings of books continually.

One day, about six months after I was in possession of the fortune, I heard a ring at the bell. There was something in the ring different from any I had ever heard before—a sort of sweet, modest tingling kind of a ring. I felt as if somebody was shaking my hand all the time; and, on looking back on the event, I think there must be something in mesmerism and every thing else—homœopathy and the water cure included; for it was certainly quite unaccountable on ordinary principles—but so it was. The maid was very slow in answering the bell. There was another pull. The same mysterious effects—a sort of jump—a tremor as it were, not at all unpleasant, but very odd—so I went to the door myself; and there fixed on me, in the most extraordinary manner, were two of the blackest eyes I ever saw—illuminating cheeks of a dark yellow colour, and increasing the whiteness of the most snowy teeth—the brightest, glistenest, shiningest, teeth that can possibly be imagined. She wore—for I may as well tell you it was a woman—she wore a flowing white veil upon her head, the queerest petticoats, and funniest shoes—at that time I had not seen

the Chinese Collection and thought it was Desdemona (whom I had seen Mr Kean put to death a few nights before) "walking" in some of Othello's clothes. What she said, or if she said any thing, I [Pg 185] was too much astonished to make out; but she walked into my room, smiling with her wonderful teeth, and curtsying with the extraordinary petticoats down to the very floor—and calling me "Massa Sib."

"My good woman," I said, "I am afraid you make a mistake. I don't know any one of the name of Sib;" but I checked myself, for I thought she perhaps mistook me—I wore prodigious whiskers at that time—for a gallant colonel, whose name begins with that euphonious syllable.

"No, no—no colonel," she said; "me wants *you*—me no care for colonels." What could she possibly want with me? I had never seen the woman before, or any body like her, except a picture of the Queen of Sheba when she was on a visit to Solomon. Could this woman come from Sheba? Could she take me for—no, no—she couldn't possibly take me for Solomon. So I was quite non-plussed.

"You no get no letter, Massa Sib, to tell you we was to come—eh?"

A letter? a letter?—I had had a hundred and fifty letters, but put them all into a box. How was it possible for me to read such a number? and who did she mean by *us*? How many more of then were coming?

"Massa Sib vill be so fond of him's babba—him vill"——

A dreadful thought came into my head—a conspiracy to extort money—a declaration at Bow Street—a weekly allowance. "Woman!" I said, "what, in heaven's name, do you mean by babba?"

"Dee little babb; it is so pretty—so like him papa."

"And whose baby is it? for I suppose it's a baby you mean, by your chatter about a babb."

"Your's. Oh! you will so lubb it."

"Mine? you detestable impostor, I never had such a thing in all my life."

"And here it is—oh, dee pretty dear!"

And at that moment, another woman, dressed in the same outlandish style as herself, brought up a little round parcel, that looked like a bundle of clothes, and, before I had time to say a word, or shut the door, or fly, placed it in my arms; and then both the women showed their glistening teeth, stretching from ear to ear, and screamed out in chorus, "You vill so lubb dee babba—it is such a pretty dear!"

I stood in a state of stupefaction for some time, but the dark-visaged visitors by no means shared my inactivity; they ran, and screamed, and bustled; trotted down stairs, jumped up again, and filled the whole passage; then the drawing-room; then the little bedroom behind it, with trunks, and bags, and band-boxes, and bird-cages full of parrots, and cloaks, and shawls; till at last, when I started from my trance—in doing which, nearly let the baby fall—I found my whole house taken possession of, and the two women apparently as much at home as if they had lived with me twenty years.

I unrolled the shawls and things from the baby's face. It was an infant about a year old, and opened its eyes as I was looking at it, and looked so wisely and sagaciously at me in return, that I could almost believe it knew as much of the proceeding as I did—and this it might very easily have done, without being a miracle of premature information, for I had not the remotest conception of what the whole thing was about. So I laid the child on the sofa, and went to the bell to ring for a policeman.

"Oh, don't ring him bell, ve are so comfitable here!" said one of the women. "Yesha vill go home 'gain, and I vill habb little bed in t'oder room, and vill sleep vid dee babb—so nice!"

"Oh, you will—will you? We'll see about that," I answered, astonished at the woman's impudence. "I will get you and your little lump of Newcastle"—this was an allusion to her colour—"turned out into the street."

"Oh, Massa Moggan vill soon be here! Him wrote letter a veek since; but him vill come to-day."

"Oh!"——

So I did not pull the bell, but looked at the two intruders just as Macready looks at the witches in *Macbeth*; for Mr Morgan was my legal adviser, and had been my uncle's agent, and transacted all the business connected with the succession; and I had such confidence in him that I never [Pg 186] opened his letters, and had of course thrown the note they talked of into the great wooden box that was the receptacle of all my correspondence.

In the mean time, the baby began to squall.

"Take the brat away, and I'll tell a little bit of my mind to Mr Morgan," I said, grinding my teeth in a horrible passion; and, in a moment, the two women disappeared with the child, roaring and screaming, as if they had stuck pins into it on purpose to drive me mad.

If I had been a man of a tragic turn of mind, and fond of giving vent to the passion of a scene, I would have walked up and down the room, striking myself on the brow or breast, and shouting, "Confusion! distraction!" and other powerful words which Mr Kean used to deliver with

astonishing emphasis; but I had no talent for the intense, and threw myself on the sofa, exclaiming, "Here's a pretty go!"

And a pretty go it undoubtedly was—two black women and a saffron-coloured baby established with me, as if I had been married to a Hottentot; and my sister-in-law, as is very often the case, had come to attend to her nieces' morals and education.

"So! Mr Morgan, what is the meaning of all this?"

But before I had time for further exclamations, my friend Mr Morgan, who had come quietly into the room, interrupted me——

"Hush, my dear Sneezum—you are delighted, I'm sure. A most interesting incident—eh, Sneezum?"

"Oh! these things do all very well in a book," I began; "but, by jingo, sir, it's a very different thing in real life; and I tell you very fairly, I'd sooner be married at once than have all the troubles of bringing up a set of children that I have nothing to do with."

"Children! my dear Sneezum?"

"To be sure; how do I know that some more black women mayn't come—with some more children—till my house grows like a gallery of bronzed figures; but I'll sell them—see if I don't; I'll pack them all on an Italian boy's head-board, and sell them to the doctors—every one."

"You labour under a mistake, my dear Sneezum. You've got my letter?"

"Yes—I got it—but"——

"Oh, then, of course you are too happy to show such respect to the wishes of the defunct."

"What defunct?"

"Your uncle."

"What! uncle Sneezum?" and a wonderful light seemed to break in upon my mind.—"He sent this baby here?"

Mr Morgan nodded his head; and, being a man of great caution, he only put his finger in a mysterious manner alongside of his nose, and said—

"Secrets in all families, Sneezum."

"Oho! well—but the women—they're ugly customers, both of them; uncle Sneezum was no judge of beauty."

"The women! what do you mean?" said Mr Morgan.

"Ay, which of them is it? but you need hardly tell, for I should never know which of them you meant; they're a great deal liker each other than any two peas *I* ever saw. Are we to call her Mrs Sneezum?"

Here Mr Morgan burst into a great laugh.

"My dear Sneezum, you are always trying to find out some wonderful scene or other to put into one of your books. No, no—these are two nurses; one will remain in charge of the child, the other returns immediately to Calcutta."

"And where will the one that is to remain—where will she live?" I asked with a fearful presentiment of something shockingly unpleasant. But before he had time to answer, the black visage of the nurse herself appeared at the door, smiling with more blindingly white teeth than ever.

"We have took dee room below dis—dee babb is in dee beautiful bed, and ve vill never leave Massa Sib—never no more—so nice!"

So I was booked, and felt it useless to complain. [Pg 187]

Chapter II.

Fifteen years passed on most happily. I established myself, or rather old Morgan established me, in my present house; he paid £25,000 for the estate; and I have gone on, as I told you at the beginning of this letter, cultivating my farm and my talents with the utmost care. The little girl grew and grew till I thought she would never stop; and by the time she was sixteen she was at least an inch taller than I was. Many people like those prodigious women of five feet six—I'm only five feet five myself, which I believe was the exact measurement of Napoleon; and I must confess that when I looked on Martha Brown—that was her name—a sort of compliment I always thought to the complexion of her Hindoo mother—I could not imagine how she could be the child of such a curious old-fashioned looking individual as I had heard my uncle Sneezum was. Well, she grew tall—and grew stout—and grew clever; and if old Morgan had been her father himself, he could not have taken more care of her. He was always down at Goslingbury, (that's the name of my place—I sometimes put "Park" after it; but the lawn is now in turnips, and not the least like Blenheim,) and his wife, and his two daughters, and his little boy—in fact, the whole family; and

though, I confess, they were always most friendly and attentive to *me*, their principal cares were bestowed on Martha Brown. I never push myself where I perceive my company is not greatly desired; so I went out to see the planting, or thin the copses, or make new fences, or superintend the ploughing, or betook myself to my study, and gave full way to the wildest flights of fancy in my everlasting first chapters of a novel or romance.

Sir,—It was at that time—now nearly four years ago—that I began a work which I don't believe the most hostile criticism—but I will not boast; it will be enough to say that I consider it equal to any two introductory chapters I ever read. The whole of the first consists in a description of my own house—the name of course changed, and the locality removed to another county. I give the number of the rooms, the width of the passages, the height of ceilings, and a description of the new lifting-hinges to the dining-room door, that raise it over the turkey carpet, without sacrificing, as is usual, an inch of the lower part, and leaving a great interval at the sill. The fields are also very particularly described, and in some instances the exact measurement given; it gives such an appearance of reality, as may be seen in Ainsworth and others; and the second chapter is devoted, or meant to be devoted, to the living interests of the story—the *dramatis personæ*, as it were—with hopes, fears, griefs, and the other passions alluded to in Collins's ode.

Mystery has an indescribable charm, which is the thing that makes me so fond of riddles; and so I determined to have a hero or a heroine, I did not care which, of a most unexampled kind. But how to invent an unexampled hero, I could not imagine. Some disgusting fellow had always done it before: even a blackamoor had been taken up—for there was that horrid Othello; a Jew—there was Sheva; a puppy—there was Pelham; a pickpocket—there was Jack Sheppard; and at last, as the sweet source of mystery, and the pleasantest one to unravel, I thought I would take myself. Yes, I would be the hero of my own book; and as to a heroine, why, one of the Misses Morgan, or Martha Brown, or old Mrs Morgan, or the Indian nurse, (whose name was Ayah, which is Sanscrit or Cherokee for her situation,) any body would do. I was not at all particular; so I began my own description.

It is amazing how little difference there is between man and man. A very few touches judiciously applied, would make Roebuck into Wellington, especially if Roebuck held the brush himself. Involuntarily I found my height increasing, my *embonpoint* diminishing, my eyes brightening, my [Pg 188] hair disporting in wavy ringlets over a majestic brow, till at the end of the second page I was Theodore Fitzhedingham, twenty-five years of age, with several grandfathers and grandmothers distinguished in history before the Norman conquest, and a clear rent-roll of forty thousand a-year. And yet, after all, it was my own individual self, Thomas Smith Sneezum—not, perhaps, exactly as I was at that moment—but as I had often and often fancied myself when I had gone through a course of Thaddeus of Warsaws, and other chronicles of the brave and beautiful. For, I confess, I was no wiser than other people, and it is well known they have an amazing tendency to identify themselves with the characters of the books they read, which perhaps accounts for the contempt that Doctors' or Clergymen's wives in country villages entertain for any body of the name of Snookes; and gives them so prodigious an opinion of their own importance, that they wouldn't visit a stockbroker or flannel manufacturer for the world. But there I was, stuck in the third page of the second chapter—Theodore Fitzhedingham—blessed with all that handsomeness, and rolling in all that money, and not able to move hand or foot, or in short make the least progress towards the *dénouement* of the story. For, with all my study, I could not manufacture a heroine out of any of the girls around me. Miss Letitia Morgan had false teeth—I found it quite impossible to make a heroine of *her*; and besides, I was not even sure of the genuineness of the long curls at the side of her face. For, you will observe, that the beautifying process I have mentioned above; seems strictly confined to one's own particular case. No lying and swopping, and altering and amending, would make those long brown artificial incisors—you saw a roll of the gold wire every time she laughed—into a row of pearls encased in a casket of ruby. That is my description of white teeth in red lips, and I think it is far from bad. Then Miss Sophia was immensely tall, and immensely thin; and in the mornings when she appeared *en negligée*, as they say in the *Morning Post*, her clothes hung straight down in perpendicular descent, so that she looked exactly like the canvass air funnels that you see in a steam-boat: and there were no outs and ins, or ups and downs, about her figure from top to toe; and I found it impossible, for a particular reason, to supply these deficiencies by the exercise of my ingenuity in description And that particular reason was this,—that she did it herself. Lord! what a change took place on Miss Sophia as you saw her gliding about the room like a half emptied pillow-case in the morning, and the grand and *distinguée* (*Morning Post* again) individual that choked up all the doorways, and occupied whole sofas, when you met her at a party at night. Then there were such flounces and tucks, and furbelows,—she sailed through the room enveloped in such awful circumgyrations of muslin—so pulled in at the waist, and so inflated every where else, that she looked—as you saw only her neck and shoulders emerging from the enormous circle in which the rest of her was buried—like an intrepid æronaut who has fallen by some accident through a hole in the balloon, and you were lost in calculations of the length of darning-needle that would be needed to reach to the *vera superficies*. Now if I invent, I like to have the honour of the invention entirely to myself; and I found it impracticable to extract a heroine from seven or eight spring gauze petticoats, and a roll of millinery below the waist, that looked like a military cloak rolled up on the crupper of a life-guardsman's saddle. Then poor Martha Brown was too young, and at that time too bashful, for a heroine; and besides, there was no getting over the blot on her birth. Theodore Fitzhedingham could never think of paying attention to the daughter of a Hindoo woman and old Sneezum, the bullock contractor of Bunderjumm. One day I had been at work in one of the plantations, and just as I was marking with my hand-axe a birch tree to be felled, a thought came into my head. I left the cross half executed, and threw the axe on the bank, hurried

home, and locked myself in the study. Pen and paper were lying before me, and in a moment I had got deep into the introduction of my heroine. She was an orphan thrown on Fitzhedingham's [Pg 189] care—young, beautiful, accomplished, but of unknown mysterious parentage—and the *dénouement* to consist in the discovery that her father was——but I won't mention it just now, for half the value of these things consists in the surprise. I will give you a page or two of it, only begging you to remark how entirely a man's style alters when he gets into a serious work. Here I go gabbling on and on to you, without much regard to style, or perhaps to grammar—(if there are any slips in it, have the kindness to correct them before you show this to any one)—but the instant I take up my pen to write a portion of my novel, I get dignified and heroic, perhaps you will say a little stiff, but I assure you I have formed myself on the best models. The passage I alluded to was this:—

"To all the graces of external beauty Maria Valentine de Courcy united all the captivations of the intellect—all the attractions of the understanding,—all the enchantments of the soul. Cast in the finest mould of earthly loveliness—radiant in all the charms of youth, of innocence, and of integrity—she was the loved of all approachers—the idol of all observers—the appropriator of all affections. A little more ethereal, she would have been a goddess—a little less celestial, she would have been a more ordinary woman than she was. For her nature was of too lofty a kind—her spirit of too sublimated a character—her disposition of too beatified a placidity, to allow her to be classed with the other individuals constituting the female sex. A period of many years had elapsed since she first took up her residence among the proud halls—the baronial corridors—the heraldic passages of Fitzhedingham Castle. Winter had found her wandering in the snowy lanes—Spring had noticed her careering in the budding meadows—Summer had beheld her perambulating through the flowery grove—and Autumn had kept his eye on her as she galloped her managed palfrey through the umbrageous orchard, or skimmed in her light bark over the pellucid bosom of the silver lake. For many years such had been her unvarying course; and if loveliness has a charm—if innocence has an attraction—if youth has a witchery—all—all—were concentrated in the noble figure and exquisitely-chiselled countenance of the subject of our sketch. The colouring of a Titian, the elasticity of a Rubens, the magnificence of a Michael Angelo Buonaparte."—

"Sneezum, Sneezum!" cried old Morgan, kicking with all his might at the study-door; and interrupting me before I could exactly settle how the sentence was to be properly ended—"Come and bid poor Billy good-bye."

"Billy? who's Billy?" I thought—a little perplexed, perhaps, with the labours of composition.

"Come; he's off this minute for Dublin, where he joins the Trigonometrical Survey—a great honour for a fellow not six months in the Engineers."

The old fool was talking about his son William Morgan, who had been at Goslingbury (Park, when I get the turnips up and the grass sown) for a month—a nice merry young man; and so clever at mathematics, and hydraulics, and other scientific pursuits, that he had won all the prizes at Addiscombe; and, though only a second lieutenant, was chosen to conduct a great survey of Ireland.

"I'm coming," I said; and bundled away my description of Maria Valentine de Courcy; and away old Morgan and I went to the lawn, where we expected to find the soldier. But no soldier, nor any body else, was to be seen.

"His mother and sisters are making fools of themselves, I daresay," said I, "blubbering and crying over the boy, as if he was going out to settle in New Zealand."

"I suspect there's a good deal of crying going on," replied old Morgan; "let us look into the summer-house at the top of the garden." So we hurried up the grass walk; and just as we got to the door, I was in the very act of stepping into the bower, and old Morgan close on my heels, when a man, with a handkerchief held to his eyes, rushed distractedly upon us, and rolled us both down the steps, as if we had been pushed by a bull; and in a minute or so, when I came to myself; I found my heels in a gooseberry bush, and my head tight-jammed into a flower-pot; old Morgan [Pg 190] had rolled over into the next bed, which was prepared for celery, and he lay in one of the long troughs, with his hands folded across his breast, and evidently persuaded that he was his own effigy on the top of his own tomb. And this was all the leave-taking we had with the engineer; for, in an agony of grief at parting from his mother, and perhaps to hide his crying, he had hurried out blindfolded, and took no more notice of his host and his father than if we had been a couple of old cabbage-stalks. However, I got up as soon as I was able, and assisted Morgan once more upon his feet. This time we proceeded more cautiously into the summer-house; and on the bench we saw Martha Brown sitting and sobbing with all her might, with her head on Mrs Morgan's shoulder, and Miss Sophia holding a bottle of salts to her nose; while a tear, every now and then, rolled slowly over the tip of her own; and Miss Letitia chafing the sufferer's hands, and occasionally giving them a thump, as if to guard against a fit of hysterics.

Those Hindoos are certainly beautifully made. I never saw any thing more graceful than the recumbent figure of Martha Brown; and I think that was the first time I remarked that she was no longer a child. Up to that moment I had scarcely observed her size; but there she was—a regular full-grown woman—though, I must say, she was behaving rather like an infant, to keep whimpering and sobbing in such a ridiculous way, merely because I had fallen down-stairs.

"What is all this?" I said; "has any body hurt the child?"

"No, no, Mr Sneezum!" exclaimed Mrs Morgan, without looking at me; "leave her alone for a minute or two; it will soon be over."

"How do feel, dear?" enquired Miss Letitia.

"Are you any better, love?" asked Miss Sophia.

And it was very evident they gave themselves no concern about the nearly fatal accident we had met with, which had affected poor Martha so deeply; so I became a little warm.

"Very pretty—very pretty this—upon my word! What in heaven's name is the matter with you all? Here has been that blundering booby William, pushed his father and me down-stairs, and Martha seems the only one that would care a farthing if we had both been killed."

Upon this the girl made a great effort, and lifted up her head; but the moment her eyes rested on me she gave a great scream—wild laughter mixed with the most dreadful sobs; and she was fairly off in an hysterical attack.

"Why, she's worse than she was," I said; but old Morgan took me aside.

"Don't you see," he said, "that she's of a most affectionate, gentle nature, and that William's rushing off in the way he did"—

"Ay, to be sure, and upsetting me in such a dangerous manner. Poor thing! is it all for my sake do you think she's crying?" So I went and took her hand, and said—"Don't cry, Martha, don't cry—I'm not a bit hurt—so be a good girl, and don't vex yourself any more."

Upon this, Mrs Morgan looked at me as if she thought me deranged—so did Miss Letitia—and so did Miss Sophia; and even Martha, when she looked at me again, fell back in fresh fit, holloing "His head! his head"—and this time it was more laughter than sobs.

"Come away—come away," said old Morgan at last; "no wonder you frighten them all to death. What the deuce is that you've got on your head?"

And there stood I with my brows enveloped by the flower-pot.

Chapter III.

I saw the Morgans were making a dead set to take me in. Sometimes it was Miss Letitia, and sometimes Miss Sophia—and always the mother. To hear that woman talk of her daughters, you would swear that two such were never known on earth before. Their sweetness—their temper— [Pg 191] their beauty—the numbers of people that were in love with them—the hosts of rich and handsome fellows they had rejected, and the decided turn both of them had for a quiet country life, and the society of a well-educated, intellectual man of a certain age. She was a wonderful woman Mrs Morgan, and I really believe she thought she was speaking the simple truth all the time. But it wouldn't do—I judged for myself, and never took the least notice of all her hints and boastings. I tried to have them less about the house than they used to be; but nothing would keep them away—they always pretended it was for the sake of Martha Brown—a very likely story that they should trouble their heads about my uncle's anonymous contribution to the population returns, when his veritable nephew and heir was to be had by hook or crook. But I don't mean any disparagement by that to the poor little girl herself—far from it—she was the nicest creature in the world, and really not so black as I had thought; and she was now nearly twenty-one, and played and sung—and such an excellent critic, too! I always read my writings to her the moment they were finished, and she never found the slightest fault in any of them. I had left my description of Maria Valentine de Courcy incompleted for several years—for it is a long time now since the foolish adventure of the flower-pot first showed me that she took a tenderer interest in me than merely that of a cousin—and I now determined to give my second chapter the finishing touch, and consult her on the farther conduct of the story.

"Martha," I said, "I wish you would listen for a minute or two to what I've written."

So she sat down in my study, and worked a flower in an Ottoman square, and was evidently prepared to listen with the utmost attention.

"It is the rest of the second chapter."

"Oh, are you only there yet? I was in hopes you had come to the end of the story."

To the end of the story! Could the girl be hinting that I ought to tell her my mind; for I must tell you, I had so completely got over all prejudice about her birth, that I was strongly tempted to give an additional proof of my veneration for my uncle's memory, by giving his poor little orphan my name. Can she mean any thing by wishing me to come to the end of the story?

"How do you mean to wind up?" she asked.

"Oh! in a most mysterious and surprising manner; but we haven't got near the *dénouement* yet. There must be a duel, of course—a misunderstanding—and a rival."

"Oh! Theodore Fitzhedingham has no occasion to fear a rival," said Martha, pretending to have lost the stitch.

"No! 'Pon my word that's very good of you. Do you really think that Maria Valentine de Courcy

will prefer him to every one else?"

"She will be a very foolish, a very ungrateful girl, if she doesn't—for hasn't he loved her ever since she was a child?"

"Well, Martha, you are certainly a very nice, a very affectionate girl; and I may as well put your mind at rest at once by telling you"—

"Sneezum! Sneezum!"

There was old Morgan again kicking at the study door, and holloing Sneezum with all his might. I had taken Martha's hand, and was just going to tell her to make preparations to become Mrs Sneezum in a week or two. I let go her hand, and rushed to the door.

"What the mischief do you want?"

"Why, here's Billy come back again," he said; "won't you come and give a welcome to poor Billy?"

"No; I be hang'd if I do. He has never apologized for pushing me down the steps; tell him to get out of my house; I have not forgot what alarm my accident caused to poor Martha. Don't you remember it, my dear?"

But there sat Martha—sometimes red and sometimes white—with tears in her eyes, and her lips half open, like the picture of St Cecilia.

"There! the very recollection of it frightens her to death. Go to your room, my dear, and I'll send this blustering fellow out of the house."

She glided out of the study without speaking a word, and I hurried to the drawing-room, but no Billy was there. His mother and sisters were luckily in London, so I turned angrily round on the father. [Pg 192]

"A pretty fellow this son of yours—never one word of apology, either to me or Martha—I won't have him roystering here at all hours, frightening affectionate little girls with his violence."

"Who is it he has frightened?" enquired old Morgan; "who are the affectionate girls you mean? I'm sure he has never caused the least alarm to his sisters in his life."

"Perhaps not—perhaps not, Mr Morgan; but there is another girl that I wouldn't have any injury done to on any account. In fact, I may as well tell you at once, that Martha evidently expects me to provide for her happiness, and I am going to do it."

"Well, nothing can be fairer—but how?"

"Why, as to any little blot on her birth, I don't care much about it. Uncle was a kind friend to me, and I really think I can't do better than give a good steady husband to his child."

"Bravo! bravo! when you have found her."

"What do you mean by—when I have found her?"

"Why, have you never read the letters?"

"No; I never read letters. They're all in the wooden box."

"Then where, when, or how, have you encountered a daughter of your uncle?"

"Why, Martha Brown. I tell you I don't dislike a little dash of Hindoo blood; it's like curry, and gives a flavour."

"And who is the husband you have chosen for her?"

"Myself."

Old Morgan burst into a prodigious laugh, but I was in no humour to stand such nonsense. I got into a furious passion—he answered in an insulting manner—and so I ordered him to get out of my house, him and his son, and all his baggage.

"Certainly, certainly, Mr Sneezum, but you'll repent of it; and, as to your marrying Martha, you'll just as soon marry the Princess-Royal."

When he was gone, I went in search of Martha to settle the matter at once. There was a circular basin among the shrubs upon the lawn, with a nymph cowering under a waterfall that fell all round her like a veil—a very pretty ornament to the grounds—and at one side of it was a little arbour, where I used often to sit and see the sun make rainbows out of the spray that rose round the head of the nymph. To get to it, it was necessary to walk on the ledge of the wall that rose a little above the water in the basin, and this I was induced to do; for, as I was searching for Martha, I thought I heard a voice in the arbour, and I hurried on to tell her what I had done to old Morgan. I stept steadily on tiptoe along the coping-stone—for I wished to surprise her—but on getting to the opening of the arbour, a sight met my eyes that made me lose my balance all of a sudden; and with a start of rage and indignation, I stept backward into the pond, and was forced to battle among the water-lilies for my life. Martha rushed from the arbour and held out her hands in vain; but the person with her—a tall young man, with bushy whiskers and an enormous pair of mustaches—leapt into the basin and lifted me on to the bank, just as I had found it useless

to try any longer to rise above the broad leaves that floated on the top, and made up my mind to give it up as a bad job. When I came to myself my preserver was gone, but Martha was supporting my head.

"Oh, you double-faced, deceitful gipsy!" I began. "Who would have thought you would be sitting, hand locked in hand, with a horrid fellow like the ruffian that was with you in the bower?"

"The ruffian! My dear guardian, don't you know him?"

"How should I? I never saw the vagabond's ugly face before."

"Why, it's William Morgan—how strange you shouldn't recognise him!"

"Well, if it were twenty William Morgans, that's no reason you should sit with your hand in his like the sign of the fire-office over our stable-door." [Pg 193]

"Oh, he's such an old friend! Recollect, sir, we grew up together, and now how can you keep your anger against him? He has saved your life."

"After first startling me into the water. No, no; I'll have none of the Morgans here. I'll go and get changed, and then I'll finish what I was going to tell you when Morgan came to the door."

I was inflexible; I wouldn't let one of the Morgans into my house. Miss Letitia wrote a letter of four pages, and Miss Sophia enclosed a sonnet. Nothing would do. I resolved to keep Martha all to myself; and, for fear of other adventures in the bower, I gave her positive orders not to leave the house. I set people to watch her. I threatened to hang her Ayah with my own hands, and showed her the very bough of the tree I would do it on, if Martha was allowed to speak to any body but myself. I resolved to marry her in a week; and, merely to prevent her being harassed by the Morgans in the interval, I took all these precautions. After that, I determined to pardon the whole family, and had even prepared a letter asking them all to dinner on our wedding-day. Martha did not seem inconsolable. Day after day passed away; and, to show how easy I was in my mind, I went on with the last chapter of my novel, leaving all the middle part to be filled up at my leisure.

One morning—it was last Wednesday—I went into the study, and had just taken pen in hand, when I recollected that that was the very day I had summoned all the labourers on the estate to resist the approach of the levellers and engineers of a disgusting railway that was determined to force itself right through my garden and close under the dining-room windows. I went out to the barn—all the men were there. I gave orders to them to warn the intruders off; if they resisted, to knock them down without ceremony and keep them in custody till I could get them before a magistrate. Having satisfied my mind on these points, I felt so sure of my object being gained in both respects—that is, Martha and the railway—that I dispatched my letter to old Morgan, inviting the whole family to dine with me on Friday, the day I had fixed on for the marriage. Martha sat by my side in the study, and went on with the everlasting Ottoman square. I read to her—

"'Is it in the circle of possible events—is it a contingency to be calculated on in the decrees of fate,' exclaimed Theodore Fitzhedingham—(this was the finest bit out of my last chapter)—'that the girl I have loved—the paragon I have worshipped—the angel I have adored, is, indeed no longer the humbly born maid I thought her but the descendant of princes—the kinswoman of emperors—the inheritrix of kings?'

"'It certainly is far from false, nay, it is absolutely true,' returned Maria Valentine de Courcy, with a condescending smile, 'that I am not the person you have taken me for, but oh! beloved Theodore—faithful Fitzhedingham, need I tell you that my love is unaltered, my affections are unabated, my heart unchanged'"——

"Sir! sir!" cried voice at the door, "they be come." I hurried out; my servant was armed with the poker, I seized the hall tongs as I passed through; and on the lawn, in the coolest possible manner, were about half a dozen fellows smoking their cigars, and occasionally looking through a bright brass instrument upon a three-legged stand, and noting down the result with the greatest nonchalance.

"Oho!" I cried, and rushed at the intruders, "run for the people in the barn, Thomas. Who are you, you infernal interloping vagabonds?"

"Engineers of the Episcopal and Universal Railway Company, sir, and we will trouble you to stand out of the way," said a tall blackguard, scarcely deigning to look at me.

"Oh, you are, are you? Just wait a minute till my men come up, and I'll have you and your railway ducked in the horsepond."

"Don't interrupt us, old man," replied the scientific ruffian; "if we do any damage, charge it to the Company—we have seventy-five thousand shares, and can afford to pay any claims."

"Here!" I cried to the men, "catch that long villain with the dwarf telescope and take him into the house; if I don't get him six weeks of the treadmill my name is not Tom Sneezum." [Pg 194]

The man made a stout resistance, but at last was overpowered, and carried into the hall. I helped to repel the others, and as they were tolerably civil, now that the ringleader was gone, I contented myself with walking them to the very end of my boundaries, and gave them notice, that

if they ventured to return, I would treat them exactly as I had done their chief. This whole business did not take up more than an hour; and before going home, I walked across to Major Slowtops, the nearest magistrate, and luckily found him at home. He promised to trounce the fellow handsomely when I brought him; and telling him I would be back with the culprit and the witnesses in half an hour, I returned in no little triumph to Goslingbury.

"Where is the vagabond?" I exclaimed, when I got into the house.

"He's been gone this hour, sir," said Thomas, hardly able to keep in a laugh.

"Gone! who let him go?"

"Why, he ordered the carriage, sir, and him and Miss Martha is off for London."

"Are you mad, Thomas?—what is it you're speaking of? Where is the rascally leveller of the railway?"

"Lor', sir—don't you know? It was only Mr William at one of his tricks. The moment he took off the spectacles we all knew him, and Miss Martha seemed so pleased"—

"Did she?"

"Oh, yes! and Mr William—but they say he's Captain Morgan now—laughed so. It was certainly a rare good surprise—wasn't it, sir?"

I rushed into my study. "Let her go!" I said, "the false, deceitful Hottentot, or Hindoo, or whatever she is; she's as black as my hat, and a disgrace to my old uncle." So I stood very quietly, brooding over my misfortune—if a misfortune it was—and revenging myself by tearing into a million pieces the beginning and the end of my romantic novel.

"Here we are, Sneezum, my boy!" said old Morgan, on the Friday, at about two o'clock; "I've come on before, to tell you to get into good-humour; for perhaps you've forgotten the invitations you gave us all for to-day."

"What has become of the young woman?" I asked, with a very disdainful look; "my uncle's unowned little girl?"

"Do you mean William's wife?" inquired Mr Morgan; "they were married this morning, at St George's, Hanover Square, and will take you for an hour or two on their way to the North."

"I think, sir, as her guardian—not to say her cousin"——

"There, my dear Sneezum, you are altogether wrong; she was no relation of your uncle. She was the daughter of a Mr Brown of the Commissariat, and left to your uncle's charge; you, of course, succeeded to the guardianship as his representative; but she is no more a Hindoo than you are."

"That makes it worse, sir."

"Come, come, old Sneezum, don't keep up your anger; recollect you are old enough to be her father, and that she likes you next in the whole world to William. Shake hands with them, and be friends; and if you ever had the folly to think of marrying her, keep your own secret, and nobody will be a bit the wiser."

I thought old Morgan advised very wisely—so, if you show this to any body, alter the names a little; for I would not have it known for the world.—Believe me, sir, your obedient servant,

T. S. S.

[Pg 195]

MARLBOROUGH.

No. III.

The campaign of 1707 opened under very different auspices to the Allies from any which had preceded it:—Blenheim had saved Germany, Ramilies had delivered Brabant. The power of the Grande Monarque no longer made Europe tremble. The immense advantage which he had gained in the outset of the contest, by the declaration of the governor of Flanders for the cause of the Bourbons, and the consequent transference of the Flemish fortresses into his hands, had been lost. It was more than lost—it had been won to the enemy. Brussels, Antwerp, Menin, Ath, Ostend, Ghent, Dendermonde, Louvain, now acknowledged the Archduke Charles for their sovereign; the states of Brabant had sent in their adhesion to the Grand Alliance. Italy had been lost as rapidly as it had been won; the stroke of Marlborough at Ramilies had been re-echoed at Turin; and Eugene had expelled the French arms from Piedmont as effectually as Marlborough had from Flanders. Reduced on all sides to his own resources, wakened from his dream of foreign conquests, Louis XIV. now sought only to defend his own frontier; and the arms which had formerly been at the gates of Amsterdam, and recently carried terror into the centre of Germany,

were now reduced to a painful defensive on the Scheldt and the Rhine.

These great advantages would, in all probability, notwithstanding the usual supineness and divisions of the Allied Powers, have led to their obtaining signal success in the next campaign, had not their attention been, early in spring, arrested, and their efforts paralyzed by a new and formidable actor on the theatre of affairs. This was no less a man than CHARLES XII. KING OF SWEDEN; who, after having defeated the coalition of the northern sovereigns formed for his destruction, dictated peace to Denmark at Copenhagen, dethroned the King of Poland, and wellnigh overturned the empire of Russia—had now advanced his victorious standards into the centre of Germany, and at the head of an army hitherto invincible, fifty thousand strong, stationed himself at Dresden, where he had become the arbiter of Europe, and threatened destruction to either of the parties engaged in the contest on the Rhine against whom he chose to direct his hostility.

This extraordinary man approached closer than any warrior of modern times to the great men of antiquity. More nearly even than Napoleon, he realized the heroes of Plutarch—a Stoic in pacific, he was a Cæsar in military life. He had all their virtues, and a considerable share of their barbarism. Achilles did not surpass him in the thirst for warlike renown, nor Hannibal in the perseverance of his character and the fruitfulness of his resources; like Alexander, he would have wept because a world did not remain to conquer. Indefatigable in fatigue, resolute in determination, a lion in heart, he knew no fear but that of his glory being tarnished. Endowed by nature with a constitution of iron, he was capable of undergoing a greater amount of fatigue than any of his soldiers: at the siege of Stralsund, when some of his officers were sinking under the exhaustion of protracted watching, he desired them to retire to rest, and himself took their place. Outstripping his followers in speed, at one time he rode across Germany, almost alone, in an incredibly short space of time: at another, he defended himself for days together, at the head of a handful of attendants, in a barricaded house, against ten thousand Turks. Wrapt up in the passion for fame, he was insensible to the inferior desires which usually rouse or mislead mankind. Wine had no attractions, women no seductions for him: he was indifferent to personal comforts or accommodations; his fare was as simple, his dress as plain, his lodging as rude, as those of the meanest of his followers. To one end alone his attention was exclusively directed, on one acquisition alone his heart was set. Glory, military glory, was the ceaseless object of his ambition; all lesser desires were concentrated in this ruling passion; for this he lived, for this he died. [Pg 196]

That his military abilities were of the very highest order, may be judged of by the fact that, with the resources of the poor monarchy of Sweden, not at that period containing two millions of inhabitants, he entirely defeated a coalition of Russia, Denmark, and Poland, headed by the vast capacity and persevering energy of Peter the Great, and numbering not less than forty millions of subjects under its various sovereigns. Nor let it be said that these nations were rude in the military art, and unfit to contend in the field with the descendants of the followers of Gustavus Adolphus. The Danes are the near neighbours and old enemies of the Swedes; their equals in population, discipline, and warlike resources. Thirty years had not elapsed since the Poles had delivered Europe from Mussulman bondage by the glorious victory of Vienna, under John Sobieski, over two hundred thousand Turks. Europe has since had too much reason to know what are the military resources of Russia, against which all the power of Western Europe, in recent times, has been so signally shattered; and though the soldiers of Peter the Great were very different, in point of discipline, from those that repelled the legions of Napoleon, yet their native courage was the same, and they were directed by an energy and perseverance, on the part of the Czar, which never has been exceeded in warlike annals. What then must have been the capacity of the sovereign, who, with the resources of a monarchy not equalling those of Scotland at this time, could gain such extraordinary success over so powerful a coalition, from the mere force of indefatigable energy, military ability, and heroic determination!

Charles, however, had many faults. He was proud, overbearing, and opinionative. Like all men of powerful original genius, he was confident in his own opinion, and took counsel from none; but, unfortunately, he often forgot also to take counsel from himself. He did not always weigh the objections against his designs with sufficient calmness to give them fair play, or allow his heroic followers a practical opportunity of crowning his enterprises with success. He had so often succeeded against desperate, and apparently hopeless, odds, that he thought himself invincible, and rushed headlong into the most dreadful perils, with no other preparation to ward them off but his own calmness in danger, his inexhaustible fecundity of resources, and the undaunted courage, as well as patience of fatigue and privation, with which he had inspired his followers. It is surprising, however, how often they extricated him from his difficulties; and even in his last expedition against Russia, which terminated in the disaster of Pultowa, he would, to all appearance, have proved successful, if the Tartar chief, Mazeppa, had proved faithful to his engagement. Like Hannibal, his heroic qualities had inspired a multifarious army—*colluvies omnium gentium*—with one homogeneous spirit, rendered them subject to his discipline, faithful to his standard, obedient to his will. But in some particulars his private character was still more exceptionable, and stained with the vices as well as virtues of the savage character. Though not habitually cruel, he was stern, vindictive, and implacable; and his government has been stained by some acts of atrocious barbarity at which humanity shudders, and which must ever leave an indelible stain on his memory.

Louis XIV., in his distress, was naturally anxious to gain the support of so powerful an ally, who was now at Dresden at the head of fifty-three thousand veteran soldiers, ready to fall on the rear of Marlborough's army, that threatened the defensive barrier of France in the Low Countries.

Every effort, accordingly, was made to gain Charles over to the French interest. The ancient alliance of France with Sweden, their mutual cause of complaint against the Emperor, the glories of Gustavus Adolphus and the thirty years' war, in which they had stood side by side, were held forth to dazzle his imagination or convince his judgment. The Swedish monarch appeared ready to yield to these efforts. He brought forward various real or imaginary grounds of complaint against the German powers, for infractions of the constitution of the empire, of which he put [Pg 197] himself forth as the guarantee, as heir to the crown and fame of Gustavus Adolphus, as well as for sundry insults alleged to have been committed against the Swedish crown or subjects. These various subjects of complaint were sedulously inflamed by the French agents; and the weight of their arguments was not a little increased by the knowledge of the fact, that they were authorized to offer Count Piper, the prime minister of Charles, 300,000 livres (L.12,000), to quicken his movements in favour of the cabinet of Versailles, besides bribes in proportion to the subordinate ministers of the Swedish monarch.[10]

Marlborough, as well he might, was extremely uneasy at this negotiation, which he soon discovered by secret information, as well as the undisguised reluctance of the German powers to furnish the contingents for which they were bound for the ensuing campaign. Indeed, it could hardly be expected that the Northern powers in Germany should send their chief disposable forces to swell Marlborough's army beyond the Rhine, when so warlike a monarch, at the head of fifty thousand men, was in the centre of the empire, with his intentions as yet undeclared, and exposed to the influence of every imaginable seduction. He dispatched, accordingly, General Grumbkow, an adroit and intelligent diplomatist, who had been sent by the King of Prussia on a mission to the Allied headquarters, to Dresden, to endeavour to ascertain the real intentions of the Swedish monarch. He was not long of discovering that Charles had assumed an angry tone towards the confederates, only in order to extract favourable terms of accommodation from them, and that Muscovy was the real object on which his heart was set. His despatches convey a curious and highly interesting picture of Charles and the Swedish court and army at this important juncture.[11] The negotiation went on for some time with varying success; but at length matters were brought to a crisis, by the King of Sweden declaring that he would treat with none but Marlborough in person.

This immediately led to the English general repairing to the court of Charles XII. at Dresden. He [Pg 198] left the Hague on the 20th April accordingly; and after visiting Hanover on the way, where, as usual, there were some jealousies to appease, arrived at the Swedish camp of Alt-Ranstadt on the 28th. The Duke drove immediately to the headquarters of Count Piper, from whom he received the most flattering assurance of the gratification which the Swedish monarch had felt at his arrival. He was shortly after introduced to the monarch, to whom he delivered a letter from the Queen of England, and at the same time addressed him in the following flattering terms:—"I present to your Majesty a letter, not from the chancery, but from the heart of the Queen, my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea, to see a prince admired by the whole universe. I am in this particular more happy than the Queen, and I wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a general as your Majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know in the art of war."[12]

This adroit compliment from so great and justly celebrated a commander, produced an immediate effect on the Swedish monarch, who was passionately desirous of military glory. His satisfaction was visible in his countenance, and he returned a gracious answer in these terms:—"The Queen of Great Britain's letter and your person are both very acceptable to me, and I shall always have the utmost regard for the interposition of her Britannic Majesty and the interests of the Grand Alliance. It is much against my will that I have been obliged to give umbrage to any of the parties engaged in it. I have had just cause to come into this country with my troops; but you may assure the Queen, my sister, that my design is to depart from hence as soon as I have obtained the satisfaction I demand, but not till then. However, I shall do nothing that can tend to the prejudice of the common cause in general, or of the Protestant religion, of which I shall always glory to be a zealous protector." This favourable answer was immediately followed by an invitation to dine with the King, by whom he was placed on his right hand, and honoured with the most flattering attention. In the course of the evening the conversation turned chiefly on military matters, in which Marlborough exerted himself with such skill and success, that he had another long private audience of Charles; and before his departure, that monarch even exceeded his views, and declared that there could be no security for the peace of Europe till France was reduced to the rank she held at the date of the treaty of Westphalia.

Though the address and abilities of Marlborough, however, had thus removed the chief danger to be apprehended from the presence of the Swedish monarch at Dresden, yet other matters of great delicacy remained still for adjustment, which required all his prudence and skill to bring to a satisfactory issue. Not the least of these difficulties arose from the zeal of the King of Sweden for the protection of the Protestant religion, and his desire to revive and secure the privileges granted to the German Protestants by the treaty of Westphalia. As Marlborough justly apprehended that the Court of Vienna might take umbrage at these demands, and so be diverted from the objects of the Grand Alliance, he exerted himself to the utmost to convince his Majesty that the great object in the mean time, even as regarded the Protestant faith, was to humble the French monarch, who had shown himself its inveterate enemy by the atrocious persecutions consequent on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and that, if this were once done, the Emperor would be unable to prevent any stipulations being inserted in favour of the Reformed faith in the general peace which might follow. Charles was convinced by these arguments, which,

in truth, were well-founded, and even went so far as to propose a secret convention with England for the promotion of the Protestant interest; a proposal which, so embarrassing at the moment when Great Britain was in close alliance with the Emperor, Marlborough contrived to elude with admirable dexterity. Another matter of great delicacy was the conduct to be observed towards the dethroned King of Poland, Augustus, who was also at Dresden, and of course viewed with the utmost jealousy the close intimacy between Marlborough and his formidable enemy Charles. Here, however, the diplomatic skill of the English general overcame all difficulties, and by skilfully taking advantage of his pecuniary embarrassments, after his territories had been ravaged and exhausted by the Swedish forces, and engaging that the Emperor should take a large part of his troops into his pay, he succeeded at once in gaining over the dethroned monarch, and securing a considerable body of fresh troops for the service of the Allies. By these means, aided by the judicious bestowing of considerable pensions on Count Piper and the chief Swedish ministers, paid in advance, Marlborough succeeded in entirely allaying the storm which had threatened his rear, and left the Saxon capital, after a residence of ten days, perfectly secure of the pacific intentions of the Swedish monarch, and having fully divined the intended direction of his forces toward Moscow.[13] [Pg 199]

The brilliant success with which this delicate and important negotiation terminated, naturally induced a hope that vigorous operations would be undertaken by the Allied powers, and that the great successes of the preceding campaign would be so far improved, as to compel the Court of France to submit to such terms as the peace of Europe, and the independence of the adjoining States, required. It was quite the reverse, and Marlborough had again the indescribable mortification of seeing month after month of the summer of 1707 glide away, without one single measure conducive to the common cause, or worthy of the real strength of the Allied powers, having been attempted. They had all relapsed into their former and fatal jealousies and procrastination. The Dutch, notwithstanding the inestimable services which Marlborough had rendered to their Republic, had again become distrustful, and authorized their field-deputies to thwart and mar all his operations. They made no concealment of their opinion, that their interests were now secured, and that the blood and treasure of the United Provinces should no longer be wasted in enterprises in which the Emperor or Queen of England alone were concerned. They never failed accordingly to interfere when any aggressive movement was in contemplation; and even when the Duke, in the course of his skilful marches and countermarches, had gained the opportunity for which he longed, of bringing the enemy to an engagement on terms approaching to an equality, never failed to interpose with their fatal negative, and prevent any thing being attempted. They did this, in particular, under the most vexatious circumstances, on the 27th May, near Nevilles, where Marlborough had brought his troops into the presence of the enemy with every prospect of signalizing that place by a glorious victory. A council of war forbade an engagement despite Marlborough's most earnest entreaties, and compelled him in consequence to fall back to Branheim, to protect Louvain and Brussels. The indignation of the English general at this unworthy treatment, and at the universal selfishness of the Allied powers, exhaled in bitter terms in his private correspondence.[14]

The consequence of this determination on the part of the Dutch field-deputies to prevent any serious operation being undertaken, was, that the whole summer passed away in a species of armed truce, or a series of manœuvres so insignificant, as to be unworthy of the name of a campaign. Vendôme, who commanded the French, though at the head of a gallant army above eighty thousand strong, had too much respect for his formidable antagonist to hazard any offensive operation, or run the risk of a pitched battle, unless in defence of his own territory. On the other hand, Marlborough, harassed by the incessant opposition of the Dutch deputies, and yet not strong enough to undertake any operation of importance without the support of their troops, was reduced to merely nominal or defensive operations. The secret of this ruinous system, which was at the time the subject of loud complaints, and appeared wholly inexplicable, is now fully revealed by the published despatches. The Dutch were absolutely set on getting an accession of territory, and a strong line of barrier towns, set apart for them out of the *Austrian* Netherlands; and as the Emperor, not unnaturally, objected to being shorn of his territories, as a remuneration for his efforts in favour of European independence, they resolved to thwart all the measures of the Allied generals, in the hope that, it the end, they would in this manner prevail in their demands with the Allied cabinets.[15] [Pg 200]

It was not, however, in the Low Countries alone that the selfish views and jealousies of the Allies prevented any operation of importance from being undertaken, and blasted all the fair prospects which the brilliant victories of the preceding campaign had afforded. In Spain, the Allies had suffered a fearful reverse by the battle of Almanza, which in a manner ruined the Austrian prospects in the Peninsula, and rendered some operation indispensable, to relieve the pressure felt by the Allies in that quarter. Peterborough, whose great military abilities had hitherto nearly alone sustained their sinking cause in Spain, had been deprived of his command in Catalonia, from that absurd jealousy of foreigners which in every age has formed so marked a feature in the Spanish character. His successor, Lord Galway, was far from possessing his military abilities, and every thing presaged that, unless a great effort was immediately made, the crown of Spain, the prize for which all contended in the war, would be lost to the Allied powers. Nor was the aspect of affairs more promising on the Rhine. The Margrave of Baden had there died; and his army, before a successor could be appointed, sustained a signal defeat at Stodhoffen. This disaster having opened the gates of Germany, Marshal Villars, at the head of a powerful French army, burst into the Palatinate, which he ravaged with fire and sword. To complete the catalogue of disasters, the disputes between the King of Sweden and the Emperor were again renewed, and

conducted with such acrimony, that it required all the weight and address of Marlborough to prevent a rupture, threatening fatal consequences, from breaking out between these powers.

Surrounded by so many difficulties, Marlborough wisely judged that the most pressing danger was that in Spain, and that the first thing to be done was to stop the progress of the Bourbon armies in that quarter. As the forces in the Peninsula afforded no hopes of effecting that object, he conceived, with reason, that the only way to make an effectual diversion in that quarter was to [Pg 201] take advantage of the superiority of the Allies in Piedmont, since the decisive victory of Turin in the preceding year, and threaten Provence with a serious irruption. For this purpose, Marlborough no sooner heard of the disasters in Spain, than he urged in the strongest manner upon the Allied courts to push Prince Eugene with his victorious army across the Maritime Alps, and lay siege to Toulon. Such an offensive movement, which might be powerfully aided by the English fleet in the Mediterranean, would at once remove the war from the Italian plains, fix it in the south of France, and lead to the recall of a considerable part of the French forces now employed beyond the Pyrenees. But though the reasons for this expedition were thus pressing, and it afforded the only feasible prospect of bringing affairs round in the Peninsula; yet the usual jealousies of the coalesced powers, the moment it was proposed, opposed insurmountable objections to its being carried into effect. It was objected to the siege of Toulon, that it was a maritime operation, of value to England alone: the Emperor insisted on the Allied forces being exclusively employed in the reduction of the fortresses yet remaining in the hands of the French in the Milanese; while Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, between whom and the Imperialists the most violent jealousy had arisen, threatened to withdraw altogether from the alliance, unless Eugene's army was directed to the protection and consolidation of his dominion. The real reason of these obstacles thrown by the Emperor in the way of these operations, was, that he had ambitious designs of his own on Naples, and he had, to facilitate their accomplishment, concluded a secret convention with Louis for a sort of neutrality or understanding in Italy, which enabled that monarch to direct the forces employed, or destined to be employed there, to the Spanish peninsula. Marlborough's energetic representations, however, at length prevailed over all these difficulties; and the reduction of the Milanese having been completed, the Emperor, in the end of June, consented to Prince Eugene invading Provence at the head of thirty-five thousand men.[16]

The invasion of the territory of the Grande Monarque accordingly took place, and was supported by a powerful English squadron, which, as Eugene's army advanced into Provence by the Col di Tende, kept the sea-coast in a constant state of alarm. No resistance, as Marlborough had predicted, was attempted; and the Allies, almost without firing a shot, arrived at the heights of Vilate, in the neighbourhood of Toulon, on the 27th July. Had Eugene been aware of the real condition of the defences, and the insubordination which prevailed in the garrison, he might, without difficulty, have made himself master of this important fortress. But from ignorance of these propitious circumstances, he deemed it necessary to commence operations against it in form; and the time occupied in the necessary preparations for a siege proved fatal to the enterprise. The French made extraordinary efforts to bring troops to the menaced point; and, amongst other reinforcements, thirteen battalions and nine squadrons were detached from Vendôme's army in the Netherlands. No sooner did Marlborough hear of this detachment, than he concentrated his forces, and made a forward movement to bring Vendôme to battle, to which the Dutch deputies had at length consented; but that general, after some skilful marches and countermarches, retired to an intrenched camp under the guns of Lille, of such strength as to bid defiance to every attack for the remainder of the campaign. Meanwhile the troops, converging towards Toulon, having formed a respectable array in his rear, Eugene was under the necessity of raising the siege, and he retired, as he had entered the country, by the Col di Tende, having first embarked his heavy artillery and stores on board the English fleet. But though the expedition thus failed in its ostensible object, it fully succeeded in its real one, which was to [Pg 202] effect a diversion in the south of France, and relieve the pressure on the Spanish peninsula, by giving the armies of Louis employment in the defence of their own territory.

Marlborough led his army into winter quarters in the end of October, and Vendôme did the same; the weather being so thoroughly broken as to render it impossible to keep the field. He repaired first to Frankfort, where he met the Elector of Hanover, and then to the Hague, where he exerted himself to inspire a better feeling in the Dutch government, and to get Eugene appointed to the supreme command in Spain: a project which afforded the only feasible prospect of retrieving affairs in the Peninsula, and which, if adopted, might have changed the fate and ultimate issue of the war. Neither the Emperor nor the court of Madrid, however, would consent to this arrangement; the former, because he feared to lose that great general in Italy, the latter because they feared to gain him in Spain. Marlborough, meanwhile, embarked for England on the 7th November, where his presence had now become indispensably necessary to arrest the progress of court and parliamentary intrigues, which threatened to prove immediately fatal to his influence and ascendancy.

The origin of these intrigues was to be found not merely in the asperity of party feeling which, at that time, owing to the recent Revolution, prevailed to a degree never before paralleled in English history, and the peculiar obloquy to which Marlborough was exposed, owing to the part he had taken in that transaction; but to another cause of a private nature, but which, in all courts, and especially under a female reign, is likely to produce important public results. During Marlborough's absence from court, owing to his commanding the armies in Flanders, his influence with the Queen had sensibly declined, and that of another materially increased. Queen Anne had become alienated from her former favourite, the Duchess of Marlborough, and, what is

very remarkable, in consequence of the growing ascendancy of a person recommended by the duchess herself. Worn out with the incessant fatigue of attendance on the royal person, the duchess had recommended a poor relative of her own, named Abigail Hill, to relieve her of part of her laborious duties. This young lady, who possessed considerable talents, and a strong desire for intrigue and elevation, had been educated in High Church and Tory principles, and she had not been long about the royal person before she began to acquire an influence over the Queen's mind. Harley, whose ambition and spirit of intrigue were at least equal to her own, was not slow in perceiving the new source of influence thus opened up in the royal household, and a close alliance was soon established between them. These matters are not beneath the dignity of history; they are the secret springs on which its most important changes sometimes depend. Abigail Hill soon after bestowed her hand on Mr Masham, who had also been placed in the Queen's household by the duchess, and, under the name of Mrs Masham, became the principal instrument in Marlborough's fall, and the main cause of the fruit of the glorious victories of the English general being lost by the treaty of Utrecht.

Though the ascendancy of Mrs Masham, and the treacherous part she was playing to her benefactress, had long been evident to others, yet the Duchess of Marlborough long continued blind to it. Her marriage, however, opened the eyes of the duchess, and, soon after the promotion of Davies and Blackhall, both avowed Tories, not free from the imputation of Jacobitism, to the Episcopal bench, in opposition to the recommendation of Marlborough and Godolphin, gave convincing proof that their influence at court in the disposal even of the highest offices, had been supplanted by that of the new favourite. The consequences were highly prejudicial to Marlborough. The Whigs, who were not fully aware of this secret influence, and who had long distrusted him on account of his former connexion with James II., and envied him on account of his great services to the country, and lustre at court, now joined the Tories in bitter enmity against him. He was accused of protracting the war for his own private purposes; and the man [Pg 203] who had refused the government of the Netherlands, and £60,000 a-year, lest it should breed jealousies in the alliance, was accused of checking the career of victory from sordid motives connected with the profits of the war. His brother Churchill was prosecuted by Halifax and the Whigs on the charge of neglect of duty; and the intercession of the duke, though made in humble terms, was not so much as even honoured with a reply. The consequences of this decline of court favour were soon apparent. Recruits and supplies were forwarded to the army with a very scanty hand—the military plans and proposals of the duke were either overruled or subjected to a rigid and often inimical examination—and that division of responsibility and weakening of power became apparent, which is so often in military, as well as political transactions, the forerunner of disaster.

Matters were in this untoward state, when Marlborough, in the middle of November, returned from the Hague to London. The failure before Toulon, the disasters in Spain, the nullity of the campaign in Flanders, were made the subject of unbounded outcry in the country; and the most acrimonious debates took place in Parliament, in the course of which violent reproaches were thrown on Marlborough, and all his great services to his country seemed to be forgotten. Matters even went so far, that it was seriously proposed to draft fifteen thousand men from Flanders to reinforce the armies in Spain, although it might easily be foreseen that the only effect of this would be to drive the Dutch to a separate peace, and lose the whole of Brabant, wrested at such an expense of blood and treasure from the French arms. The Session of Parliament was one incessant scene of vehement contention; but at length the secret league of Harley with Mrs Masham and the Tories became so apparent, that all his colleagues refused to attend a cabinet council to which he was summoned, and he was obliged to retire. This decisive step restored confidence between Marlborough and the Whigs, and for a time re-established his influence in the government; but Mrs Masham's sway over the Queen was not so easily subverted, and, in the end, proved fatal both to his fortune and the career of glory he had opened to his country.

Desirous of retaliating upon England the insult which the Allied armies had inflicted upon France by the invasion of Provence, Louis XIV. now made serious preparations for the invasion of Great Britain, with the avowed object of re-establishing the Chevalier of St George, the heir of James II., on the throne from which that unhappy monarch had been expelled. Under Marlborough's able direction, to whom, as commander-in-chief, the defensive measures were entrusted, every thing was soon put in a train to avert the threatened danger. Scotland was the scene where an outbreak was to be apprehended, and all the disposable forces of the empire, including ten battalions brought over from Flanders, were quickly sent to that country. The *habeas corpus* act was suspended. Edinburgh Castle was strongly garrisoned, and the British squadron so skilfully disposed in the North Seas, that when the Chevalier with a French squadron put to sea, he was so closely watched, that after vainly attempting to land, both in the Firth of Forth and the neighbourhood of Inverness, he was obliged to return to Dunkirk. This auspicious event entirely restored Marlborough's credit with the nation, and dispelled every remnant of suspicion with which the Whigs regarded him in relation to the exiled family; and though his influence with the court was secretly undermined, his power, to outward appearance, was unbounded; and he resumed the command of the army in the beginning of April 1708, with authority as paramount as he had enjoyed on any former occasion.

Every thing announced a more important campaign than the preceding had proved in the Low Countries. Encouraged by the little progress which the Allies had made in the former campaign, Louis XIV. had been induced to make the most vigorous efforts to accumulate a preponderating force, and re-establish his affairs in that quarter. Vendôme's army had, by great exertion, been raised to a hundred thousand men, and at the same time secret communications were opened [Pg 204]

with a considerable portion of the inhabitants in some of the frontier fortresses of Brabant, in order to induce then on the first favourable opportunity to surrender them to the French arms. The unpopularity of the Dutch authorities in those towns, and the open pretensions which they put forth to wrest them from the Emperor, and deliver them over at a general peace to the hated rule of Protestant Holland, rendered those advances peculiarly acceptable. Vendôme's instructions were to act on the offensive, though in a cautious manner; to push forward in order to take advantage of these favourable dispositions, and endeavour to regain the important ground which had been lost during the panic which followed the battle of Ramilies.

On their side the Allies had not been idle; and preparations had been made for transferring the weight of the contest to the Low Countries. The war in Italy being in a manner terminated by the entire expulsion of the French from that peninsula, and their secret convention for a sort of suspension of active operations with the Emperor in that quarter, Prince Eugene had been brought to the theatre of real hostilities on the northern frontier of France. It was agreed that two great armies should be formed, one in Brabant under Marlborough, and the other on the Moselle under Eugene; that the Elector of Hanover should act on the defensive on the Rhine; that Eugene should join the English general, and that with their united force they should force the French general to a battle. This well conceived plan met with the usual resistance on the part of the Allied powers, which compelled Marlborough to repair in person to Hanover, to smooth over the objections of its Elector. Meanwhile the dissensions and difficulties of the cabinet in London increased to such a degree, that he had scarcely quitted England when he was urged by Godolphin, and the majority of his own party, to return, as the only means of saving them from shipwreck. Marlborough, however, with that patriotic spirit which ever distinguished him, and not less than his splendid abilities formed so honourable a feature in his character, refused to leave the seat of war, and left his political friends to shift for themselves as they best could. Having obtained a promise from Eugene that he would join him before the month expired he joined the army at Ghent on the 9th May 1708, and on the same day reviewed the British division stationed in that city.

An event soon occurred which showed how wide-spread were the intrigues of the French in the Flemish towns, and how insecure was the foundation on which the authority of the Allies rested there. An accidental circumstance led to the discovery of a letter put into the post-office of Ghent, containing the whole particulars of a plan for admitting the French troops into the citadel of Antwerp. Vendôme at the same time made a forward movement to take advantage of these attempts; but Marlborough was on his guard, and both frustrated the intended rising in Antwerp, and barred the way against the attempted advance of the French army. Disconcerted by the failure of this enterprise, Vendôme moved to Soignies at the head of an hundred thousand men, where he halted at the distance of three leagues from the Allied armies. A great and decisive action was confidently expected in both armies; as, although Marlborough could not muster above eighty thousand combatants, it was well known he would not decline a battle, although he was not as yet sufficiently strong to assume the offensive. Vendôme, however, declined attacking the Allies where they stood, and, filing to the right to Braine la Leude, close to the field of Waterloo, again halted in a position, threatening at once both Louvain and Brussels. Moving parallel to him, but still keeping on the defensive, Marlborough retired to Anderleet. No sooner had he arrived there, than intelligence was received of a farther movement to the right on the part of the French general, which indicated an intention to make Louvain the object of attack. Without losing an instant, Marlborough marched on that very night with the utmost expedition, amidst torrents of rain, to Parc, where he established himself in such strong ground, covering [Pg 205] Louvain, that Vendôme, finding himself anticipated in his movements, fell back to Braine-le-Leude without firing a shot.[17]

Though Marlborough, however, had in this manner foiled the movement of the French general, he was in no condition to undertake offensive operations until the arrival of Eugene's army from the Moselle raised his force nearer to an equality with the preponderating masses of the enemy, headed by so able a general as Vendôme. The usual delays, however, of the German powers, for long prevented this object being attained. For about a month Marlborough was retained in a state of forced inactivity from this cause, during which period he bitterly complained, "that the slowness of the German powers was such as to threaten the worst consequences." At length, however, the pressing representations of the English general, seconded by the whole weight of Prince Eugene, overcame the tardiness of the German Electors, and the army of the Moselle began its march towards Brabant. But the Prince was too far distant to bring up his troops to the theatre of active operations before decisive events had taken place; and fortunately for the glory of England, to Marlborough alone and to his army belongs the honour of one of the most decisive victories recorded in its annals.

Encouraged by his superiority of numbers, and the assurances of support he received from the malecontents in the Flemish towns, Vendôme, who was both an able and enterprising general, put in execution, in the beginning of July, a design which he had long meditated, for the purpose of expelling the Allies from Brabant. This was by a sudden irruption to make himself master of Ghent, with several of the citizens of which he had established a secret correspondence. This city commands the course of the Scheldt and the Lys, and lay in the very centre of Marlborough's water communications; and as the fortifications of Oudenarde were in a very dilapidated state, it was reasonable to suppose that its reduction would speedily follow. The capture of these fortresses would at once break up Marlborough's communications, and sever the connecting link between Flanders and Brabant, so as to compel the English army to fall back to Antwerp and the line of the Scheldt, and thus deprive them of the whole fruits of the victory of Ramilies. Such was

the able and well-conceived design of the French general, which promised the most brilliant results; and against a general less wary and able than Marlborough, unquestionably would have obtained them.

Vendôme executed the first part of this design with vigour and success. On the evening of the 4th July he suddenly broke up from Braine-le-Leude, and marching rapidly all night, advanced towards Hall and Tubise, dispatching at the same time, parties towards such towns in that quarter as had maintained a correspondence with him. One of these parties, by the connivance of the watch, made itself master of Ghent. At the same time Bruges was surrendered to another party under the Count de la Motte; the small but important fort of Plassendael was carried by storm, and a detachment sent to recover Ghent found the gates shut by the inhabitants, who had now openly joined the enemy, and invested the Allied garrison in the citadel.

Marlborough no sooner heard of this movement than he followed with his army; but he arrived in the neighbourhood of Tubise in time only to witness their passage of the Senne, near that place. Giving orders to his troops to prepare for battle, he put himself in motion at one next morning, intending to bring the enemy to an immediate action. The activity of Vendôme, however, baffled his design. He made his men, weary as they were, march all night and cross the Dender at several points, breaking down the bridges between Alort and Oerdegun, and the Allies only arrived in time to make three hundred prisoners from the rearguard. Scarcely had they recovered from this disappointment, when intelligence arrived of the surprise of Ghent and [Pg 206] Bruges; while, at the same time, the ferment in Brussels, owing to the near approach of the French to that capital, became so great, that there was every reason to apprehend a similar disaster, from the disaffection of some of its inhabitants. The most serious apprehensions also were entertained for Oudenarde, the garrison of which was feeble, and its works dilapidated. Marlborough, therefore, dispatched instant orders to Lord Chandos, who commanded at Ath, to collect all the detachments he could from the garrisons in the neighbourhood, and throw himself into that fortress, and with such diligence were these orders executed that Oudenarde was secured against a *coup-de-main*, before the French outposts appeared before it. Vendôme, however, felt himself strong enough to undertake its siege in form. He drew his army round it; the investment was completed on the evening of the 9th, and a train of heavy artillery ordered from Tournay, to commence the siege,[18] while he himself with the covering army, took post in a strong camp at Lessines, on the river Dender.

Such was the chagrin experienced by Marlborough at these untoward events, that he was thrown into a fever, the result of fatigue, watching, and anxiety. His physician earnestly counselled him to leave the camp, and retire to Brussels, as the only means of arresting his distemper; but nothing could induce him to leave his post at such a crisis. He continued in his tent accordingly, and the orders were issued by Marshal Overkirk. He was greatly relieved on the 7th, by the arrival of Prince Eugene, who, finding his troops could not come up in time, had left his cavalry at Maestricht, and hastened in person, though without any followers but his personal suite, to take part in the approaching conflict. Great was the joy of Marlborough on learning the arrival of so illustrious a general; not a feeling of jealousy crossed the breast of either of these great men. His first words to Eugene were—"I am not without hopes of congratulating your Highness on a great victory; for my troops will be animated by the presence of so distinguished a commander." Eugene warmly approved the resolution he had taken of instantly attacking the enemy: and a council of war having been summoned, their united opinion prevailed over the objections of the Dutch deputies, who were now seriously alarmed for their barrier, and it was resolved to give battle to the enemy in his position in front of Oudenarde.[19]

The Allies broke up at two in the morning of the 9th July, and advanced towards the French frontiers at Lessines in four great columns. So rapid and well ordered was the march, that before noon the heads of the columns reached Herfilingen, fourteen miles fron Asche, whence they had started. Bridges were rapidly thrown over the Dender, and it was crossed early on the following morning in presence of Eugene and Marlborough, whom the animation of the great events in progress, had, in a manner, raised from the bed of sickness.[20] Here the duke halted, and the troops encamped in their order of march with their right on the Dender and their front covered by a small stream which falls into that river. By this bold and rapid movement, Vendôme's well-concerted plan was entirely disconcerted; Marlborough had thrown himself between the French and their own frontier; he had rendered himself master of their communications; and instead of seeking merely to cover his own fortresses, threatened to compel them to fall back, in order to [Pg 207] regain their communications, and abandon the whole enterprise which had commenced with such prospects of success. Vendôme was extremely disconcerted at this able movement, and he gave immediate orders to fall back upon Gavre, situated on the Scheldt below Oudenarde, where it was intended to cross that river.

No sooner was this design made manifest, than Marlborough followed with all his forces, with the double design of raising the investment of Oudenarde, and if possible forcing the enemy to give battle, under the disadvantage of doing so in a retreat. Anxious to improve their advantage, the Allied generals pushed forward with the utmost expedition, hoping to come up with the enemy when his columns and baggage were close upon the Scheldt, or in the very act of crossing that river. Colonel Cadogan, with a strong advanced guard, was pushed forward by daybreak on the 11th towards the Scheldt which he reached by eleven, and immediately threw bridges over, across which the whole cavalry and twelve battalions of foot were immediately thrown. They advanced to the summit of the plateau on the left bank of the river, and formed in battle array, the infantry opposite Eynes, the cavalry extending on the left towards Schaerken. Advancing

slowly on in this regular array down the course of the river on its left bank, Cadogan was not long of coming in sight of the French rearguard under Biron, with whom he had some sharp skirmishing. Meanwhile, Marlborough and Eugene were pressing the passage at the bridges with all imaginable activity; but the greater part of their army had not yet got across. The main body was still half a league from the Scheldt, and the huge clouds of dust which arose from the passage of the artillery and carriages in that direction, inspired Vendôme with the hope that he might cut off the advanced guard which was over the Scheldt, before the bulk of the Allied forces could get across to their relief. With this view he halted his troops, and drew them up hastily in order of battle. This brought on the great and glorious action which followed, towards the due understanding of which, a description of the theatre of combat is indispensable.

> "At the distance of a mile north of Oudenarde, is the village of Eynes. Here the ground rises into a species of low, but spacious amphitheatre. From thence it sweeps along a small plain, till it nearly reaches the glacis of Oudenarde, where it terminates in the village of Bevere. To the west the slope ascends to another broad hill called the Bosercanter; and at the highest point of the eminence stands a windmill, shaded by a lofty lime-tree, forming conspicuous objects from the whole adjacent country. From thence the ground gradually declines towards Mardlen; and the eye glancing over the humid valley watered by the Norken, rests on another range of uplands, which, gently sinking, at length terminates near Asper. Within this space, two small streams, descending from the lower part of the hill of Oycke, embrace a low tongue of land, the centre of which rises to a gentle elevation. The borders of these rivulets are crossed by frequent enclosures, surrounding the farm-yards of Barwaen, Chobon, and Diepenbeck. Near the source of one of these streams is a castellated mansion; at that of the other is the hamlet of Rhetelhouk, embosomed in a wooded nook. These streams unite at the hamlet of Scharken, and their united current flows in a marshy bed to the Scheldt, which it reaches near Eynes. The Norken, another river traversing the field, runs for a considerable distance parallel to the Scheldt, until, passing by Asper, it terminates in a stagnant canal, which joins the Scheldt below Gavre. Its borders, like those of the other streams, are skirted with coppice-wood thickets; behind are the enclosures surrounding the little plain. Generally speaking, this part of Flanders is even not merely of picturesque beauty and high cultivation, but great military strength; and it is hard to say whether its numerous streams, hanging banks, and umbrageous woods, add most to its interest in the eye of a painter, or to its intricacy and defensive character in warlike operations."[21]

As fast as the Allies got across the Scheldt, Marlborough formed them along the high grounds [Pg 208] stretching from Bevere to Mooreghem Mill, with their right resting on the Scheldt. Vendôme's men stretched across the plain, from the hill of Asper on the left, to Warreghem on the right. A considerable body of cavalry and infantry lay in front of their position in Eynes, of which they had retained possession since they had repulsed Cadogan's horse. No sooner had the English general got a sufficient number of troops up, than he ordered that gallant officer to advance and retake that village. The infantry attacked in front, crossing the rivulet near Eynes; while the horse made a circuit, and passing higher, made their appearance in their rear, when the conflict was warmly going on in front. The consequence was, that the village was carried with great loss to the enemy, three entire battalions were cut off and made prisoners, and eight squadrons cut to pieces in striving to make their way across the steep and tangled banks of the Norken. This sharp blow convinced the French leaders that a general action was unavoidable; and though, from the vigour with which it had been struck, their remained little hope of overpowering the Allied advanced guard before the main body came up, yet they resolved, contrary to the opinion of Vendôme, who had become seriously alarmed, to persist in the attack, and risk all on the issue of a general engagement.[22]

It was four in the afternoon when the French commenced the action in good earnest. The Duke of Burgundy ordered General Grimaldi to lead Sistern's squadron across the Norken, apparently with the view of feeling his way preparatory to a general attack; but when he arrived on the margin of the stream, and saw the Prussian cavalry already formed on the other side, he fell back to the small plain near the Mill of Royeghorn. Vendôme, meanwhile, directed his left to advance, deeming that the most favourable side to attack, but the Duke of Burgundy, who nominally had the supreme command, and who was jealous of Vendôme's reputation, countermanded this order; alleging that an impassable morass separated the two armies in that quarter. Those contradictory orders produced indecision in the French lines, and Marlborough, divining its cause, instantly took advantage of it. Judging with reason that the real attack of the enemy would be made on his left by their right, in front of the castle of Bevere, he drew the twelve battalions of foot under Cadogan from Heurne and Eynes, which they occupied, and reinforced the left with them; while the bridges of the Norken were strongly occupied, and musketeers disposed in the woods on their sides. Marlborough himself, at the head of the Prussian horse, advanced by Heurne, and took post on the flank of the little plain of Diepenbeck, where it was evident the heat of the action would ensue. A reserve of twenty British battalions, with a few guns, took post near Schaerken, and proved of the most essential service in the struggle which ensued. Few pieces of artillery were brought up on either side; the rapidity of the movements on both having outstripped the slow pace at which those ponderous implements of destruction were then conveyed.[23]

Hardly were these defensive arrangements completed, when the tempest was upon them. The

whole French right wing, consisting of thirty battalions, embracing the French and Swiss guards, and the flower of their army, debouched from the woods and hedges near Groemvelde, and attacking four battalions stationed there, quickly compelled them to retreat. Advancing then in the open plain, they completely outflanked the Allied left, and made themselves masters of the hamlets of Barwaen and Banlaney. This success exposed the Allies to imminent danger; for in [Pg 209] their rear was the Scheldt, flowing lazily in a deep and impassable current, through marshy meadows, crossed only by a few bridges, over which retreat would be impossible in presence of a victorious enemy; and the success against the Allied left exposed to be cut off from their only resource in such a case, the friendly ramparts of Oudenarde.

Anxiously observing the rapid progress of the French on his left, Marlborough successively drew brigade after brigade from his right, and moved them to the quarter which was now severely pressed. The hostile lines fought with the most determined resolution. Every bridge, every ditch, every wood, every hamlet, every inclosure, was obstinately contested; and so incessant was the roll of musketry, that, seen from a distance, the horizon seemed an unbroken line of fire. Hitherto Marlborough and Eugene had remained together; but now, as matters had reached the crisis, they separated. The English general bestowed on Prince Eugene the command of his right, where the British battalions, whose valour he had often praised, were placed. He himself, with the Prussian horse on the banks of the Norken, kept the enemy's left in check; while with his own left he endeavoured to outflank the enemy, and retaliate upon then the manœuvre which they had attempted against him. This bold movement was attended with severe loss, but it proved completely successful. Eugene was soon warmly engaged, and at first wellnigh overpowered by the superior numbers and vehement onset of the enemy. But Marlborough, whose eye was every where, no sooner observed this, than he dispatched Cadogan with his twelve English battalions to his support. Encouraged by this aid, Eugene moved forward General Natzmer, at the head of the Prussian heavy horse and cuirassiers, to charge the enemy's second lines near the Mill of Royeghem; while he himself renewed the attack on their infantry near Herlehorn. Both attacks proved successful. The enemy were expelled on the right from the enclosure of Avelchens, and the battle restored in that quarter; while, at the same time, their second line was drivers back into the enclosures of Royeghem. But this last success was not achieved without a very heavy loss; for the Prussian horse were received by so terrible a fire of musketry from the hedges near Royeghem, into which they had pushed the enemy's second line, that half of then were stretched on the plain, and the remainder recoiled in disorderly flight.

Meanwhile, Marlborough himself was not less actively engaged on the Allied left. At the head of the Hanoverian and Dutch battalions, he there pressed forward against the hitherto victorious French right. The vigour inspired by his presence quickly altered the state of affairs in that quarter. Barlaney and Barwaen were soon regained, but not without the most desperate resistance; for not only did the enemy obstinately contest every field and enclosure, but, in their fury, set fire to such of the houses as could no longer be maintained. Despite all these obstacles, hovever, the English general fairly drove them back, at the musket's point, fron one enclosure to another, till he reached the hamlet of Diepenbeck, where the resistance proved so violent that he was compelled to pause. His vigilant eye, however, erelong observed, that the hill of Oycke, which flanked the enemy's extreme right, was unoccupied. Conceiving that their right might be turned by this eminence, he directed Overkirk, with the reserve cavalry, and twenty Dutch and Danish battalions, to occupy it. The veteran marshal executed this important, and, as it proved, decisive movement, with his wonted alacrity and spirit. The wooded dells round the castle of Bevere soon rung with musketry; the enemy, forced out of them, was driven over the shoulder of the Bosercanter; soon it was passed, and the mill of Oycke, and the plateau behind it, occupied by the Danish and Dutch battalions. Arrived on the summit, Overkirk made his men bring up their left shoulders, so as to wheel inwards, and form a vast semicircle round the right wing of the French, which, far advanced beyond the centre, was now thrown back, and grouped into the little plain of Diepenbeck. Observing the effect of this movement, Marlborough directed Overkirk to [Pg 210] press forward his left still farther, so as to seize the passes of Mullem and mill of Royeghem, by which the communication between the enemy's right and centre was maintained. This order was executed with vigour and success by the Prince of Orange and General Oxenstiern. The progress of the extreme Allied left round the rear of the French right, was observed by the frequent flashes of their musketry on the heights above Mullem, down to which they descended, driving the enemy with loud cheers, which re-echoed over the whole field of battle, before them. The victory was now gained. Refluent from all quarters, enveloped on every side, the whole French right was hurled together, in wild confusion, into the plain of Diepenbeck; where seven regiments of horse, which made a noble effort to stem the flood of disaster, was all cut to pieces or taken.

Seeing his right wing on the verge of destruction, Vendôme made a gallant effort to rescue it. Dismounting from his horse, he led the infantry of his left near Mullem, to the aid of their devoted comrades. But the thick and frequent enclosures broke their array; the soldiers were dismayed by the loud shouts of victory from their right; and when they emerged from the enclosures; and approached the plain of Diepenbeck, the firm countenance of the British horse, drawn up on its edge, and the sturdy array of their infantry under Eugene, which advanced to meet them, rendered the effort abortive. Meanwhile darkness set in, but the battle still raged on all sides; and the frequent flashes of the musketry on the heights around, intermingled with the shouts of the victors, showed but too clearly how nearly the extremity of danger was approaching to the whole French army. So completely were they enveloped, that the advanced guard of the right under Eugene, and the left under the Prince of Orange, met on the heights in the French rear, and several volleys were exchanged between there, before the error was discovered, and, by great exertions of their respective commanders, the useless butchery was stopped. To prevent

a repetition of such disasters orders were given to the whole troops to halt where they stood, and to this precaution many owed their safety as it was impossible in the darkness to distinguish friend from foe. But it enabled great part of the centre and left of the French to escape unobserved, which, had daylight continued for two hours longer, would have been all taken or destroyed. Their gallant right was left to its fate; while Eugene, by directing the drums of his regiments to beat the French *assemblée*, made great numbers of their left and centre prisoners. Some thousands of the right slipped unobserved to the westward near the castle of Bevere, and made their way in a confused body toward France, but the greater part of that wing were killed or taken. Vendôme with charateristic presence of mind formed a rearguard of a few battalions and twenty-five squadrons, with which he covered the retreat of the centre and left; but the remainder of those parts of the army fell into total confusion, and fled headlong in wild disorder towards Ghent.[24]

We have the authority of Marborough for the assertion, that "if he had had two hours more of daylight the French army would have been irretrievably routed, great part of it killed or taken, and the war terminated on that day."[25] As it was, the blow struck was prodigious, and entirely altered the character and issue of the campaign. The French lost six thousand men in killed and wounded, besides nine thousand prisoners and one hundred standards wrested from them in fair fight. The Allied were weakened by five thousand men for the French were superior in number and fought well, having been defeated solely by the superior generalship of the Allied commanders.[26] [Pg 211]

No sooner did daylight appear, than forty squadrons were detached towards Ghent in pursuit of the enemy; while Marlborough himself, with characteristic humanity, visited the field of battle, doing his utmost to assuage the sufferings, and provide for the cure of the numerous wounded—alike friend and foe—who encumbered its bloody expanse. Count Lottnow was sent with thirty battalions and fifty squadrons, to possess himself of the lines which the enemy had constructed between Ipres and Warneton, which that officer did with vigour and success, making five hundred prisoners. This was the more fortunate, as, at the moment they were taken, the Duke of Berwick, with the French army from the Moselle, was hastening up, and had exhorted the garrison to defend the lines to the last extremity. At the same time, the corresponding Allied army, commanded by Eugene, arrived at Brussels, so that both sides were largely reinforced. Berwick's corps, which consisted of thirty-four battalions and fifty-five squadrons, was so considerable, that it raised Vendôme's army again to an hundred thousand men. With this imposing mass, that able general took post in a camp behind the canal of Bruges, and near Ghent, which he soon strongly fortified, and which commanded the navigation both of the Scheldt and the Lys. He rightly judged, that as long as he was there at the head of such a force, the Allies would not venture to advance into France; though it lay entirely open to their incursions, as Marlborough was between him and Paris.[27]

Encouraged by this singular posture of the armies, Marlborough strongly urged upon the Allied council of war the propriety of relinquishing all lesser objects, passing the whole fortified towns on the frontier, and advancing straight towards the French capital.[28] This bold counsel, however—which, if acted on, would have been precisely what Wellington and Blucher did a century after, in advancing from the same country, and perhaps attended with similar success—was rejected. Eugene, and the remainder of the council, considered the design too hazardous, while Vendôme with so great an army lay intrenched in their rear, threatening their communications. It was resolved, therefore, to commence the invasion of the territory of the Grande Monarque, by the siege of the great frontier fortress of Lille, the strongest and most important place in French Flanders, and the possession of which would give the Allies a solid footing in the enemy's territory. This, however, was a most formidable undertaking; for not only was the place itself of great strength, and with a citadel within its walls still stronger, but it was garrisoned by Marshal Boufflers, one of the ablest officers in the French service, with fifteen thousand choice troops, and every requisite for a vigorous defence. On the other hand, Vendôme, at the head of an hundred thousand men, lay in an impregnable camp between Ghent and Bruges, ready to interrupt or raise the siege; and his position there extremely hampered Marlborough in bringing forward the requisite equipage for so great an undertaking, as it interrupted the whole water navigation of the country, by which it could best be effected. The dragging it up by land, would require sixteen thousand horses. Nevertheless it was resolved to undertake the enterprise, sanguine hopes being entertained, that, rather than see so important a fortress fall, Vendôme would leave his intrenched camp, and give the Allies an opportunity of bringing him again to battle on equal terms.[29] [Pg 212]

No sooner was the undertaking resolved on, than the most vigorous measures were adopted to carry it into execution. The obstacles which presented themselves, however, were great indeed, and proved even more formidable than had been at first anticipated. Every gun, every waggon, every round of ammunition, required to be transported from Holland; and even the nearest depôt for ordinary and military stores for the Allies, was Brussels, situated twenty-five leagues off. Sixteen thousand horses were requisite to transport the train which brought these stores, partly from Maestricht, partly from Holland; and when in a line of march, it stretched over fifteen miles. Prince Eugene, with fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons, covered the vast moving mass—Marlborough himself being ready, at a moment's notice, in his camp near Menin, to support him, if necessary. Between these two great men there existed then, as ever, the most entire cordiality.[30] Their measures were all taken in concord, and with such ability, that though Vendôme lay on the flank of the line of march, which extended over above seventy miles, not a gun was taken, nor

a carriage lost; and the whole reached the camp at Helchin in safety, on the 12th August, whither Marlborough had gone to meet it. So marvellous were the arrangements made for the safe conduct of this important convoy, and so entire their success, that they excited the admiration of the French, and in no slight degree augmented the alarm of their generals, who had hitherto treated the idea of Lille being besieged, with perfect derision. "Posterity," says the French annalist, Feuqueres, "will scarcely believe the fact, though it is an undoubted truth. Never was a great enterprise conducted with more skill and circumspection."[31]

Prince Eugene was entrusted with the conduct of the siege, while Marlborough commanded the covering army. The former commenced the investment of the place on the 13th August, while Marlborough remained at Helchin, taking measures for the protection of the convoys, which were incessantly coming up from Brussels. At length the whole were passed, and arrived in safety in the camp before Lille, amounting to one hundred and twenty heavy guns, forty mortars, twenty howitzers, and four hundred ammunition waggons. Eugene's army for the siege consisted of fifty-three battalions and ninety squadrons, in all about forty thousand men. Marlborough's covering force was sixty-nine battalions and one hundred and forty squadrons, numbering nearly sixty thousand men. But the force of the French was still more considerable in the field. Vendôme and Berwick united on the 30th, on the plain between Grammont and Lessines, and on the 2d September advanced towards Lille with one hundred and forty battalions and two hundred and fifty squadrons, mustering one hundred thousand combatants, besides twenty thousand left, under Count de la Motte, to cover Ghent and Bruges. But Marlborough had no fears for the result, and ardently longed for a general action, which he hoped would one way or other conclude the war. "If we have a second action," says he, "and God blesses our just cause, this, in all likelihood, will be our last campaign; for I think they would not venture a battle, but are resolved to submit to any condition, if the success be on our side; and if they get the better, they will think themselves masters; so that, if there should be an action, it is like to be the last this [Pg 213] war. If God continues on our side, we have nothing to fear, our troops being good, though not so numerous as theirs. I dare say, before half the troops have fought, success will declare, I trust in God, on our side; and then I may have what I earnestly wish for quick."[32]

No sooner was Marlborough informed of the junction of Vendôme and Berwick, than, anticipating the direction they would follow, and the point at which they would endeavour to penetrate through, and raise the siege, he marched parallel to the enemy, and arrived on the 4th September at a position previously selected, having his right at Noyelle, and his left at Peronne. So correctly had he divined the designs of the able generals to whom he was opposed, that, within two hours after he had taken up his ground, the united French army appeared in his front. Notwithstanding their great superiority of forces, the enemy, however, did not venture to attack, and the two armies remained watching each other for the next fortnight, without any movement being attempted on either side.[33]

Meanwhile, Eugene was actively prosecuting the siege of Lille. Trenches were opened on the 22d, and a heavy fire was opened from eighty pieces of cannon. On the following night, an outwork, called the Chapel of St Magdalene, was stormed and taken. The second parallel was soon completed, and some farther outworks carried; and the whole battering guns having at length been mounted, a breach was effected in the salient angle of one of the horn-works, and on the same night a lodgement was effected. A vigorous sortie, on the 10th September, hardly retarded the progress of the operations, and a sap was made under the covered way. Marlborough, who visited the besiegers' lines on the 18th, however, expressed some displeasure at the slow progress of the siege; and in consequence, on the 20th, another assault was hazarded. It was most obstinately resisted, but at length the assailants overcame all opposition and bursting in, carried a demi-bastion and several adjoining works, though with a loss of two thousand men. Great as this loss was, it was not so severe as that of one officer who fell; for Eugene himself, transported with ardour, had taken part in the assault, and was seriously wounded. This grievous casualty not only gave the utmost distress to Marlborough, but immensely augmented his labours; for it threw upon him at once the direction of the siege, and the command of the covering army. Every morning at break of day he was on horseback to observe Vendôme's army; and if all was quiet in front, he rode to the lines and directed the siege in person till evening, when he again returned to the camp of the covering force. By thus in a manner doubling himself, this great man succeeded in preventing any serious inconvenience being experienced even from so great a catastrophe as Eugene's wound, and he infused such vigour into the operations of the siege, that, on the 23d September, great part of the tenaillons were broken, with a large portion of the covered way. At the same time the ammunition of the garrison began to fail so much in consequence of the constant fire they had kept up for above a month, that Marshal Boufflers sent intimation to Vendôme, that unless a supply of that necessary article was speedily obtained, he should be obliged to surrender.[34]

The French generals, aware how much the fortress was straitened, were meanwhile straining every nerve to raise the siege; but such was the terror inspired by Marlborough's presence, and the skill with which his defensive measures were taken, that they did not venture to hazard an attack on the covering army. But a well-conceived project of Vendôme's, for throwing a supply of [Pg 214] powder into the fortress, in part succeeded; although many of the horsemen who carried it were cut off, some succeeded in making their way in through the Allied lines, and considerably raised the spirits of the garrison, as well as prolonged their means of defence. But meanwhile the ammunition of the besiegers was falling short, as well as that of the besieged; and as the enemy were completely masters of the communication with Brussels, no resource remained but to get it

up from Ostend. A convoy was formed there accordingly by General Erle, and set out on the 27th September, consisting of seven hundred waggons, escorted by General Webb with ten thousand men. Count de la Motte instantly set out with the troops under his command from the vicinity of Ghent, and came up with the convoy in the defile of Wynandals. A sharp action ensued, and the French advanced to the attack with their wonted impetuosity. But Webb's defensive arrangements were so skilful, and the fire kept up by his troops so vigorous, that the enemy were utterly routed; and the convoy forcing its way, reached Menin on the following day, and entered the Allied camp, amidst the acclamations of the whole army, on the 30th September.[35]

The safe arrival of this convoy gave new energy to the operations of the siege; while the recovery of Eugene relieved Marlborough of half the labour under which, to use his own words, he had been for a fortnight "rather dead than alive." Three days after the whole tenaillon was carried, and the troops established directly opposite the breaches of the ramparts. Meanwhile Vendôme opened the sluices, and inundated the country to the very borders of the dyke, so as to intercept Marlborough's communication with Ostend, and prevent the arrival of stores from it. But the English general defeated this device by bringing the stores up in flat-bottomed boats from Ostend to Leffinghen, and thence conveying them in carriages, mounted on very high wheels, to the camp. Cadogan greatly distinguished himself in this difficult service. Overkirk died at this critical juncture, to the great regret of Marlborough, who could then ill spare his ardent and patriotic spirit. Meanwhile, however, the siege continued to advance, and fifty-five heavy guns thundered from the counterscarp on the breaches, while thirty-six mortars swept all the works which commanded them. Finding himself unable to withstand the assault which was now hourly expected, Boufflers, on the 22d October, beat a parley, and capitulated; having sustained, with unparalleled resolution, a siege of sixty days, of which thirty were with open trenches. Penetrated with admiration at his gallant defence, Eugene granted the French general and his brave garrison the most honourable terms. The gates were surrendered on the 23d, and the remainder of the garrison, still five thousand strong, retired into the citadel,[36] where they prolonged their defence for six weeks more.

Thus had Marlborough the glory, in one campaign, of defeating, in pitched battle, the best general and most powerful army possessed by France, and capturing its strongest frontier fortress, the masterpiece of Vauban, under the eyes of one hundred and twenty thousand assembled from all quarters for its relief. He put the keystone at the same time into this arch of glory, by again declining the magnificent offer of the government of the Low Countries, with its appointment of sixty thousand a-year for life, a second time pressed upon him by King Charles, from an apprehension that such an offer might give umbrage to the government of Holland, or excite jealousy in the Queen's government at home.[37] [Pg 215]

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LOVER OF SOCIETY.

Many years ago, I was struck with the remark—that if any one would write down, from week to week, the prominent events which occurred in his time, he must make a book which many would like to read.

I took the hint; and here I give a portion of my Recollections. Not that I have ever kept a regular Journal, a matter which I now regret; but I have mingled a good deal in general life, I have seen nearly all the remarkable characters of Europe in the most stirring period of the world, and I have seen the beginning as well as the end of that most extraordinary of all national catastrophes, the French Revolution.

At all times fond of associating with my fellow men, taking a strong interest in public opinions, having strong opinions of my own, and witnessing the most singular changes in almost every form of public, of personal, and of national impressions, I have had my full share of experience in the ways of men. And I now offer it to those who would refresh their remembrances of memorable men, things, and times.

For the purpose of dealing in the fairest possible manner with my readers, I have looked into the various records of those events which might have escaped my memory. But I have not suffered them to bias opinions conceived long since, and conceived in the spirit of sincerity. Such is my design. It is given to the public with a perfect freedom from all party influence; with a total avoidance of all personality; with that calmness of retrospect which best becomes one who has no desire to share in the passions of the world; and with that wish of the French almanack-maker, which lies at the bottom of many a bulkier enterprise than mine—

"Je veux infiniment qu'on me lise."

1800.

January 1.—The nineteenth century has commenced with one of those events, which deserve to mark epochs. On this day the UNION Of Ireland with England has begun. The church bells are ringing, at this moment, in all quarters. Flags are flying on the various government establishments. A new Imperial flag is hoisted at the Tower, and I now hear the guns saluting it with their roar.

The last century was the era of Intrigue in politics, in war, in courts, in every thing. In England, the Revolution at the close of the Century before had extinguished the power of Despotism. Popery had perished under the heel of Protestantism. The Jacobite had fled from the face of the Williamite. The sword was seen no longer. But the strifes of party succeeded the struggles of Religion; and Parliament became the scene of those conflicts, which, in the century before, would have been fought in the field.

I strongly doubt which age exhibits the national character in a more elevated point of view. The war of Charles I. was a period of proud feeling. It was the last burst of Chivalry. Men of rank and fortune periled both from a sense of honour, and some of the noblest who fell on the royal side, were as fully convinced of the royal errors as the orators of Parliament; but their sense of honour urged them to the sacrifice, and they freely shed their blood for a King, whose faithlessness and folly were to be redeemed only by his martyrdom.

From the period of the Revolution, the character of the country had changed. Still bold, sensitive, and capable of sacrifice, it had grown more contemptuous of political romance, more clear-sighted as to public merits, and more fixed on substantial claims. The latter part of the seventeenth century had seen the worthless and treacherous Charles II. brought back by the nobles and gentry of the land in a national triumph. The middle of the eighteenth century saw the expulsion of the Pretender, a gallant and adventurous prince, whose only adherents were the Scottish chiefs, and whose most determined opponents were the whole multitude of England. [Pg 216]

France had lost her Chivalric spirit nearly a hundred years before. It had died with Francis I. The wars of the League were wars of Chicane; Artifice in arms, Subtlety in steel coats. The profligacy of the courts of Louis Quatorze, and his successors, dissolved at once the morals and the mind of France. That great country exhibited, to the eye of Europe, the aspect of the most extravagant license, and the most rapid decay. There lay the great voluptuary, under the general gaze; like one of its feudal lords dying of his own debauch—lying helpless from infirmity, surrounded with useless pomp, and in the sight of luxuries which he could taste no more—until death came, and he was swept away from his place among men.

Germany was unknown even in Europe, but by the military struggles of Prussia and Austria. But the objects were trifling, and the result was more trifling still. Prussia gained Silesia, and Austria scarcely felt the loss, in an Empire extending from the Rhine to the Euxine. Then came peace, lassitude, and oblivion once more. But this languid century was to close with a tremendous explosion. A Belgian revolt was followed by a French Revolution. The wearisome continuance of the calm was broken up by a tornado, and when the surges subsided again, they exhibited many a wreck of thrones flung upon the shore.

What is to be the next great change? What inscription shall be written by the historian on the sepulchre of the coming hundred years? Will they exhibit the recovery of the power of opinion by Kings, or the mastery of its power by the People? Will Europe be a theatre of State intrigue, as of old, or a scene of Republican violence? It would require a prophet to pronounce the reality.

But I can already see symptoms of change; stern demands on the higher classes; sullen discontents in every country; an outcry for representative government throughout Europe. The example of France has not been lost upon the populace; the millions of Europe, who have seen the mob of the capital tear down the throne, will not forget the lesson. They may forget the purchase, or they may disregard the miseries of the purchase, in the pride of the possession. But we shall not have another French Revolution. We shall have no more deifications of the axe, no more baptisms in blood, no more display of that horrid and fearful ceremonial with which France, like the ancient idolators, offered her children to Moloch, and drowned the shrieks and groans of the dying in the clangour of trumpets and the acclamations of the multitude. Those scenes were too terrible to be renewed. The heart of man shrinks from liberty obtained by this dreadful violation of all its feelings. Like the legendary compacts with the Evil One, the fear of the Bond would embitter the whole intermediate indulgence; and even the populace would be startled at a supremacy, to be obtained only by means of such utter darkness, and followed by such awful retribution.

31.—A piece of intelligence has arrived to-day, which has set all the World of London in commotion. It is no less than a direct challenge to our good King. Chivalry is not yet dead, as I supposed. After expulsion from the sunny plains of Italy and Spain, it has revived among the polar snows.

The Russian Emperor has actually published this defiance to the world, in the St Petersburg *Gazette*. "It is said that his majesty the Emperor, perceiving that the European powers cannot come to an accommodation, and wishing to put an end to a war which has raged eleven years, has conceived the idea of appointing a place, to which he will invite the other potentates to engage together with himself in single combat, in Lists which shall be marked out. For which purpose they shall bring with them, to act as their esquires, umpires, and heralds, their most enlightened ministers and able generals, as Thugut, Pitt, and Bernstorff. He will bring, on his part, Counts Pahlen and Kutusoff."

The first impression on the appearance of this singular document was surprise; the next, of course, was ridicule. The man must have utterly lost his senses. He has been for some months playing the most fantastic tricks in his capital: cutting off people's beards if they happen to displease his taste as a barber, cutting off coat-skirts if they offend his taste as a tailor, ordering the passers-by to pay him a kind of Oriental homage, and threatening to send every body to [Pg 217]

Siberia. Under such circumstances, the air of Russia is supposed to be unfavourable to royal longevity.

The death of a singular character occurred a few days since, a *protegée* of Hannah More, and, as might be expected from that lady's publishing habits, rendered sufficiently conspicuous by her pen. She was a total stranger, apparently a German by her pronunciation of English, yet carefully avoiding to speak any foreign language. She was first found taking refuge under a haystack, apparently in a state of insanity, and determined to die there. The peasantry, who occasionally brought her food, of course soon gave her a name, and, as she was evidently a gentlewoman, they called her the lady of the haystack. Hannah More, who had unquestionably some humanity, though she was rather too fond of its public exhibition, made her the heroine of a tale, and thus drew upon her considerable notice. She was prevailed on, though with some difficulty, to leave the haystack; and after a residence of a considerable period in the country, supported by subscriptions, she was removed, on its being ascertained that she was incurably insane, to an hospital in London, where, after continuing several years, she died.

Her case excited great curiosity for the time, and every effort was made in Germany to ascertain her family, and give some notice of her condition. One of the most remarkable circumstances in her insanity, was her guarded silence on the subject of her relatives. Though she rambled into all conceivable topics, she could not be induced to give the slightest clue to their names. The moment any attempt at their discovery was made, all her feelings seemed to be startled; she shrank at once, looked distressed, and became silent. Hannah More's "Tale of Woe," was therefore a well-meant effort to attract attention to an unhappy creature, who was determined to give no knowledge of herself to the world.

Lord Camelford's eccentricities are well known, but the world has given him credit for more than he deserves. He was unluckily a duellist almost by profession, and thus as dangerous to associate with as a mad bull. Yet I have heard traits of a generosity on his part as lavish as his manners are eccentric. He is, however, so well known to be alert in the use of the pistol, and to be of fiery temper, that some curious stories are told of the alarm inspired by his presence. One of those is now running the round of the Clubs.

Some days ago, his lordship, walking into a coffee-house, and taking up the evening paper, began poring over its paragraphs. A coxcomb in an adjoining box, who had frequently called to the waiter for the paper, walked over to Lord Camelford's box, and, seeing him lay down the paper for the moment while he was sipping his coffee, took it up, and walked off with it without ceremony. His lordship bore the performance without exhibiting any sign of disturbance, but waited till he saw the intruder engaged in its paragraphs. He then quietly walked over, and with all the eyes of the Coffeehouse upon him, snuffed out the fellow's candles, and walked back to his own seat. The fellow, astonished and furious, demanded the name of the person who had served him in this contemptuous manner. His lordship threw him his card. He took it—read "Lord Camelford" aloud—seemed petrified for a moment, and in the next snatched up his hat, and made but one step to the door, followed by the laugh of the whole room.

But his lordship has, like Hamlet, method in his madness. A report was lately spread that he had resolved, in case of Horne Tooke's rejection by the House as member for Old Sarum, that he would bring in his own black footman. This report he resented and denied, sending a letter to the newspapers, of which this is a fragment:— [Pg 218]

> "A report, as preposterous as unfounded, has lately found its way abroad, stating that I meditated a gross and indecent insult upon the dignity of the legislature, by using an influence which I am supposed to possess, for the purpose of introducing an improper character into the formation of its body.
>
> "It becomes me to set the public right, by solemnly assuring them, that no such idea was ever in contemplation for one moment; and that I am at a loss to discover how the rumour originated; as, so far from being capable of harbouring a wish to add to the embarrassments of an unhappy and dejected people, it would be the pride and glory of my heart, if I had the power to place such persons in situations of responsibility, as, by their talents and integrity, might preserve our Laws and Government and Constitution."

The eccentricities of the unfortunate Emperor of Russia have come to even a more rapid end than I had expected. A courier has just arrived with the startling intelligence, that the Czar was found dead in his chamber. The whole transaction is for the moment covered with extreme obscurity; but it is to be feared that what the Frenchman, with equal cleverness and wickedness, called the Russian trial by Jury, has been acted on in this instance, and that the Russian annals have been stained with another Imperial catastrophe.

How natural and magnificent are Shakspeare's reflections on the anxieties that beset a crown—

> "Oh, polished perturbation! golden care,
> That keeps the ports of Slumber open wide
> To many a watchful night: O Majesty!
> When thou cost pinch thy bearer, thou dost sit
> Like a rich armour worn in heat of day,
> That scalds with safety."

If Voltaire's definition be true, that swindling is the perfection of civilization, and that the more

civilized, the more subtle we become, England may boast of a swindler that seems to have brought the art to its highest perfection. She is a female, not at all of the showy order, which beguiles so many understandings through the eyes—an insignificant and mean person, with an ordinary face, not at all exhibiting manners superior to her appearance, yet certainly of the most superb ambition in the art of tricking the World. Where she began her adventures first, remains to be developed by future biography. At length she appeared in the neighbourhood of Greenwich, and, representing herself there as an heiress, took a handsome house, and contrived, in the usual way, to make all the tradesmen in the neighbourhood contribute to its furnishing. By the simplicity and plausibility of her manner, she even obtained loans to the amount of some thousands, to set her household in motion, until her affairs were settled. An heiress must, of course, have a carriage; but this clever person was not content with doing things in an ordinary way, but set up three. While her house was being prepared,—which she ordered to be done by the first artists in their way, the walls being painted in fresco,—she drove down to Brighton in her travelling carriage, with four horses and two outriders. She gave an order for the furnishing of her house to the amount of £4000, and commissioned from Hatchett, the celebrated coachmaker, a first-rate chariot, with all kinds of expensive mountings and mouldings, to be ready for the Queen's birthday, when she was to be introduced at court by the wife of one of the Secretaries of State. In the interval, she drove daily through the West End, dropping her cards at the houses of persons of public name. She thus proceeded for a while triumphantly; but having, in the intoxication of her success, given the names of some persons of rank as her relatives, inquiry was made amongst them, and the relationship being of course disowned, suspicion was suddenly excited. Nothing could exceed her indignation on the subject; but the tradesmen, thus rendered only more suspicious, attempted to recover their furniture. The caption was at last made, and bailiffs were put into the house, with the expectation of apprehending the lady herself. [Pg 219] However, she was adroit enough to discover her danger, and to her house she returned no more. Search was made after her, and it was said that she was discovered and thrown into jail. But she suddenly disappeared; and failing her own legacy, left to the unlucky people who had given her credit, a long legacy of general quarrel and mutual disappointment.

When Fox was asked whether he had any faith in Political Economy, the doctrines of which had become fashionable in his day, from the writings of Turgot and the French school, he answered —"That it was too undefined for his comprehension; that its views were either too large, or too indistinct, to give his mind the feeling of certainty."

He well might say this, when no two of the modern Political Economists agree, and when all the theories of the last age are laughed at by all the theorists of the present. In the middle of the seventeenth century Sir William Petty, one of the most acute, and also one of the most practical men of his time, pronounced that the population of England would take three hundred and sixty years to double—the fact being, that it has doubled within about a seventh part of that period. Of London he predicts, that its growth must finally stop in 1842; and that then its population must amount to half the population of England. Yet London is still growing, day by day, and yet its population scarcely exceeds a twentieth of the whole.

The Emperor Paul, in the beginning of his reign, was a favourite with the soldiery, whom he indulged in all possible ways, giving them money, distributing promotion lavishly among them, and always pronouncing them the bulwark of his throne. But when his brain began to give way, his first experiments were with the soldiery, and he instantly became unpopular. The former dress of the Russian soldier was remarkable alike for its neatness and its convenience. He wore large pantaloons of red cloth, the ends of which were stuffed into his boots; the boots were of flexible leather, and an excellent and easy protection for the legs and feet. He wore a jacket of red and green, with a girdle round the waist; his head was protected by a light helmet. The whole dress thus consisting of two garments, light, showy, and looking the true dress for a soldier.

Paul's evil genius, which induced him to change every thing, began with that most perilous of all things to tamper with—the army of a great military power. He ordered the Austrian costume to be adopted. Nothing could equal the general indignation. The hair must be powdered, curled, and pomatumed; a practice which the Russian, who washed his locks every day, naturally abhorred. The long tail made him the laugh of his countrymen. His boots, to which he had been accustomed from his infancy, and which form a distinctive part of the national costume, were to be taken off, and to be substituted by the tight German spatterdash and the shoe, the one pinching the leg, and the other perpetually falling off the foot, wherever the march happened to be in the wet. The consequence was, infinite discontent, and desertion to a great extent—a thing never heard of in the service before.

It may be conceived with what disdain those frivolous, yet mischievous, innovations must have been regarded by those Russian officers who had known the reality of service. Suvaroff was then in Italy with his army. One morning a large packet was brought to him by an Imperial courier. To his astonishment, and the amusement of his staff, it was but models of tails and curls. Suvaroff gave vent to a sneer, a much more fatal thing than a sarcasm, in some Russian verses, amounting to—

"Hair-powder is not gunpowder;
Curls are not cannon;
Tails are not bayonets."

The general's rough poetry was instantly popular; it spread through the army, it travelled back to Russia, it reached the Imperial ear; the Czar was stung by the burlesque, and Suvaroff was [Pg 220]

recalled.

Few things are more remarkable, than the slowness with which common sense acts, even in matters which should evidently be wholly under its guidance. It might appear that the mere necessities of war would dictate the equipment of the soldier; namely, that it should be light, simple, and safe, as far as is possible. Yet the equipment of the European soldier, at the commencement of the French war, seemed to be intended only to give him trouble, to encumber him, and to expose his personal safety. The Austrian soldier's dress was an absolute toilette. The Prussian, even with all the intelligence of the Great Frederic to model it, was enough to perplex a French milliner, and to occupy the wearer half the day in putting it off and on. The English uniform was modelled on the Prussian, and our unlucky soldier was compelled to employ his hours in tying his queue, powdering his hair, buttoning on his spatterdashes, and polishing his musket-barrel. The heavy dragoons all wore cocked hats, of all coverings of the head the most unprotecting and the most inconvenient. The French light troops, too, all wore cocked hats. The very colour of the royal French uniform, as well as the Austrian, was white, of all colours the most unfitted for the rough work of the bivouack, and also injurious, as shewing the immediate stain of blood.

It actually took twenty years to teach the general officers of the European armies, that men could fight without spatterdashes, that hair-powder was not heroism, and that long tails were only an imitation of the monkey; that muskets did not fire the worse for having brown barrels, and that the cuirass was a better defence for the body of the dragoon than a cloth waistcoat, however covered with embroidery. But why shall not improvement go a little farther? Why shall not the arm of the dragoon be a little protected as well as his body? A slight and simple covering of steel rings would effect the purpose, and it is an important one; for a slight wound in the arm disables him even more than a wound in the body, unless the latter wound should be mortal at once. But why, also, should not the foot soldier wear something equivalent to the cuirass? The weight might be made trifling, it might be carried at the back of his knapsack except when in actual engagement, and it would save thousands of lives; for the most dangerous wounds are in the front, and a wound in the abdomen is almost incurable. Five shillings' worth of tin-plate might protect the soldier for his lifetime; and there can be no doubt, that the consciousness of having such a protection would render troops more efficient. Of the bravery of the British there can be no doubt; but there can be just as little doubt, that every increase to the personal security of troops renders them calmer under fire, and of course fitter for obedience in the exigiencies of service. Besides, it is a public duty to the brave men in our service, not to expose them needlessly on any occasion; and they *are* exposed needlessly, when they are sent into the field without every protection which our skill can give. But are we demanding armour for the foot soldiers? No; the armour of the old times of Chivalry would be too heavy, and impede the activity of those movements, of which so much of military success depends. The defensive arms of the Roman soldier were simply a small light helmet, a light cuirass, and greaves, or boots bound with brass. Yet with these his average march was twenty miles a-day, carrying sixty pounds weight of provisions and baggage on his back. The weight of his sword, his two lances, and his intrenching tools and palisade, was not reckoned.

Buonaparte has made a Concordat with the Pope. The laughers have attacked him in the following epigram:—

Politique plus fin que General Eubile,
Bien plus ambitieux que Louis dit le Grand.
Pour être Roi d'Egypte, il croit à l'Alkoran,
Pour être Roi de France, il croit à l'Evangile.

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Our English epitaphs are often as disgraceful to the national taste, as their levity is unsuitable to the place of the dead. I am not aware whether this epitaph, by the most amiable of poets, Cowper, has been preserved among his works. It is on the tomb of a Mrs Hamilton:—

"Pause here and think—a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult Life's silent clock. Thy glowing vein
Seems it to say—'Health here has long to reign?'—
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight: a heart untaught to sigh?
Yet fear. Youth ofttimes, healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees.
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims—Prepare thee for an early shroud!"

In the course of this year died three remarkable men, Lavater, Gilbert Wakefield, and Heberden, the famous physician. Perhaps no man of his day excited more general attention throughout Europe than John Gaspar Lavater; and this is the more remarkable, when we recollect that he was but a simple Swiss pastor at Zurich—minister of the church of St Peter. When about thirty years' old, his mind was first turned to the study of Physiognomy. He shortly after published some parts of a work on the subject, in which he broached a new theory; viz. that the countenance gave representative evidences of the powers and comparative vigour of the understanding. The subject of Physiognomy had been already treated of by the German writers; but, as Voltaire observes, the business of German philosophy is to make philosophy inaccessible; and their treatises had sunk into oblivion. Yet the science itself, if science it is to be called, is so

natural, so universally, however involuntarily, practised, and frequently so useful in its practice, that its revival became instantly popular:—a large part of its popularity, however, being due to the novelty of Lavater's system, the animation of his language, and that enthusiastic confidence in his discovery, which is always amongst the most powerful means of convincing the majority of mankind. Something also is due to the happy idea of illustrating his conceptions by a great number of portraits, which added amusement to the general interest of the volumes. Passion possesses great influence in the world, and Physiognomy became the fashion. His books spread through every part of the Continent, and nothing can be more striking than the ardour with which they were received. If Switzerland is proud of his popularity, the mysticism of Germany was delighted with his mysticism; and the literary coteries of France, at whose head were all the ladies of the court, were his most vehement disciples. Nothing was read, for a considerable period, but the pages of Lavater. It has been said, that scarcely a domestic would be hired without a physiognomical examination, and reference to the pages of Lavater.

His personal conduct sustained his public popularity; his gentle manners, his general benevolence, and his eloquence in the pulpit, endeared him to the people. He was the most popular preacher in Zurich, less from his abilities, than on the softness of his voice, and the tenderness of his manner.

The objections occasionally started to his theories only increased his hold upon the national affections. For the period he was the physiognomical apostle of Switzerland. Some of his admirers went so far, as to lay his quarto on the table beside the Scriptures, and regard it as a species of Natural Revelation.

Even when the novelty lost its charm, the locality preserved his reputation. Switzerland, in those days, was the peculiar resort of all the leading personages of Europe; all travellers of distinction visited the country, and generally made some stay in its cities; and all visited Lavater. What has become of his Album, I have not heard; but its autographs must have made it invaluable to a collector of the signatures of eminent names.

But, whether tempted by vanity, or betrayed by original feebleness of intellect, the harmless physiognomist at length suffered himself to announce doctrines equally hazardous to the Religion, and the Policy, of the Canton. The habits of the times were latitudinarian in religion, and revolutionary in politics. Some unlucky opinions, uttered in the folly of the hour, brought Lavater under the charge of a leaning to Rome in the one, and to France in the other; he bore up for a while against both. But the invasion of Switzerland by the French armies, suddenly made him a vigorous denouncer of Republican ambition, and he was soon to be its victim. In the storming of Zurich by Moreau, he was severely wounded in the streets; and though he was rescued, and his wounds were healed, he never recovered the injury. He languished, though in full possession of his intellectual powers, until he died. [Pg 222]

What his theology was, can scarcely be defined; but if he had not adopted Physiognomy as the study of his life, his temperament might have excited him to try the effect of a new Religion. He was said to have believed in the continuance of the power of working miracles, and to have equally believed in the modern power of exorcists. Fortunately his talent was turned to a harmless pursuit; and he amused, without bewildering, the minds of men.

The grand principle of his physiognomical system is, that human character is to be looked for, not as is usually supposed, in the movable features and lines of the face, but in its solid structure. And he also imagined that the degree of intellectual acuteness is to be ascertained by the same indications. But his theory in the former instance is but feebly supported by fact; for it is by the movements of the features that the passions are most distinctly displayed: and in the latter, his theory is constantly contradicted by facts, for many of the most powerful minds that the world has ever seen have been masked under heavy countenances.

Perhaps the true limit of the Science is to be discovered by the knowledge of its use. Every man is more or less a physiognomist. It is of obvious importance for us to have some knowledge of the passions and propensities of our fellow men; for these constitute the instruments of human association, and form the dangers or advantages of human intercourse. Thus, a countenance of ill temper or of habitual guile, of daring violence or of brutish profligacy, warns the spectator at once. But the knowledge of intellectual capacity is comparatively unimportant to us as either a guide or a protection, and it is therefore not given, but left to be ascertained by its practical operation.

Phrenology has since taken up the challenge which Physiognomy once gave to mankind:—equally ingenious and equally fantastic, equally offering a semblance of truth, and equally incapable of leading us beyond the simple observation which strikes the eye. A well-formed head will probably contain a well-formed brain; and a well-formed brain will probably be the fittest for the operations of the intellect. But beyond this, Phrenology has not gone, and probably will never go. The attempts to define the faculties by their position in the structure of the bone or the brain, have been so perpetually contradicted by fact; its prognostics of capacity have been so perpetually defeated; and its mistakes of character have been so constantly thrown into burlesque by the precipitancy and presumption of its advocates—that common sense has abandoned it altogether; it has by common consent been abandoned to enthusiasts; and to assert its right to the name of a Science, would now hazard the title of its advocate to rationality.

The life of Gilbert Wakefield is one among the many instances of vigorous learning and strong intellect, made a source of misery to their possessor by a want of common prudence. His whole

life might be characterized in three words—courage, caprice, and misfortune. After having attained a Cambridge fellowship, acquired distinction in classical criticism, and entered into the Church, he suddenly began to entertain notions hostile to the liturgy, and became classical tutor of the dissenting academy of Warrington. For ten years he laboured in this obscure vocation, or with private pupils, now chiefly turning his classical studies to the illustration of the New Testament. At the end of this period, he became classical tutor of the dissenting College in [Pg 223] Hackney. But even Dissent could not tolerate his opinions; for a volume which he published, tending to lower the value of public worship, gave offence, and speedily dissolved the connexion. His classical knowledge was now brought into more active use, and he published Annotations on the Greek tragedies, and editions of some of the Roman poets. Unfortunately, the popular follies on the subject of the French Revolution tempted him to try his pen as a Pamphleteer; and a letter written in reply to the Bishop of Llandaff, rendered him liable to a prosecution: he was found guilty, and sentenced to an imprisonment of two years in Dorchester jail. This imprisonment was unfortunately fatal; for whether from his confinement, or the vexation of mind which must be the natural consequence, his liberation found him exhausted in strength, though still the same bold and indefatigable being which he had been through the whole course of his wayward life. Still he had many friends, and between the spirit of party, and the more honourable spirit of personal regard, the large subscription of £5000 was raised for his family. But his career was now rapidly drawing to a close. He had been but a few months relieved from his prison, when his constitution sank under an attack of typhus, and he died in his forty-sixth year, at an age which in other men is scarcely more than the commencement of their maturity—is actually the most vigorous period of all their powers; and in an undecayed frame gives the securest promise of longevity. With all his eccentricities, and he had many, he had the reputation of being an amiable man.

Heberden was at the head of English Medicine in his day. He was a man of vigorous understanding and accomplished knowledge. He began life as a scholar, entering Cambridge, where he obtained a fellowship. Adopting physic as his profession, he continued in Cambridge for ten years; until the usual ambition of country practitioners to be known in the metropolis, urged him to try his fortunes in London.

The example of this able, and ultimately successful man, is not without its value, as an encouragement to perseverance under the most discouraging obstacles, when they happen to come in the way of individuals of sound scholarship and substantial strength of mind. Heberden lingered in London without success for some years; and at length, conceiving that his ill-fortune was beyond remedy, had formed his resolution to return to the country.

At this period some lucky chance changed his purpose. He became known; rapidly rose into practice, and assumed the rank due to his ability. Similar circumstances had occurred in the career of the celebrated Edmund Burke, who was at two different periods on the point of leaving England for America, in despair of distinction at home. The late Lord Eldon had even given up his chambers in London, and announced his intention of commencing as a country practitioner of the law; when, at the suggestion of a legal friend, he made the experiment of "trying another term." Business suddenly flowed in upon him, and the disheartened barrister was soon floated on to the highest dignities of his profession. Even the illustrious Wellington himself is said, at one time, to have entertained serious thoughts of directing himself to a civil career, and to have been prevented only by the difficulty of finding an immediate employment. The delay gave room for the fortunate change in his prospects, which soon made him the first officer in Europe.

Heberden wrote a great variety of Tracts on his own science; suffered no improvement in medicine, or public topic connected with general health, to escape him; cultivated his original scholarship to the last; enjoyed the friendship of the scientific world throughout his career; and enjoyed life itself to an unusual duration, dying in his ninety-first year.

The anxieties of Europe are, for a while, at least, at an end. The preliminaries of peace with France were signed on October the 1st, and yesterday the 9th, Lauriston, first aide-de-camp to Bonaparte, arrived in town. The populace were all civility to him so were the ministers. The French ambassador, Otto, immediately took him to Downing Street, where he was complimented [Pg 224] by Lord Hawkesbury. Lauriston is a general in the Republican service, with a handsome figure, which, covered with lace, and the showy decorations of his rank, quite enchanted the multitude of gazers.

At the peace of 1782, the pleasantry of George Selwyn, on the arrival of the French ambassador, a remarkably little man, was, "That France had sent them the preliminaries of peace, by the preliminaries of an ambassador." Whatever may be the fate of the present preliminaries, the jest will not apply to the present envoy, who looks the soldier, and would evidently make a dashing hussar. His progress through the streets was, from the first, followed by acclamation. But at length it became a kind of triumph. The zeal of the rabble, (probably under good guidance, for the French *employés* comprehend those little arrangements perfectly,) determined on drawing the carriage. The harness was taken off, the horses enjoyed a sinecure, the coachman sat in uneasy idleness on his box, and the crowd tugged away in their best style. The procession slowly moved through the principal streets of the West End, till it reached the Foreign Office. After a pause there, for the delivery of his credentials, Lauriston went to the Admiralty, where St Vincent, the first lord, (albeit no lover of Frenchmen,) received the stranger with a good-humoured shake of the hand, and, on parting with him, made a little speech to the mob, recommending it to them "to take care and not overset the carriage."

In the evening London was illuminated, and looked as brilliant as lights and transparencies could

make it. An odd incident during the day, however, showed of what tetchy materials a great populace is made. Otto, the French resident, in preparing his house for the illumination, had hung in its front a characteristic motto, in coloured lamps, consisting of the three words —"France, Concord, England." A party of sailors, who had rambled through the streets to see the preparations for the night, could not bring their tongues to relish this juxtaposition; which they read as if it were, "France *conquered* England." The mob gathered, and were of the same opinion. Jack began to talk loud, and to speak of the motto as a national insult. Fortunately, however, before the matter could proceed to breaking windows, or perhaps worse, some of the envoy's servants informed their master of the equivocal nature of his motto. The obnoxious word was changed accordingly, and the illumination in the evening (which was most splendid,) displayed the motto—"France—Peace—England."

The North, too, has not been without its festivities. Alexander of Russia has been crowned with all the pomp of a successor of Catherine, and the Lord of an Empire five thousand miles long, and touching almost the Tropics, and almost the Pole. Moscow, of course, was the scene. All that barbaric pomp and European luxury could combine, was to be seen in the displays of the double coronation of the Czar and Czarina. Alexander, disdaining the royal habit of being drawn in a carriage, however gilded; or remembering that he was the monarch of a nation of horsemen, King of the Tartar world, moved in the midst of his great lords and cavalry, mounted on a fine English charger, and was received every where with boundless acclamations.

The memory of kings is seldom long-lived in despotic governments. But Paul's is already extinguished, or survives only in the rejoicing of the people to have got rid of him. His nature was not ungenerous, but his caprice had become so intolerable, that his longer life would probably have seen some desperate outbreak in the Empire.

The Czar is handsome, according to Russian ideas of beauty,—tall, and well-proportioned. The people are delighted to find themselves under his authority, and the peculiar affability of his manner to the English at Moscow, is regarded as a pledge of the reconciliation of Russia to the system of our politics and our trade.

Russia, more than any other monarchy, requires a powerful, direct, and vigilant administration. The enormous extent of her territory exposes her to perpetual abuses in her provincial governments. The barbarism of a vast portion of her population, demands the whole capacity of an enlightened Sovereign, to raise it in the rank of human nature. [Pg 225]

To this hour the question is doubtful, whether Moscow ought not to have continued the seat of government. It is true that then Russia would probably have had no Baltic fleet. But ought she ever to have had a Baltic fleet? Ought she to have attempted a maritime superiority, with sea locked up in ice for six months of the year; a territory meant for a wilderness, and incapable of becoming anything better, in which the Russian sovereigns have condemned themselves to the life of one of their own bears, cold, wild, and comfortless? All the stoves on earth cannot make a St Petersburg winter endurable by any thing but a fish or a marmozet; while Moscow offered a glorious climate, unlimited space for a capital city, a fertile country, a fine landscape, a central position for the head of an empire, with Europe in its front, and Asia at its back.

The choice of St Petersburg has probably cramped the growth of Russian power. Even Poland has only given her a desert, a kingdom scantily cultivated, scantily peopled, discontented serfdom and a broken frontier. Yet all may be for the best. Moscow, as the head of the Empire, might have made her too powerful, and Europe might have seen a Russian Gengis Khan.

The Town is ringing with an extraordinary feat of pedestrianism; the first exploit of a young Scotchman, Barclay of Ury. He had betted £5000 that he would walk ninety miles in twenty-one and a half hours, and has won, leaving an hour and seventeen minutes to spare.

Feats of this order have a value, as showing the powers of the human frame. They would otherwise be merely vulgar gambling. But if it is of importance to know the extent of the mental powers, those of the body also have their uses; and an effeminate generation would only have to prepare themselves by the exercises of this young gentleman, to be able to dispense with post-chaises and the gout. The walker is but twenty-two years old; and he has finished his exploit without any injury to his frame, and, it may be presumed, with a considerable advantage to his finances. All the "Sporting world," as they are named, were on the ground, which was a measured mile, on the road between York and Hull; lamps were erected to light the principal performer during the night. A cottage at the road-side received him for refreshment, and change of dress, at intervals. A militia regiment, which happened to be on its march from Hull, halted and filed on either side of the road, with the gallantry of sportsmen, to give him free way; and the general interest taken in this singular performance was surprising. The only drawback was the evident activity of his frame, and his power of endurance; for after the first thirty miles the betting began to be wholly in his favour, and the spirit of speculation shrunk from that period, and long before the close no bets would be taken. From daylight, multitudes thronged to the course. All the carriages, of which such numbers pass along this communication between the two great northern towns, went to the side of the road; even the mails gave way. The affair seemed national, and if the gallant pedestrian had failed, it might have been followed by a general mourning in the Ridings.

One of the great Histrionic Dynasty, Stephen Kemble, has lately amused the Town by his performance of Falstaff. He exhibited the humours of the jovial knight with skill enough to make the audiences laugh. But he was perhaps the first actor who ever played the *fat* knight to the life.

His remarkable corpulence qualified him to play the character without stuffing. The good-humour of his visage was fully equalled by the protuberance of his stomach; and if the "totus in se teres atque rotundus" of Horace, is the poet's definition of a good man, the actor rose to the summit of human virtue. The best prologue, since the days of Garrick, ushered in this singular performance.

"A Falstaff here to-night, by nature made,
Lends to your favourite bard his pond'rous aid;
No man in buckram he, no stuffing gear! [Pg 226]
No feather bed, nor e'en a pillow here!
But all good honest flesh, and blood, and bone,
And weighing, more or less—some *thirty* stone.
Upon the northern coast, by chance, we caught him:
And hither, in a broad-wheel'd waggon, brought him;
For in a chaise the varlet ne'er could enter,
And no mail-coach on such a fare would venture.
Blest with unwieldiness, at least his size
Will favour find in every critic's eyes;
And should his humour, and his mimic art,
Bear due proportion to his outer part,
As once 'twas said of Macklin in the Jew,
'This is the very Falstaff Shakspeare drew.'
To you, with diffidence, he bids me say,
Should you approve, you may command his stay,
To lie and swagger here another day.
If not, to better men he'll leave his sack,
And go as ballast, in a collier, back."

1802.

This French peace will not last. The parties to this unnatural wedlock are beginning to grumble already; and this, too, when the bans are still in every body's ears. The French, however, have begun the quarrel, by sending out a huge fleet, with 30,000 men on board, to St Domingo. This our minister regards as a daring exploit, which may finish by turning on Jamaica. The negroes are every where in exultation; for they cannot be made to believe that France intends any thing but a general emancipation; and that her expedition, however it be apparently against Touissaint, is sent for a general overthrow of the whites.

Long discussions have taken place between the two governments, all ending in the usual way. France protesting her honour, and England proclaiming her alarms; both amounting to so much paper wasted. But our West India squadron has been reinforced; and the First Consul has found employment for a daring soldiery, who cannot live in quiet; found offices for some hundreds of officials, the most petitioning and perplexing race of mankind; and found a topic for the Coffeehouses, which he naturally thinks much better employed in talking about St Domingo, than in criticising his proceedings at home.

Another source of grumbling between these two ill-assorted parties. At the very Marriage feast an apple of discord has been thrown in, and that apple is Switzerland. France will suffer but one republic, and that must be the World. The presumption of a little pigeon-house of Republics among the Alps insults her feelings; and all must run under the wing of the great Republican Eagle, or be grasped by her talons. An army has been ordered to march to Berne. The Swiss will probably resist, but they will certainly be beaten. Republics are sometimes powerful in attack; they are always feeble in defence. They are at best but a mob; and, while the mob can rush on, they may trample down opposition. But a mob, forced to the defensive, thinks of nothing but running away. The strength of a monarchy alone can bind men together for an effectual resistance. Switzerland will get the fraternal embrace, and be as much fettered as St Domingo.

Who are to be the heirs of General Claude Martin? The man never knew that he had a grandfather, and probably was as much in doubt about his heirs. What he was himself, nobody seems to know. But this man of obscurity has died worth half a million sterling! So much for India and her adventurers.

When a boy, he entered into the French service. By some chance or other he found himself in India; there offered himself to the Nabob of Lucknow, disciplined his troops, rose to the rank of commandant of the Rajah's troops, or some similar position, and amassed the half million. He was a splendid distributor, however, and has given away by his will six hundred thousand rupees—a [Pg 227] sum large enough to buy any thing in France but the First Consul.

Francis, Duke of Bedford, has just died. The reports vary as to the cause. The general opinion is, that in playing rackets, or in some other rough exercise, he overstrained himself, and produced a return of a disease to which he had been for some years liable. The details of his death are too painful to be entered into. The first surgical assistance was brought down to Woburn. An operation was performed, which for some days gave hope, but it was too late. Mortification ensued, and he died, to the great regret of a large circle of personal friends; to the great loss of his party, which was Whig in the highest degree; and to the general sorrow of the country. He was a handsome man with a showy figure, and the manners, and, what was better, the spirit of a nobleman. He was magnificent in his household, and not less magnificent in his sense of duty as a landlord and country gentleman. He first established those great Agricultural Meetings by which

the breed of British cattle was so greatly improved; Agriculture took the shape of a science, and the Agricultural interest, the true strength of a country, took its place among the pillars of the Empire.

By a sort of fashion, the leading country gentlemen always began public life as Whigs. And although the Bedford family had gone through every form of politics, from the days of their founder, Russell, under Henry the VIII., and especially in the person of the Duke of Bedford's unpopular, but able, grandfather, the Duke espoused the party of Fox with the devotion of an enthusiast.

He was thus brought into some unfortunate collisions with the bolder spirits and more practised talents of the Treasury Bench; and though, from his position in the House of Lords, secure from direct attack by the great leaders of Government, he was struck by many a shaft which he had neither the power to repel nor to return.

An unlucky piece of hardihood, in attacking the royal grant of a pension of three thousand a year to the greatest writer, philosopher, and politician of the age, Edmund Burke, provoked a rejoinder, which must have put any man to the torture. Burke's pamphlet in defence of his pension, was much less a defence than an assault. He broke into the enemy's camp at once, and "swept all there with huge two-handed sway." He traced the history of the Bedford opulence up to its origin, which he loftily pronounced to be personal sycophancy and public spoil—the plunder of the Abbeys, obtained by subserviency to a Tyrant. The eloquence of this terrible castigation unhappily embalmed the scorn. And so long as the works of this great man are read, and they will be read so long as the language endures, the honours of Francis Duke of Bedford will go down dismantled to posterity.

But his private character was amiable, and the closing hours of his career were manly. On its being announced to him that an operation was necessary, he asked only for "two hours delay to settle his affairs;" and he occupied those two hours in writing to his brothers, and to some friends. He then offered to submit to be bound, if the operators should think it necessary; but they replied, "that they relied fully on his Grace's firmness of mind." He bore the trial with remarkable fortitude. But the disorder took an unfavourable turn, and on the third day he expired.

The retirement of Pitt from the Ministry, has given his successor, Addington, the honour of making the peace. But the services of the great Master are not eclipsed by the fortunes of the follower. Addington is universally regarded as the shadow of Pitt; moving only as he moves; existing by his existence; and exhibiting merely in outline his reality. Every one believes that Pitt must return to power; and those who are inclined to think sulkily of all ministers, look upon the whole as an intrigue, to save Pitt's honour to the Irish Roman Catholics, and yet preserve his power. Those rumours have received additional strength from a grand dinner given the other day in the city, on his birthday, at which his friends mustered in great force, and his name was toasted with the most lavish panegyric. Among the rest, a song, said to be by George Rose, of [Pg 228] whose claims to the laurel no one had ever heard before—was received with great applause. Some of its stanzas were sufficiently applicable.

"No Jacobin rites in our fêtes shall prevail,
Ours the true feast of reason, the soul's social flow;
Here we cherish the friend, while the patriot we hail,
As true to his country—as stern to her foe.
Impress'd with his worth,
We indulge in our mirth,
And bright shines the planet that ruled at his birth.
Round the orbit of Britain, oh, long may it move,
Like the satellite circling the splendours of Jove!

"To the name of a Pitt, in the day of the past,
Her rank 'mid the nations our country may trace;
Though his statue may moulder, his memory will last,
The great and the good live again in their race;
Ere to time's distant day,
Our marble convey
The fame that now blooms, and will know no decay,
Our fathers' example our breasts shall inspire
And we'll honour the Son as they honour'd the Sire."

The public doubts of the peace are at length settled. A note has been sent from the Foreign Office to the Lord Mayor, announcing that the definitive treaty had been finally settled at Amiens, on the 27th of March, by the plenipotentiaries of England, France, Spain, and the Batavian Republic. The treaty, as it transpires, is the source of general cavil. It leaves to France all her conquests, while England restores every thing except Ceylon and Trinidad; the one a Dutch colony, and the other a Spanish; both powers having been our Allies at the commencement of the war. The Cape is to be given back to the Dutch; but Malta, the principal bone of contention, is to be garrisoned by a Neapolitan force, until a Maltese garrison can be raised, and the island is then to be declared independent, under the guarantee of all the great powers of Europe. The French government affected to display great reluctance to conclude even this treaty, which has thus taken six months of negotiation since the exchange of preliminaries. At one time, orders were

sent for the Channel fleet to put to sea. Yet there can be no question that France desired this Peace, whether as a resting time for a fresh attack, or from the mere exhaustion of war. She had already gained every object that she could hope to obtain by arms in her present condition, and her natural policy was to secure what she had thus attained. The two grand prizes of her ambition, Egypt and the command of the Mediterranean, had been boldly aimed at, but she had lost both, and both were now evidently hopeless. Some of those straws, too, had been thrown up, which, if they show nothing else, show the direction of the wind; and there were evident signs in the almost royal pomp of the First Consul, in the appointments of officers of state for ten years, and the constituting the Consulate an office for life; in the preparations for the return of the emigrants, and in the superb receptions at the Tuilleries—that Bonaparte already contemplated the last days of the republic. To what new shape of power his ambition looks is yet only in conjecture. But he is ambitious, daring, and unscrupulous—the idol of the army, and the wonder of the people. He may shrink, like Cæsar, from the diadem, or he may assume, like Cromwell, the power of a king, without the name; but the field is open before him, and France can offer no competition.

Darwin, the author of the "Botanic Garden," has just died at the age of seventy-one. His death will leave a chasm, though one not incapable of being filled up, in our didactic poetry. His "Loves of the Plants" was a new idea, thrown into agreeable verse; and a new idea is always popular. For a [Pg 229] while his poem obtained great celebrity: but Nature alone is permanent; and after the first surprise wore off, the quaintness of his inventions, and the minute artifice of his poetic machinery, repelled the public taste. The Linnæan system, partly indecent, and partly ridiculous, was felt to be wholly unfitted for the blazonry of versification; and his poem, the labour of years, sank into obscurity as rapidly as it had risen into distinction. It is now wholly unread, and almost wholly forgotten; yet it contains bold passages, and exhibits from time to time happiness of epithet, and harmony of language. Its subject degrades the poem; its casual allusions constitute its merit. Vegetable loves must be an absurdity in any language; but Darwin's mind was furnished with variety of knowledge, and he lavished it on his subject with Oriental profusion. He had eloquence, but he wanted feeling; knowledge, but he wanted taste; and invention, but he wanted nature. The want of any one of the three would have been dangerous to his fame as a poet, but his deficiency in the three together left him to drop into remediless oblivion.

A curious attempt hast just shown the popular opinion of ministerial honesty. The Attorney-General has prosecuted, and brought to conviction, a fellow in some low trade, who, hearing that Mr Addington was prime minister, and thinking of course that a prime minister could do all things, sent an actual offer of £2000 to him for a place in the Customs, on which he happened to set his heart. Unluckily for the applicant, he was a century too late. However those matters might have been managed a hundred years ago, less tangible means than money now rule the world. Besides, no man who knew any thing of Addington, ever attached a suspicion of the kind to him. Erskine made a speech in the defence, the best that could be made on such a subject, but not the most flattering to the vanity of his client. It was that he was a blockhead, and had no idea of the absurdity that he was committing. Among other instances of his ignorance, he said, that when he saw the subpoena served upon him, he thought that it was the appointment to his place. But even his idiotism could not save him, and the affair ended in his being sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and £100 fine.

Christie, the auctioneer, the other day, gave a happy specimen of the eloquence of the hammer. He is at the head of his trade, and sells all the remarkable things. On this occasion the Pigot diamond had come into his hands. It is a very fine brilliant, but objected to by the connoisseurs as not having sufficient depth. It was valued at £40,000. But at this sale the auctioneer could not raise its price above £9500, or guineas. He then appealed to his audience, a crowd of the fair and fashionable,—

"How unfortunate," said he, "is it, for the owners of this incomparable production, that they should have brought it into the market in a country so famed for female beauty as England! Here the charms of the sex require no such additions; here the eyes of the ladies sparkle with brilliancy which outvies all the gems of the East. In other countries this incomparable stone would be sought as a necessary aid; here it can be valued only as a splendid superfluity." The room rang with applause.

One of the heroes of Junius has just died; the veteran Wellbore Ellis, Lord Mendip. This man's whole life was spent in public employments. He was the son of an Irish bishop, whose brother—such were the curious qualities of the time—took orders in the Popish Church, followed the Pretender, and died a Popish bishop. Young Ellis, after an education at Westminster and Oxford, was brought into parliament under the Pelhams, who made him a lord of the Admiralty. Under the Newcastle administration which followed, he was appointed to the lucrative post of Irish vice-treasurer, which he held undisturbed through all the struggles of the Cabinet till the Grenville administration, when he was raised still higher, and became Secretary at War.

The Grenvilles fell; the Marquis of Rockingham brought in his friends and Ellis was superseded in his Irish office by Colonel Barré. For five unlucky years he continued in that Limbo of patriots, [Pg 230] exclusion from place. At length, the Premiership of Lord North recalled him. He again obtained the Vice-treasurership, and in the final distress of that unpopular administration, was for a short time raised even to the Colonial Secretaryship. But North was driven from power, and all his adherents fell along with him. Rockingham, the North and Fox coalition, and Pitt, exhibited a succession of premierships, which ended in the exclusion of the whole Whig principle, in all its shapes and shades, for twenty years. Ellis was now growing old; he was rich; he had been a

public man for upwards of forty years; he had been fiercely abused by the opposition writers while he continued in office, and fiercely attacked by the government writers when in opposition. He had thus his full share of all that public life furnishes to its subjects, and he seemed inclined to spend the remainder of his days in quiet. But the French Revolution came. Startled at the ruin with which its progress threatened all property, he joined that portion of the Whigs which allied itself with the great Minister. The Duke of Portland entered the cabinet, and Wellbore Ellis was raised to the peerage. There his career, not unworthily, closed; and his remaining years were given to private society, to books, of which he had a celebrated collection, and to the recollections of the Classics, of which he possessed an early mastery. He was an acute and accomplished man. The fiery indignation of Junius rather threw a light than inflicted an injury on his character. That first of political satirists spared none; and the universal nature of his attacks made men receive them, as they receive a heavy shower, falling on all alike, and drenching the whole multitude together.

Bonaparte has taken the first step to a throne: he has established nobility. The Republic having abolished all titles, a peerage was, for a while, impossible. But he has formed a military Caste, which, without hazarding his popularity with the Parisians, increases his popularity with the troops, and has all the advantages of a noblesse, with all the dependency of its members on the head of the State. He has named this Institution the Legion of Honour. It is to consist of several classes, the first comprehending the great officers of state, generals who have distinguished themselves, and ancient men of science. It has sixteen Cohorts, with palaces allotted to them in Paris and the provinces, for the headquarters of the cohorts. Grants of land are also proposed for the support of these officers and their residences, with distributions and pensions for the lower ranks of the soldiery, to whom the "croix d'honneur" is given.

Thus the old reign of titles, orders, crosses, and an established Class of society, has begun once more; a large portion of the most influential personages of France are thus bound to the head of the government, the hopes of every man, however humble in soldiership or in science, are pointed to the attainment of this public honour, as well as personal provision, and the general purchase of power is virtually declared, with the general consent of this versatile nation.

Ten thousand pounds have just been voted to Jenner, for his discovery of the vaccine inoculation. The liberality of parliament was never more rationally employed. The history of the man, and the discovery, have been long before the public. But the most curious circumstance of the whole is, that the facts of the disease, and the remedy, should have remained for any one to discover in the nineteenth century. They were known to the peasantry of Gloucestershire probably from the first days of cow milking. That the most disfiguring of all diseases, in every country of Europe and Asia, and the most pestilential in a large portion of the globe, could be arrested by a disease from the udders of a cow, seems never to have entered into human thoughts, though the fact that those who had the vaccine disease never suffered from the smallpox, was known to the country physicians.

But Jenner's chief merit was his fortunate conjecture, that the infection might be propagated from one human subject to another. This was the greatest medical discovery since that of the Circulation of the Blood. [Pg 231]

IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST.

Chapter I.

"It's all for the best, you may depend upon it," said Frank Trevelyan, addressing his companion, Vernon Wycherley, as those two young men were pursuing a beaten track across one of those wild wastes that form so prevalent a feature in most of the mining districts of Cornwall.

"All for the best, indeed?" repeated Vernon interrogatively. "Can it be all for the best to have a whole batch of poems I've been racking my brains about for the last year and a half—and which even you yourself, hard as you are to please, admitted were worthy of praise—to have all these, not only rejected by every publisher I offered them to, but to be actually returned with a recommendation to give up all idea of ever offering them to public notice?"

"But which convinces me still more that matters have turned out for the best; and that if your poetical effusions had been published, they would have brought you far more ridicule than praise," thought Frank. But at the same time, not wishing to hurt his companion's feelings, he said—"Yet, probably, when you have again revised the manuscripts, and bestowed some of your masterly finishing touches here and there, you will, after all, congratulate yourself upon the source of your present disappointment."

"That's an impossibility—an utter impossibility," returned Vernon Wycherley—"for were I to look through them a hundred times, I should never alter a word.——But stay—Look! look!—what is that I see? Two ladies on horseback, I declare! who could have anticipated meeting with such an occurrence in so outlandish a place?"

The place was by no means undeserving of the remark, being devoid of any kind of vegetation, except some straggling heath and a few patches of stunted gorse, which here and there sprung

up amidst the rugged spar-stones that, intermixed with rude crags of granite, were thickly scattered over this wide waste, which, throughout its vast extent, afforded as perfect a picture of sterility as can be well conceived. With this brief outline of the scenery, we must next attempt to describe the parties who were wandering over it.

Frank Trevelyan was about two-and-twenty. In figure he was rather below the middle height, and being slightly made and with the proportions of a tall man, he looked much less than he actually was. His features were not handsome, but he possessed what in a man is far more important—a highly intelligent and intellectual cast of countenance. He wore his hair, which was light and curly, cut very close, and incipient whiskers adorned the outline of his lower jaw. He was dressed in a gray tweed wrapper, with trousers of the Brougham pattern, and he sported a hat—black, but whether beaver or gossamer we are uninformed—high in the crown, but very narrow in the brim, bearing altogether no very remote resemblance to an inverted flower-pot.

His companion was about the same age, but the latter had made so much better use of his growing years, as to have shot up to something more than six feet in height; yet his figure, though slender, exhibited no appearance of weakness. His features were passably good—the nose perhaps rather too projecting; but his teeth were unexceptionable. He had a clear complexion, with a good fresh colour in his cheeks, which were still covered with the down of youth, but without imparting the slightest appearance of effeminacy. A foraging-cap of gray woven horse-hair, with a preposterous shade projecting out in front, covered his head; a loose blouse enveloped the upper, whilst checkered inexpressibles enclosed the lower man. Unlike his companion, he wore his hair, which was rather dark, very long, both at the sides and behind; and the rudiments of mustaches were perceptible upon his upper lip; but whether they were to be [Pg 232] allowed to attain a more luxuriant maturity, or their brief existence was to be prematurely cut short by the destroying razor, was, at the time we speak of, involved in doubt, that being a subject which, though it engrossed much of his thoughts, the proprietor had hitherto been unable to make up his mind upon. Each of our two heroes bore a light kind of knapsack upon his back; their general appearance marked them to be gentlemen, whilst their attire and accoutrements denoted they were pursuing a pedestrian tour.

But softly! the ladies approach. See how elegantly they canter their steeds over the only smooth piece of turf our travellers had met with throughout the whole extent of gloomy commons they had that morning traversed.

"Ay, that's right! Pull up in time, my lovely ones, ere you get amongst the rascally mole-hills; and then you'll not only ride the safer, but afford us at the same time a chance of obtaining a view of your pretty faces," thought friend Frank; whilst similar thoughts, although perhaps arranged in more elegant terms, were passing through the mind of his companion. But if the curiosity of the two pedestrians was great, their admiration proved far greater when the objects which excited those feelings, on a nearer approach, proved to be two as lovely young women as the most fastidious admirer of beauty could wish to gaze upon. One of them, indeed, displayed such matchless charms to the youthful poet's eyes, as at the very first glance to form to his excited fancy the beau-ideal of perfect loveliness.

"What an angel!" he mentally exclaimed; "upon such a form I could continue to gaze enraptured for"——

How long he never said, for ere he had time to give utterance to the thought, he stumbled over one of the surrounding mole-hills, and staggering forward several paces with extended arms, he ultimately fell prostrate on the ground, close by the side of the innocent yet moving cause of his misadventure, and with such force, as to bury the whole of his countenance in the soft heavings of a similar hillock to the one he had so inadvertently tripped over.

Luckily for him, the place his physiognomy alighted upon was of so soft and yielding a nature, that though he stamped a perfect model of his features in the clay, the features themselves were unimpaired, otherwise than by the earthy colouring communicated to them by so pressing a contact, which perfectly satisfied the fair equestrians (who had the kindness to pull up and express their hopes that he was not seriously hurt) that the actual damage sustained was of a very superficial nature.

"And I suppose you intend to say that this is all for the best?" observed Vernon in rather a rueful tone, as, the ladies having ridden on, he was attempting to rub off the dirt from his face with his pocket handkerchief—the first wipe of which was sufficient to show him how much the effects of his tumble had changed the natural hue of his complexion.

"To be sure I do," answered Frank "and any man less unreasonable than yourself would say so too."

"What! say it was all for the best for him, like an awkward booby, to fall sprawling in the dirt, thereby making himself a laughing-stock to that beautiful, angelic creature? Oh! only look, my dear Frank, only look—see her—see both of them! Why, as I live, they are almost ready to fall off the very backs of their horses from the laughter my blundering awkwardness has excited. Oh, it's really dreadful—I must turn my head another way. I can bear the sight of it no longer!"

"But only think how much worse it would have been if your phiz, instead of the soft earth, had encountered one of the hard spar-stones that are so plentifully strewed about here?"

"And supposing it had—wouldn't it have been better, at the cost of little pain and suffering, to

have excited the compassion, instead of the laughter of that heavenly creature?"

"But hardly at the sacrifice of your nose, I should say," rejoined Frank, "which, from the deep impression it has made in the clay, must have been smashed flat as a pancake had it battled out the matter with the stones." [Pg 233]

The young poet had a great regard for his nose, and his companion's remarks upon the subject were so palpable, that he was not only silenced but convinced.

"I say here, my man. Here, Jan, Jan, I say," bawled out our friend Frank, to what he was pleased to style a straw-yard savage in the disguise of a gentleman's servant on horseback, who, whilst engaged in the pleasant employment of munching an apple, had allowed the ladies he was attending to canter off some distance a-head, and was then in the act of passing, at a very moderate pace, close by our two heroes, but pulled up his nag at the summons, and, touching his hat, replied, in the singing accent of the western Cornishmen—" Your sarvant, gen'lmen both; what 'ud ye plaze to have, sir?—though my name b'aint Jan, plaze yer honours."

"What is it then?—Bill, Dick, Tom, Harry, Ben, Jim, Nic, Mike, Mathey, or Peter?"

"Neither, maester, plaze your honour, sir," said the man, with a grin that denoted he was entering into the humour of the thing, and who, as well as Frank, was a bit of a wag in his way. "Timothy's my name, at your sarvice, gen'lmen—what 'ud your honours plaze to have of I?"

"What I would have, Timothy," answered Frank, "is for you to tell me who those two young ladies are that you are in attendance upon?"

"Maester's two dafters," replied Timothy.

"And who's maester?" asked Frank.

"The squire, to be sure," answered his man.

"And what's squire's name?" inquired Frank.

"Potts—Squire Potts," replied Timothy—at which announcement Vernon Wycherley lifted up both eyes and hands in unfeigned amazement.

"And the young ladies?" resumed the questioner.

"Lor, sir! I ha'n't a got time to bide and tell'ee no more. See they be 'most out of sight a'ready, and I shall have to ride a brave pace to catch mun again—and most dead wi' thest, too, I be's a'ready."

Frank, who plainly saw Timothy's drift, dived his hand into the deep recesses of his trousers' pockets.—Timothy, who witnessed the act, not altogether an unexpected one, drew nearer and nearer, and when close alongside of Frank, cramming the remainder of the apple into his mouth, he dropped the hand that had conveyed it there, as if by the merest accident in the world, within easy reach of the interrogator's, who, slipping into it a coin of sufficient importance, small as it was, to raise a grin of delight in the groom's countenance, again asked him the names of the two young ladies.

"Heerken, and I'll tell'ee," he answered. "She with the light hair and eyes, she's Miss Bessie; and she with the dark hair and eyes, she's called Miss Molly—that's she's name." And having so said, Timothy rode off at a rapid pace.

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed Vernon Wycherley—"can it be possible that so lovely a being—one who seems too beautiful to tread the earth"——

"And so rides on horseback over it; is that what you mean?" interrupted Frank.

"No, you know very well it is not what I mean," answered Vernon petulantly. "My wonder is, how one so elegant could be called by such a name as that knave uttered."

"What! Molly Potts, eh? that I believe was the name he mentioned?" interposed Frank.

"Pshaw, nonsense!" retorted his companion; "it can't be her name. The idea's too preposterous to be true. That insolent clown has dared to try to hoax us; for which I promise him, if I were his master, I'd break every bone in his good-for-nothing body. Molly Potts! It never can be so. The thing's quite out of the question—utterly impossible!"

"Impossible or not, I don't see that it's likely to make much difference either to you or me," observed Frank; "for the chances are, we never set eyes upon either of them again."

"Then," said Vernon, "I almost wish that I, at least, had never set eyes upon one of them at all. To know that such an angel moves about on earth, and to think that I may never see her more, must ever form a source of deep regret; and yet it seems strange—very strange—that I—I—who have ever looked upon the fairest of the sex unmoved, should be so struck as I was here by a mere glance." [Pg 234]

"A very hard hit, certainly," said Frank: "I never saw a fellow more completely floored."

"Better book that to tell again," retorted vernon; "it really is so seldom you do say a witty thing, that it's a pity it should be lost upon these dull moors."

"Then, unless we intend to follow the fate of my wit," resumed Frank, "we must step out a little faster to get out of them; which we sha'n't do under a couple of miles' walk more, I promise you."

Chapter II.

Frank Trevelyan's statement proved tolerably correct as to distance, for little more than two miles brought our travellers clear of the rugged moorlands; when, after ascending the brow of a steep hill, a sight broke suddenly upon them, which, though unlike the scenery they had previously passed over, presented if possible a more dreary picture. As far as the eye could reach, nothing could be discerned but one vast wilderness of undulating sandy hillocks, totally devoid of vegetation, except a kind of coarse rush, which, in spite of the shifting nature of the soil, had here and there contrived to spring up and take root; and now to add to this cheerless aspect, the sky, which hitherto had been bright and clear, began to lower with those dark threatening clouds which form the sure forerunner of a heavy squall of wind and rain—no pleasant thing for two lightly-clad pedestrians to be overtaken with in a bleak open country on a chill November day. Even Frank, who, with his merry chat, had latterly kept his companion's spirits alive, the latter of whom had begun to complain both of hunger and fatigue—even Frank felt disconcerted at the desolate prospect before him, as well as disappointed at not discovering the mining village, containing the snug little public-house, which he had been informed he should fall in with at the termination of the stony moorlands. Resolved however to put the best face he could upon the matter, our little hero assured his tall comrade that another half hour would be sure to bring them to the desired spot, where he was certain they would obtain both rest and refreshment—two things they much needed—having walked on unceasingly for several hours since their early morning's meal without having eaten or drunk any thing, and the sun by this time had begun to sink low in the horizon. Scarcely, however, had they crossed the narrow valley that divided these two barren wastes from each other, and had commenced ascending the steep beaten path that passed through the sandy desert, than the storm, which had been previously brewing, burst forth with relentless fury, the rain descending in torrents, accompanied by fierce gusts of wind, that, whirling aloft the loose drifting sands, swept them onwards in dense clouds before the gale, forming an overpowering and blinding deluge that perplexed our tourists exceedingly.

"This is all for the best, I suppose," suggested Vernon Wycherley, who, uncomfortable as he was, couldn't help enjoying the luxury of having a hit at his fellow-traveller, and thus proving himself for once at any rate to have been on the right side of the argument.

"All for the best, did you say?" replied Frank. "All for the best?—ay, to be sure it is—though we ourselves may perhaps be too short-sighted to see the drift of it."

"See the drift!" interposed Vernon—"See the drift! Why, we not only see it, but feel it. The benefit to be derived from it is what I want you to convince me of, Master Frank."

The truth of Vernon's observation was too palpable to be denied; for both he and his companion were half-choked and nearly blinded by the clouds of sand that, in the course they were pursuing, [Pg 235] blew directly in their faces, and which even the rain seemed to have no effect in allaying; till as last the peppering became so severe, that our travellers were actually compelled to turn their backs upon the enemy. Hardly, however, had they done this, ere Frank joyfully exclaimed—"It *is* all for the best after all, and that I'll soon convince you of, Master Vernon. Cast your piercing peepers through the thick of it, and you'll see the very place we want to find, which, if the storm hadn't compelled us to face to the right about, we should have passed by without discovering, concealed as it is in the narrow gorge we have just crossed. So cheer up, I say, old fellow, and let us both put our best foot foremost, and see how soon we can get there."

Vernon required no further persuasion, and the desired house of entertainment was soon reached. Here our wet and weary travellers had the good fortune to meet with that comfort of all comforts to persons so situated—a blazing kitchen-fire, which afforded them an opportunity of drying their wet clothes, and at the same time to enjoy the sight of the cookery of some tempting rashers and eggs, which, with the unequalled accompaniment of fried potatoes, was soon after duly set out for them in the sole parlour the house afforded, where they found a good fire had been prepared for their reception.

"Would you like a bottle of Guinness's porter with your dinners, gen'lmen?" asked a very pretty and tidily dressed young woman, who waited upon them.

"To be sure we would, my pretty Mary," replied Mr Vernon Wycherley, "and thank you for the hint into the bargain; I'm sure I should never have dreamt of meeting with Dublin stout amidst the wilds of Cornwall."

"Us do always kip it," observed Mary.

"Then a bottle of it, if you please, my pretty girl," resumed the poet. "Ay, that's right, out with the cork—never mind the froth, Mary—never mind the froth."

"It is indeed prime stuff!" he added, replacing his empty glass upon the table; "and upon my life, Frank, this is a perfect feast; and never did I enjoy one more. Things really have turned out a great deal better than I expected."

"Or, in other words, have turned out all for the best," observed Frank, looking up for a moment

from his plate, the contents of which had previously absorbed his whole attention; and elevating his glass as a signal for Mary to fill it with the tempting beverage, which she, well understanding, instantly obeyed; and having drained every drop of it, he resumed—"So you see, Master Vernon, you stand convicted by your own confession, that your former doubts and misgivings were without foundation; added to which, you can't help agreeing with me, that our present gratification is still further enhanced by the few trivial difficulties we just before met with."

Vernon was not inclined to concede to all his companion had just said, and, in fact, was mentally arranging the proper language in which to express his dissent, when a fresh arrival of piping-hot rashers turned the current of his thoughts towards the eggs and bacon, about which, instead of saying any thing, he quietly helped himself to, and then handed over the dish to his friend.

"I feel rather tired with my walk to-day," observed Mr Vernon Wycherley, who, having at last eaten to his heart's content, had pressed an extra chair into his service, for the purpose of resting his long and wearied legs thereupon. "Every thing here," he continued, glancing his eye around the tidily furnished little room—"every thing here looks clean and comfortable. I wonder if we could get accommodated with beds, instead of having to tramp it three miles further over the sandbanks in this uncertain weather, in order to reach our original destination at the next village?"

"I wish we could, with all my heart," answered Frank; "and here comes Mary with some more stout, who can tell us all about it." And so the handmaiden was questioned accordingly, who replied, in a tone of evident disappointment, "Lar bless ee, sir, there b'aint a bed to be had in the whole place; fay there b'aint, I can assure ee not, if ye'd offer pounds o' gold for 'un; for ever since Wheal Costly, just handy by here, has turned out so rich, there's no quarters to be had for [Pg 236] the sight of folks that be employed about her. There's only seven beds in all this here housen; and, besides the family, there be no less than sex-and-thirty miners a quartering here; they takes sex out o' the seven beds, and mistus and I and all the childer do fill the t'othern all night, and when us do turn out, then maister and his comarade do turn in—and 'tis the same all through town[38]—an' by ma fath an' troth, I zem there b'aint, at this very moment, a bed without a pair in 'un for miles round."

"But how do the folks here contrive to pig it away together six in a bed?" inquired Mr Vernon Wycherley. "Your beds must be very large, otherwise I should fancy such close stowage to be hardly possible."

"O na, sir, you don't onderstand," replied the maid, hardly able to restrain herself from laughing outright at the stranger's gross ignorance of mining habits; "not pair[39] o' six all to bed together to one time; you da see miners do work to bal[40] eight hours to a spell, and has sexteen to stay 'bove ground; so one and his comarade sleeps their first eight hours 'bove ground, and then turns out for the next pair; and so they goes on, one pair in and t'other pair out, so that between sex on 'um, the bed's never to say quite empty."

"And can never, of course, require a warming-pan," remarked Frank.

"Lar! tha b'est a queer little chap," thought Mary; but being too polite to say as much, she merely smiled pleasantly at the remark, as she tripped out of the room.

"Well, as we must toddle further, it's of little use to put so grave a face upon it, old fellow," observed Frank to his poetical friend, who was indulging in a reverie, with his eyes fixed in vacancy towards the burning embers in the grate.

"Eh! what?" demanded Vernon, with the usual start of an absent literary man, whose attention is suddenly awakened. Frank repeated his previous remark.

"My thoughts were far, far away from hence," said Mr Vernon Wycherley; "the subject of them was my comedy, which, as you know, I intend to offer for the prize at the Haymarket."

"Your comedy be hanged!" interrupted Frank.

"I fear that even a direr fate than that awaits it," resumed its author. "Oh! if I had but seen *her* before I arranged my female characters—have carried her beauteous image in my mind, as now I mentally behold her"—

"What! Molly Potts?" interposed Mr Frank Trevelyan, with a look of arch innocence—such a funny look it was, as no man living but Frank himself could possibly have given.

"Pshaw," said Vernon impatiently, "how can you find the heart to mention her name, if such indeed it be, in that disagreeable tone and manner? It is enough to drive away every poetic idea connected with her. If you can only mention her name in that cold tone of contempt, I'd thank you to hold your tongue about her altogether."

With this remark, the poet took a manuscript book from a pocket in his blouse, and with contracted brow, he made an entry there in pencil of some happy thought the moment had just then suggested, which occupying some minutes, his companion in the interval walked to the window to examine into the appearance of the weather, and perceiving that the rain had ceased, and one bright star already twinkled in the sky, he suggested the propriety of preparing for their immediate departure, in order that they might get over as much of their ground as they possibly could before dark.

Having been directed to the path they were to pursue, which was a different one from that they had gone over when overtaken by the storm, though apparently leading in the same direction, our travellers again resumed their route. There was still good light when they started, and as long as it continued—but which was a very short time—the novelty of the surrounding desert of [Pg 237] sand imparted some degree of interest to the scene; but, in proportion as the darkness closed in, the spirits of the pedestrians began to flag. Still, however, Frank strove to cheer up his companion, who was by far the most weary and dispirited of the two, and, as a never-failing remedy, began to talk to him about his intended comedy—its plot, and some of the most striking scenes and characters. The result was just as he had anticipated, and its author, who just before had dragged himself along in moody silence, or only replied in listless monosyllables, began to chat away upon the much-loved topic in the most animated manner possible; and so much were both engrossed with the subject, as not to perceive that, whilst traversing one of those level pieces of turf that few and far between formed a kind of tiny oasis in this desert, they had altogether missed the footpath.

Just at this unfortunate crisis it had become exceedingly dark, and the heavy clouds fast gathering overhead promised another shower; which promise was fulfilled even more speedily than they anticipated, and down came the rain pouring away in hissing torrents upon our pedestrians, who, unable to regain the lost footpath, strolled on for some time without the remotest notion of the direction they ought to take. They were not, however, very long in finding that they had again gotten amongst the loose sandbanks, which, being dispersed around in steep undulating hillocks, were exceedingly fatiguing to traverse even by daylight; it is needless, then, to say how much this difficulty was increased when the traveller was involved in darkness, and at the same time ignorant of the direction he ought to pursue. Nor was this the worst evil to which our two wanderers were exposed. A considerable number of mines had been opened in these wastes, and though the working of them had been abandoned for several years, yet the shafts were still open, many of them wholly unprotected either by rail or embankment, and the aperture being even with the surface, and not wider than the mouth of an ordinary-sized well, no one could possibly discern his danger in a night so dark as it then was. A more fatal snare for entrapping a benighted traveller could scarcely have been devised. But neither Vernon nor Frank had the remotest suspicion of this danger; or, in fact, any fears beyond the dread of spending the night in this howling wilderness.

At last, to their great relief, the rain subsided, and the clouds breaking away disclosed the great bear and polar star, which afforded them an unerring point to steer by, and raised strong hopes that if the sky remained clear, and their legs would only hold out long enough against the excessive fatigue of scrambling over the steep hillocks, they might, by pursuing a perfectly straight course, at last get clear of this desert spot, and reach a better kind of country, where they might meet with some habitation or other that would at least afford them rest and shelter until daybreak.

Now, when matters have become very bad, any change for the better, however slight it be, imparts some cheering influence; and the relief our drenched pedestrians felt from the mere ceasing of the rain, and exchanging the dull lowering sky for the clear dark-blue starlight, proved enough to renovate their drooping hearts, and to excite them to make the best use they could of their limbs; so that by persevering they at last reached a part of the waste where the travelling became less irksome, the drifting sand having, in this particular part, formed itself into larger hills, which, in course of time, had become coated with short grass, and thus afforded very pleasant ground to walk over. But this relief from fatigue was attended with increased peril to the erring wanderers, who were now in the very midst of abandoned mines, whose shafts yawned around them in every direction, many of which they passed almost within a hair's-breadth of, unaware of the dangers that thus lay in their path, and only congratulating themselves on the improved state of the ground they had to walk over.

Now Vernon Wycherley, who had been for some short time turning the matter over in his mind, began to fancy he had found a poser for his fellow-traveller, to whom he remarked, that however [Pg 238] fortunate they might consider themselves when they got out of their present difficulties, there could be no possible advantage whatever in their having gotten into them.

"I don't agree with you even there," said Frank; "one advantage there will be on the score of experience, as it cannot fail to furnish us with an accurate knowledge of what a person's sensations are when he loses his way in a wilderness of sandbanks in a dark and stormy night in November."

"And is that all the advantage you can point out?" interposed Mr Vernon Wycherley.

"All? No, not one-half," resumed Frank. "Will it not supply both of us with everlasting materials for spinning yarns to match other travellers' tales, as well as furnish you with an endless topic for your poetic and dramatic pen? And besides, I've no doubt there are lots of other advantages we shall eventually derive benefit from, though they may for ever remain hidden amongst the many mysteries that man is never designed to know."

"You really are the most extraordinary fellow I ever met with," rejoined Vernon, "striving, as you ever do, to cook up good of some kind or other out of the most evil materials; and every misfortune, by some wonderful philosophy hatched up by your ingenious brain, you pretend to convert into a benefit. Why, old fellow, Mansel of Trinity actually told me—mind I've only his word for it, perhaps not the best authority in the world either—but he positively assured me, that you tried to convince him that your being taken ill on the third day of your examination, which

was thus cut short in the middle, and which caused you to rank far lower than you otherwise would have done amongst the wranglers, was the most fortunate event that possibly could have happened to you."

"And that is my firm conviction still," said Frank, with the utmost coolness.

"What!" exclaimed Vernon in amazement, "you surely cannot be in earnest in what you say?"

"Indeed I am," resumed Frank; "for, had I taken higher honours my dear old governor would never have rested satisfied unless I had devoted myself either to study of the law or politics, both of which I hate, instead of permitting me, at some future time, to become a quiet country parson. —But what extraordinary light is that?" he exclaimed, on perceiving a narrow stream of fire, apparently at no great distance, shoot up above the brow of a low hill just before them?"

"A singular kind of meteor, certainly," observed the poet. "I never saw one like it before."

"Very like a sky-rocket; wasn't it?" observed Frank; "and a sky-rocket I've no doubt it was; and as this happens to be the night of the 5th of November, I dare say it proceeds from the very village to which we are bound—an important place too, it should seem, from sporting sky-rockets. Ah! there goes another. Huzza! we shall soon be amongst them.—Oh! merciful Heaven!" he exclaimed, as his companion suddenly vanished from his sight, having stepped inadvertently into the mouth of one of those dangerous shafts we have before alluded to. A heavy sound denoted the fearful depth to which he had been precipitated, which was shortly followed by a loud, hollow crash, caused by a fall of some fragments of detached earth, which, from the great depth it had to descend, occupied several seconds ere it reached the bottom of this deep abyss.

Chapter III.

Frank Trevelyan, almost petrified with horror at the dreadful catastrophe, which there was just then sufficient light to enable him to discern the nature of, remained for some moments riveted to the spot from whence he had witnessed its occurrence; but soon partially recovering his bewildered faculties, he fell upon his hands and knees, and approaching the mouth of the shaft, called out, in a tone of agonizing anxiety to his companion, but with scarcely a hope of being responded to, when a faint voice, though from an awful depth, assured him he was yet alive; but, [Pg 239] it was to be feared, dreadfully injured; and, in plain truth, he was in a situation of even greater danger than his fellow-traveller was then aware of. Poor Vernon Wycherley had fallen upwards of sixty feet perpendicularly, and had alighted on a projection of the ground, occasioned by a drift that had been made in the workings, which alone prevented him from being hurled to the bottom of the pit, which was of vast depth, though partially filled with water. As it was, his situation was so perilous, that it seemed only to add to the agony of impending death, with a very remote prospect of deliverance. Every thing depended upon his being able to secure himself upon the point of ground where he then rested; and this being loosened by the force with which he had fallen upon it, was gradually crumbling from beneath him, every particle of which, as it gave way, splashing in the water at the bottom of the shaft produced a deafening crash, which sound rendered him fearfully conscious of the probability of the whole mass, upon which his sole chance for safety depended, sinking under him, before the necessary assistance could arrive. This it soon did to such a degree, that, in spite of all his efforts, he gradually sank lower and lower, until, unable longer to retain a footing, his legs were overhanging the awful gulf, and he was rapidly sliding off, when, by a desperate effort, he threw up his feet, so that they reached the opposite side of the shaft, whilst his body still remained on the projecting drift, against which he firmly planted his back, and with his feet on the opposite side, he was thus enabled to gain a stationary position; yet, even then, the soil continually crumbling away, rendered it doubtful how long he might be able to retain it.

Frank Trevelyan was, however, as we before mentioned, unaware of the full extent of his friend's peril, and only dreading the effects of what had already occurred, he no sooner heard the welcome sound of his voice, than, bidding him keep up a good heart, for that he plainly heard the voices of a number of persons at no great distance, from some of whom he should be able to procure all the aid he required. Having so said, he started off at speed towards the spot from whence he could still hear the humming noise of many voices, indicating an assemblage of a large company of persons no great way off—and so towards this spot he ran at a rapid pace, regardless of the risk he incurred in thus racing along, as it were blindfold, in so dangerous a locality. But the fact is, a thought of his own personal safety never once entered his head: Vernon's accident, and its probable consequences, engrossed his every thought. Another rocket served to show him he was taking the right direction; and at so rapid a pace did he proceed, that the enlivening sounds of voices became more and more distinct, when, topping the brow of the hill, a blue light, most opportunely lighted up, disclosed to him at a very short distance on the opposite side of the valley, a substantial gentleman's house, in front of which a motley and mixed medley of some couple of hundred people or more—some of them gentlemen, but the majority consisting of miners and agricultural labourers—were assembled, either as actors, assistants, or lookers-on, at a display of various kinds of fire-works that was then going forward.

A sight so welcome to our little hero's hopes imparted fresh vigour to his limbs; and he darted down the steep declivity at the imminent danger of his neck, but happily reached the bottom in safety, just as the light which had aided him in his descent expired, which then made every thing appear even darker than before. Consequently, Frank, not espying the brook that intervened betwixt himself and the object he was striving to reach, tumbled over head and ears into one of

its deepest pools; but being a swimmer, and the stream but narrow though the pool was deep, he soon attained the summit of the opposite bank; when a hedge, almost close at hand, alone seemed to separate him from the people whose assistance he was so anxious to secure. The hedge was easily clambered over, though an impediment he had not anticipated awaited him on the other side, in the form of a small fishpond, into which he bundled, and so got a second [Pg 240] ducking. But as this pond, or rather that portion of it into which he had fallen, was not deep, he soon splashed across it, to the amazement of the assembled party who witnessed the feat, which a fresh blue-light, just then ignited, afforded them ample means of doing—the heavy souse he had made in tumbling in, and the splutter he made in floundering out again, having already attracted their attention to the spot—which, as he seemed to have selected the very widest part of the whole pool, was the very last of all others any one could have suspected an entry to have been made on the premises.

Unconscious of the surprise he had thus excited, Frank Trevelyan rushed forward into the midst of the assembled group, and seizing hold upon a stout little old gentleman who seemed to be the leading man of the party, endeavoured, as well as his exhausted state would permit, to explain the fearful misadventure which had just occurred. The intelligence excited an exclamation of horror from all who heard it.

"What a dreadful death!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"Oh! don't say so, for heaven's sake," cried Frank—"He may be, and I fear is, much hurt; but I trust he may yet be saved."

"Impossible!" said half a dozen voices. "Why, the shaft's hundreds of feet deep."

"But my companion is yet far from the bottom of it," resumed Frank—"Something or other has interposed to prevent his falling lower. He spoke, and told me so—Oh! for mercy's sake make haste, and you may yet preserve his life."

"What a horrible situation!" exclaimed the old gentleman; "but no time must be lost in talking about it, or inquiring into the why or the wherefore. So here you, Timothy, John Clarke, Harris, Tom Carpenter, run for your lives, every man Jack of you to the farm, where you'll find plenty rope;—and here, miners, my dear men—do you bestir yourselves—succeed or not, I'll pay you well. Could any thing be more fortunate?" continued the old gentleman, soliloquising to himself —"could any thing be more fortunate than our show of fire-works bringing all the miners of the parish about our ears; the very best hands in the world, from woeful experience in like matters, to render aid in an accident of this kind."

No one required to be told a second time; and almost ere the words were out of the worthy squire's mouth, every body had dispersed here and there to procure ropes, and whatever might be required; all of which were collected with a celerity almost incredible; and then off started plenty of able and willing hands, all in eager haste to accomplish the charitable object they were bent upon.

And now we must return to poor Vernon Wycherley, whom we left pent up in a narrow dungeon many feet beneath the surface, enveloped in darkness, and with difficulty sustaining an irksome and even painful position, by keeping his body jammed across, and, as it were, forming a kind of bridge over this awful chasm; whilst the loose soil, upon whose unstable foundation his only chance of safety depended, gradually crumbling away, kept his attention unceasingly alive to the certain fate that awaited him when unable longer to retain his hold; the horrors of which were still further augmented by the deafening din that thundered forth as each detached mass reached the water far, far below. Few men, indeed, could have sustained a sufficient degree of self-possession to have held on a minute under such trying circumstances; but our tall young hero was possessed of that true kind of courage, which, though disinclined to seek out danger for mere danger's sake, is never daunted by its approach, however fearful or unexpected it may be; and thus he was enabled to await his impending fate with calm resignation. Strange, too, as it may appear, his thoughts, notwithstanding his appalling situation, would now and then wander to common everyday matters. Even the events of that very afternoon occurred to him, and the beauteous form he had been so much struck with passed in fancy before his eyes. "Would she pity his fate?" he asked himself—"alas! no—how was she to know any thing about it? Poor Frank, too," he thought, "what can he say to my unexpected, and probably fatal accident? I fear all his [Pg 241] philosophy will, at least this time, fail of convincing him;—it is *all for the best*, but better for myself, perhaps, than him, as far as chances of being saved go; for with his little legs, it must have been all over with him some time before this. But, gracious Heaven! may not such a catastrophe have already happened to him?"

The start this last thought excited had well nigh proved fatal—a large quantity of earth became detached even by this slight movement, and at the same time caused a change of position, which, though very slight, was yet sufficient to produce a fresh action on the muscles, previously cramped from the unusual strain upon then, and thereby causing so much pain, that the sufferer was nearly relaxing his hold, the retention of which became more arduous every moment; whilst the time thus occupied seemed prolonged to almost tenfold the term of its ordinary duration. Never, therefore, was sound more welcome to his ears, than the hoarse and agitated tone with which his friend, Frank Trevelyan, shouted out to him down the mouth of the shaft; whilst the cheers with which his reply was hailed from several persons who had already reached the spot, assured him that the much-wished-for relief was at hand. Nor was there, indeed, a moment then to lose; for even during the short time it took in adjusting the rope, and getting ready a light, with

which an adventurous miner, well skilled in such matters, was about to descend, poor Vernon's strength was rapidly declining; and, conscious of his increasing weakness, he called out earnestly to those above to make haste, as he could hold on no longer, and that the ground was fast slipping away from under him. Anxiously indeed throbbed every breast during the interval occupied by the miner's descent, and breathless was the suspense with which each awaited the signal to pull away again upon the rope, which had scarcely been given, when a heavy rumbling sound, followed by a whirring noise, and terminating in a tremendous booming crash, whose fearful din and uproar it is impossible to describe, caused a thrill of horror to pass through the frame of every bystander; whilst Frank, uttering a loud cry, threw himself with his face upon the ground, and grasped the turf in all the frenzied agony of grief, till the loud cheers that made the welkin ring again, aroused him to a state of consciousness, when all his grief was turned into joy by discovering the friend whose loss he had just begun to deplore, again safely landed on the earth's surface, and apparently but little the worse for his extraordinary tumble.

The noise which had caused so much unnecessary alarm was produced by the projecting mass, which, loosened by Vernon's violent descent upon it, had given way the instant it lost the partial support caused by the pressure of his body against it.

Fortunately for the sufferer, there was no lack of medical aid. The village doctor, who had been present at the fire-works, had the humane, or business-like consideration to betake himself as speedily as possible from thence to the place where his services were so likely to be needed; whilst the old gentleman, who had taken so active a part in the late transaction, had himself also practised the healing art in the early part of his life. To the gratification of all present, these two gentlemen, after a cursory examination, reported that no bones were broken, and that although the right wrist was sprained, and the left leg much bruised, yet that the other injuries were of a very trifling nature; so much so indeed, that being helped on the back of the pony which had brought the old gentleman to the scene of action, the patient rode without much difficulty to the mansion from whence the assistance had been derived; and which, although then attained by a more circuitous route than the one Frank had previously gone, was less than a mile distant.

Nothing, indeed, could exceed the kind hospitality of the old gentleman, who, as Frank had supposed, turned out to be the proprietor of the house and grounds he had made his entry upon in so unusual and unexpected a manner. Determined to act out the character of the good [Pg 242] Samaritan to the very letter, the squire, for so every body called him, would insist upon taking the patient to his own house, as well as that Frank should remain to assist in taking care of him; alleging that there was no other place for miles around where they could be properly accommodated; and if there was, they should not go there as long as he had a house to shelter them. Vernon was too glad to find any kind of resting-place to refuse so generous an offer, and it required very little pressing to induce Master Frank Trevelyan to accept the invitation; for, somehow or other, he had just at the very moment begun to fancy that the late occurrence was but the commencement of a series of adventures, which a further acquaintance with their new friend might lead to. But the reasons which induced him to take such a fancy into his head, we must for the present forbear mentioning.

Chapter IV.

Vernon Wycherley, in spite of all his late perils, enjoyed a good night's rest, and on awakening about daylight on the following morning, he found that, barring a little pain and a great deal of stiffness about his sprained wrist and bruised leg, combined with slight soreness all over, he was not much the worse for his accident, and so he told Frank, who just at that very moment had popped his head into the room to see how he was getting on.

"And really, friend Frank," observed the patient, "I ought to be thankful for the snug quarters I've fallen into, as well as for my providential and almost miraculous escape."

"Which," interrupted Frank, "your medical friends here say you must at present think as little about as you can, and not talk about at all."

"Well, well, old fellow, their advice is doubtless very good; but it shall not for all that prevent my indulging in feelings of thankfulness to heaven for my deliverance."

"Not an uncomfortable room this," observed Frank, looking around it.

"Can any thing convey an air of greater comfort?" said Vernon. "There's a look of cheerful cleanliness about it that's quite delightful; and as for the bed, I never rested my wearied limbs before on one I liked better."

"Ay," said Frank, "and all through the house, from attic to cellar, I'll venture to say you'll find things just the same."

"Why, you can scarcely have had sufficient time or opportunity to ascertain that yet, I should imagine," observed Vernon; "for, with all the modest assurance with which you are so superabundantly blessed, you can't have already been paul-prying, and poking that impudent nose of yours into every hole and corner of it."

"Certainly not," answered Frank, "but I've seen quite enough to form a pretty accurate judgment that the bulk will tally with the sample—a conclusion I can arrive at without the aid of my nasal organ. A fact may be ascertained without one's poking their nose to the bottom of it—a very

unsatisfactory, as well as uncertain, mode of proceeding, take my word for it. Why, I wouldn't undertake to ascertain even the height or depth of a molehill by so uncertain a process."

"And will you never forget that unlucky blunder of mine?" asked Mr Vernon Wycherley.

"Never, I promise you," replied Frank.

"Well, then, if you can't forget it, I suppose you can cease talking about it; and, by way of a more pleasing subject, suppose you tell me something about the people here—the old gentleman, the only member of the family I've yet seen, appears to possess a very host of good-nature."

"And a very good-natured host he has proved," interrupted Frank.

"That's right," said Vernon;—"very well for you; so book it, to tell again, and make the most of it." [Pg 243]

"I shall do no such thing," rejoined Frank, "as no words I can employ would do justice to our honest entertainer, who is without exception the happiest and merriest little fellow I ever met with, possessing a countenance full of mirth and good-humour, and a heart overflowing with benevolence—a downright hearty good fellow, a thorough trump—a regular brick, and no mistake at all about the matter, as our little friend, Major Rodd, would say. And I say, Vernon, you've no idea what a delightful evening I spent after I'd tuck'd you in for the night. I never in my life met so entertaining a man before—a mere glimpse of his good-natured face is sufficient to drive away a very legion of blue-devils, although, by the by, those are fiends that never haunt me; and then we had a famous spread by way of supper—jugged hare—a woodcock—the first I've yet seen for the season—and lots of snipes."

"All of which, I dare say, you did ample justice to," interposed Mr Vernon Wycherley.

"More than justice, friend Vernon—more than justice; for I ate the best portion of the woodcock, in addition to a fair allowance of the jugged hare I'd taken before—and then finished off with the snipes—the whole being accompanied with some excellent home-brewed ale."

"Well, enough about the supper; but tell me, was there nobody but yourself and the squire to partake of it?"

"Oh yes! the doctor staid to supper, but was obliged to start and visit a patient who had sent for him, which compelled him to commence a five miles' ride ere he had well time to finish his meal."

"You saw no ladies, then?"

"Yes, but I did though—that is, I saw the lady of the house; and much as I liked master, I don't know but I liked mistress more—such a dear, kind-hearted creature—and so good-looking, Vernon—one of the sort that would never look old, or grow ugly, even if she lived to the age of Methusalem. And her fondness for her old man is quite delightful—none of your my-dearing or my-loving nonsense, or anxiety about every thing he likes to eat and drink disagreeing with him; but good, downright, honest, hearty affection, which was beautifully displayed in the happy smile with which she regarded the old fellow, and witnessed how truly he seemed to be enjoying himself. That's what I'd recommend all wives to do who wish to preserve their good looks. A woman's beauty depends so much upon expression, that if that's spoilt, farewell to all her charms, and which nothing tends more to bring about than a countenance soured with imaginary cares, instead of lighted up with thankfulness for innumerable blessings—that's what makes half the women wither away into wrinkles so early in life; whilst nothing renders their beauty so lasting as that placid look of pure benevolence, which emanates from a heart full of thankfulness to God—affection for those nearest and dearest to them, and good-will towards all mankind."

"Thank ye, Frank—thank ye for these pretty little sentiments—very good remarks, certainly, and true; but I think you'd better keep them to bestow upon the future Mrs Trevelyan; I dare say you may find them useful then. And now, have you any further news to tell me this morning?"

"Yes, I believe I have. I was just going to tell you about the fair ladies we met on the downs yesterday; but I've a great mind not to do so."

"Eh? what? where?" interrupted Vernon. "Oh! do tell me—have you seen them?"

"No," answered Frank demurely, "I haven't seen even the shadow of their petticoats."

"Is this Squire Potts', then? eh!"

"Not impossible," rejoined Frank with most provoking coolness; "at least," he continued, "I know nothing to the contrary, for never having heard our worthy squire's cognomen, I see no reason why he may not be called Potts as well as any thing else."

"Pshaw," said Vernon impatiently, "and is that all you have to tell me? I really fancied you had heard or seen something."

"And so I have," rejoined Frank.

"Whom, then? eh! Do tell me!" demanded Vernon, eagerly. [Pg 244]

"Timothy," replied Frank.

"Timothy!" reiterated the poet.

"Ay, Timothy, to be sure; what d'ye think of that, Mr Vernon Wycherley?"

"Why, it leads me to hope," replied that gentleman, "that we may meet the ladies themselves ere long, or"—

No *or* in the matter," interrupted Frank; "I've made up my mind to meet them both at breakfast this very morning; and no mistake, as our gallant little friend the major says—for I'm pretty certain those lovely birds of paradise roosted last night somewhere or other about the premises."

"But as you say you've seen Timothy, haven't you been able to get any thing out of him?"

"No," replied Frank; "for as all his business seems to be confined to out-of-doors work, he only came once or twice into the room where we were upon some trifling excuse or other; but, in reality, I've no doubt to have a peep at your humble servant, whom the rogue instantly recognised; and when no one was looking, he tipped me a sly wink of the eye, at the same time pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, and directing his eyes towards the ceiling, thereby indicating, as I thought, that those I wished the most to see had already betaken themselves to bed."

"Then I trust they were not packed off on purpose that you might not see them?" observed the young poet.

"Quite the reverse, Vernon, I assure you, for I'm quite confident they were so packed off in order that they mightn't see me."

"You surprise me indeed—can it be possible that one so affable and open-hearted as our squire here appears to be, should hesitate to let his daughters see so harmless a specimen of the human race as my particular friend Mr Francis Trevelyan? But ah! I see how it is," Vernon continued, and his countenance fell as he said so. "I see how it is—he doubts our being gentlemen; a circumstance quite sufficient to account for the absence of the young ladies."

"Don't let that notion trouble you," interposed our little hero; "your particular friend, Mr Francis Trevelyan, as you have been pleased to style him, has removed every unfavourable impression a first glance of your two yards of humanity might have produced—you know the old saying, 'Show me your associates and I'll tell you what you are.'"

"Then," interposed Vernon, "the impression here must be, that I'm one of the most impudent dogs living."

"Nothing of the kind," resumed Frank; "that is, if they judge of you by your humble servant, whom they consider an exceedingly modest young man, which was the sole reason the two girls were kept out of the way, and sent off so early to bed; though by the by I'm almost ashamed to say"—

"Don't talk of your shame, Frank," interrupted Vernon, "a very different kind of thing, though too often confounded with modesty. It's the latter—It's your modesty—I wish to hear about."

"Why, the plain state of the case," rejoined Frank, "was, that our good-natured friend the squire, from an imperfect knowledge of the natural boldness of my disposition, (call it impudence, if you will,) supposed me incapable of facing the battery of laughter my extraordinary appearance would have exposed me to, had I come within view of his fair daughters."

"Your appearance is queer enough at all times I must confess," observed Vernon, "and still more so in your travelling costume; but still hardly enough so, I should have thought, to have produced quite so powerful an effect as you have just mentioned."

"You wouldn't say so, or have thought so, either, had you seen the strange figure of fun I made. Just now for a moment fancy my limited proportions enveloped in the squire's ample toggery—(who more than makes up in breadth all he wants in height,)—only fancy me so attired and where could you look for a more complete personification of a living scarecrow?"

"I can fancy it all," said Vernon Wycherley, laughing exceedingly at the idea of his companion so arrayed; "but do tell me," he continued, "what could have induced you to put on so ridiculous a masquerade." [Pg 245]

"What else could I do?" rejoined Frank, "unless I turned in supperless to bed, or had it brought up to me there, neither of which suited my inclination—for, you see, what the rain we encountered had left undone in the drenching way, the brook I blundered over head and ears into had completely effected; and though my subsequent souse just afterwards into the fishpond could make me no wetter, that deficiency was amply made up for in mud; and as I had thrown off my knapsack, I had no precise notion where, in order that I might run all the lighter without it, which has only just now been picked up and returned to me, and so not a dry rag of my own to help myself to, I was right glad to rig myself out in the squire's clothes, which, fitting me like what our friend the admiral would say, 'purser's shirt upon a handspike,' made me look for all the world like an unstuffed effigy of a Guy Fawkes—a figure so superlatively ridiculous, that two light-hearted young girls, who were unable to help wellnigh laughing themselves from off their horses' backs at the sight of a youthful poet employing his nose as a pick-axe, could scarcely be expected to look unmoved on so ludicrous an object as I was."

"Spare me, Frank—spare me!" exclaimed Vernon. "How shall I be able to remove the ridiculous association which must be connected with that unlucky tumble?"

"The more important one you made so shortly afterwards, I'll undertake to say, will produce the desired effect," said Frank.

"Oh! don't talk about that now, pray," interposed Vernon with a shudder, and turning pale at the sudden recollection of his recent peril; which Frank perceiving, and aware of the indiscretion he had so thoughtlessly committed by alluding to, and to avert his friend's mind from dwelling any longer upon it, he rattled on as fast as he could about various other matters, describing in glowing terms all he had seen, heard, or conjectured, about the place they were then in. "What a contrast," he said, "the mere separation of a narrow valley has made between the desolate wastes we have traversed for the last two days, and the fertile spot where we now are, which, though deficient in timber, is beyond measure fertile in corn, and contains, I am told, some excellent shooting—that is partridge shooting; for a pheasant is here a kind of *rara avis in terris*, and as little likely to be met with as the very black swan itself; but then it's a fine country for woodcocks, whilst the bottoms almost swarm with snipes; all of which the squire has promised to show me in the course of the day, and for days to come, if I feel so inclined; for he won't hear a word of our leaving for at least ten days, or a week at the very shortest."

"But how, my dear fellow, can we accept an invitation of this kind from an utter stranger, whom"——

"No stranger at all," interrupted Frank. "He tells me your governor is one of his oldest and most esteemed friends; and as for myself—but stay—hush!—hark! I hear the old gentleman's voice, and he's coming this way too, or I'm very much mistaken."

Chapter V.

The squire was one of those persons who generally give audible notice of their approach as soon as they enter their house, or pass through from one part of it to another; and our two heroes heard him, whilst in the act of ascending the stairs, bawling out to the ladies above that it was high time for them to be up and moving; and hammering away at the first door he came to, he called out—"Come, come, young ladies, wake up, wake up—chase away your balmy slumbers, and kick Morpheus out of bed without further ceremony.

'Come Miss Mary,
[*"Her loved name!" exclaimed Vernon within.*
All contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells,
And cockle shells
And cockles all of a row.'

"Nothing like early rising for planting the roses in your cheeks—and if that argument," said he to himself, "won't make a young woman bundle herself from under the bed-clothes, I don't know what will." And then he walked on to the room in which Frank had slept, and which was the adjoining one to Vernon's, he began to drum away upon the door there; calling out, at the same time—"Come, Frank—Mr Trevelyan—if you intend to have a view of the sea before breakfast, as you proposed last evening, it's high time you should be up and stirring." [Pg 246]

"I'm up and stirred already, sir," said Frank, popping his head out of the adjoining room door.

"Yes; you're up to any thing, I see," said the squire, good-humouredly extending his hand to his guest, as he entered the room; "and how's my patient this morning?" he continued, advancing towards the bed. "Ah!" he said, having felt Vernon's pulse, "just as I hoped, and indeed fully expected—you couldn't possibly be doing better; a little—very little care for a day or two, is all you seem to require. I looked in before this morning to see how you were getting on, and found you snoring away so comfortably, that, judging all was as it should be, I wouldn't disturb you with my inquiries."

"Snoring!" repeated Vernon, in alarmed surprise, looking exceedingly disconcerted, and doubting almost whether he had heard aright.

"Ay, snoring," resumed the squire; "but never mind that, my hearty fellow—the best men snore sometimes, take my word for it; and, I dare say, it wasn't loud enough to disturb the young ladies. It was pretty loud, though, I must confess; but still I think it could hardly reach so far, particularly when your door was shut."

"But I found it wide open," observed Frank, by no means ill-amused to see how annoyed his companion was at the conviction of having snored, and the possibility of such sounds having reached the ears of one *so lovely*. Oh, how Vernon longed to hurl his pillow, or even any harder missile within his reach, at the saucy little fellow's head who was looking so provokingly pleased with his distress, and which the presence of the squire alone restrained him from making a left-handed attempt at, for his right was, as we before mentioned, disabled for the present by his late accident. But Vernon was too good a judge to attempt any thing of the kind, or show any exhibition of displeasure before his kind entertainer who, telling him he must act as his doctor, having, as he said, been bred to, and practised for several years in the medical profession, examined into the state of his sprains and bruises, and told him he would soon be all right again, but that he must be content to spend a few hours longer in bed, where his breakfast of gruel

should be sent up to him; and then, accompanied by Frank, he took his departure.

The old gentleman, however, gave the ladies a fresh hail as he passed by their bedroom door, to which two or three voices replied simultaneously, but in tones far less musical than Frank expected; and it seemed to him very different from what he had heard from the fair equestrians of the preceding day, when they kindly expressed their hopes that the sprawling poet had received no injury from his tumble.

"Ah! I see how it is," thought he to himself; "these pretty creatures, like too many of their sex, have a couple of tones to their voices—one for home, and the other for company. There's one-half of my admiration gone already." But wishing, at the same time, to put the best construction he could upon the matter, he tried to persuade himself that they must have taken cold, poor things! in consequence of having been caught in the heavy shower of the preceding day; and this it was which had caused the hoarseness of their voices. "I have known it have that effect before now on other people," he thought, "and why might not the same happen to these fair damsels; who, though lovely as angels, can scarcely escape from 'all the ills that flesh is heir to,' amongst which a cold, attended with hoarseness, can hardly be reckoned the worst?" [Pg 247]

A PEEP INTO THE WHIG PENNY POST-BAG.

My Dear Member—I send you a powerful petition,
For absolute, instant, entire abolition.
This question our Chamber is taking a lead in
Composed, as you know, of the Flowers of Dunedin,
Intelligent Druggists, rhetorical Quakers,
Broad acres—a few—but no want of wiseacres.
All are perfectly clear that these horrid restrictions
Are the proximate cause of our present afflictions,
Obstructing the bowels, as 'twere, of the nation,
And entirely deranging our whole circulation.

To expel these bad humours, we earnestly urge
A dose, night and morning, of Russell's *new* Purge;
Not the old wishy-washy affair of the *fixture*,
But the new out-and-out Morisonian mixture.

In the mean time 'tis well that the Noble concoctor
Has succeeded in ousting the family Doctor.
Peel's a perfect old wife—twaddles on about diet,
About exercise, air, mild aperients, and quiet;
Would leave Nature alone to her vigour elastic,
And never exhibit a drug that is drastic.
Doctor Russell's the man for a good searching pill,
Or a true thorough drench that will cure or will kill.
For bleeding and blistering, and easy bravado,
(Not to speak of hot water,) he passes Sangrado.
He stickles at nothing, from simple phlebotomy,
As our friend Sidney said, to a case of lithotomy:
And I'll venture to say, that this latest specific,
When taken, will prove to be no soporific.
Might I just hint how happy 'twould make me to be
Sole Agent down here for the great Patentee?

Entre nous, what can mean these unpleasant surmises?
I scarce know what prognosis to form of the crisis:
And our friends, quite perplex'd at this puzzling delay,
Can't imagine how scruples should stand in the way.
Must the grand Opus Magnum be brought to a fix,
Because some jarring drugs are unwilling to mix?
His lordship, I'm certain, would cut the thing shorter,
If he'd borrow a touch of my pestle and mortar.

Ere we part, I must give you a hint of the truth:
We Free Churchmen can't stomach your views of Maynooth.
If you value your seat, as a friend I would urge ye,
Steer clear of endowing the Catholic Clergy;
A bolus (or bonus) so very unhallow'd
Would in Scotland, I'm sure, not be easily swallow'd.

By an early reply we should all be elated,
And 'twould tell if from Windsor again it were dated.

Dear Druggist—-You've open'd your jocular vein,

And I fain would reply in the same pleasant strain;
But let those laugh who win—I have only to say,
That we are—*as we were:* and all done by Lord Grey— [Pg 248]
The most arrogant, wayward, capricious of men,
(Though this last little sketch must not seem from my pen.)
Only think of objecting that Palmerston's name
In a fortnight would set East and West in a flame:
About mere peace or war a commotion to make,
When the Party's existence was plainly at stake!
When office was offer'd, to cast it behind,
And to talk of such trash as the good of mankind!
It is clear, my good friend, such a crotchety prig
Has but little pretence to the title of Whig.

On the part I have played in this luckless transaction,
I confess I look back with unmix'd satisfaction.
From the first I said *this*—and 'tis pleasant to feel
Thus at ease with one's self—"I'm for total repeal.
Stick to that, my Lord John, and all scruples I stifle:
Any office, or none, is to me a mere trifle;"
(Though, of course, my dear Mac, for the purest of ends,
I was willing to help both myself and my friends.)
"Any office I'll take, that can give you relief—
From the Whip of the House to Commander-in-chief."
Oh! If all of the party had acted as I did,
In how noble a band would Lord John have presided!

But—"'tis best as it is:" we may grieve, yet we shouldn't:
Peel can carry the measure—'tis certain we couldn't:
Though we hoped, if our reign was once fairly begun,
It might last till—we did what was not to be done.

I think, (though thus leaving old views in the lurch,)
We should *not* have establish'd the Catholic Church.
To speak for my colleagues, in me would be vanity:
They might differ; but I should have thought it insanity.

In the hope that our friends in Auld Reeky are "brawly,"
I remain yours, in confidence, T. B. Mac——y.

EAST AND WEST.

Sweet is the song, whose radiant tissue glows
  With many a colour of the orient sky;
  Rich with a theme to gladden ear and eye—
The love-tale of the Nightingale and Rose.

Nor speeds the lay less surely to the mark
  That paints in homely hues two neighbours sweet,
  Born on our own bleak fields, companions meet,
The modest Mountain-daisy and the Lark.

The fond attachments of a flower and bird!
  That things so fair a mutual bond obey,
  And gladly bask in love's delightful ray,
Who would deny, and doubt the poet's word?

Or who would limit love's and fancy's reign?
  Their hardy growth here springs as fresh and fair,
  Far from the sun and summer gale, as there
Where Gul for Bulbul decks her gay domain.

'Tis poesy, whose hands with kindly art,
  Of kindred feelings weaves this mystic band,
  To knit the Scottish to the Iranian strand,
And reach wherever beats a human heart.

[Pg 249]

AN APOLOGY FOR A REVIEW.

It is not our general practice to review books of travels; nor, in truth, in noticing these little volumes, do we introduce any exception to that general rule. Under what precise category in literature they may fall, would admit, as Sir Thomas Browne observes as to the song sung by the Sirens, of a wide solution. Plainly, however, in the ordinary sense of the term, travels they are not. They will form no substitute for Murray's admirable hand-books; for on the merits or

demerits of competing hostelries, which Mr Murray justly regards as a question of vital importance—the very be-all, and often end-all of a tour—these volumes throw no light. In statistics they are barren enough. To the gentlemen of the rule and square, who think that the essential spirit of architecture can be fathomed by measurement, they will be found a blank. And though abounding in allusions, which betray, without obtruding, an intimate acquaintance with ancient literature, and sufficient in congenial minds to awaken a train of memories, classic or romantic, medieval or modern; they contain few dates, no dissertations, no discussion of vexed questions as to the ownership of statues, baths, temples, or circuses; or the other disputed points which have so long been the subject of strife in the antiquarian arena. And, really, when we consider the way in which, in the course of a century, all the old landmarks on the antiquarian map have been broken up, and the monuments of antiquity made to change hands; how Nibbi supersedes Winckelman, only to be superseded in turn; how a temple is converted into a senate-house; one man's villa into another; how Caracalla is driven from his circus to make way for Romulus; how Peace resigns her claim to a Pagan temple to make way for a Christian basilica of Constantine; how statues, arches, gardens, baths, forums, obelisks, or columns, are in a constant state of transition, so far as regards their nomenclature; and, to borrow the conceit of Quevedo, nothing about Rome remains permanent save that which was fugitive—namely, old Tiber himself; we rather feel grateful to the tourist who is content to take up the last theory without further discussion, and to spare us the grounds on which the last change of title has been adopted. What, indeed, matters it, in so far as the imagination is concerned, by what emperor, consul, or dictator, these mighty remains were reared or ruined? Whether these Titanian halls first echoed to the voices of Pagan or the chant of Christian priests? Whether this inexplicable labyrinth of vaults and cells, and buried gardens which overrun the Esquiline, where the work of art and nature is so strangely melted and fused together by "the alchymy of vegetation," really formed part of the golden house of the monstrous Nero; or of the baths of him, the gentlest of the Cæsars, who, when he had gone to rest without doing a good action, regretted that he had lost a day? Equally they remain monuments of the grandeur of the minds which gave them birth; mysterious, suggestive—perhaps the more suggestive, the more awakening curiosity and interest, from the very obscurity in which their origin, purposes, or fortunes are shrouded. And if individual associations become dim or doubtful, they merge in the clear light which these gigantic fragments, betraying, even in ruin, their original beauty of proportion and grandeur of conception, throw upon the lofty and enduring character of the Roman people.

These volumes, then, as we have said, will neither replace Murray, nor form a substitute for Eustace. Neither is their interest mainly owing to mere vivid or literal portraiture; by painting in words, as an artist would do by forms and colours, and enrolling before us a visible panorama, such as might present a clear image of the scenes described here to those who had never witnessed them. Their charm—for a charm, we trust, they will have to a considerable number of readers—arises simply from the truth with which they seize, and the happy expression in which they embody, *the spirit of the spot*; marking, by a few expressive touches, the moral as well as the physical aspect of the scene, and awakening in the reader a train of associations often novel in conception, as well as felicitous in expression; but which appear in general so congenial and appropriate, that we are willing to persuade ourselves they are a reproduction of thoughts, and dreams, and fancies, which had occurred to ourselves in contemplating the same objects. Hence it is to those, who have already witnessed the scenes described, that these volumes address themselves. They do not paint pictures, but revive impressions; they call up or steady imperfectly defined images; bring forward into light struggling memories;—and, by a union of brief description, classic or historical allusions, picturesque and significant epithets, and reflections hinted at, rather than wrought out, they very successfully accomplish their object—that of realizing to the eye of the mind that distinctive and prevailing expression which each aspect of nature, like each movement of the human face, wears in itself, and is calculated to awaken in others—cheerful, sombre, majestic, or awe-inspiring, according to the nature of the scene, the associations past and present with which it is surrounded, and the conditions, or, as a painter would term it, accidents under which it has been viewed. [Pg 250]

While we say that Mr Whyte has generally been very successful in his aim, we must not be understood to express by any means an unqualified probation of the taste in which these volumes are conceived, or the plan on which they are constructed. The train of reflection is *sometimes* too obviously an afterthought—not spontaneously evoked at the moment by the influences of the scene, but evidently devised and wrought up into point and *apparent* application by a subsequent process. We have dreams which were never dreamt, and reveries which are any thing but involuntary. There are too many Tristram Shandy transitions, sundry cockneyisms in expression, (we use the word in a wide sense,) and one or two jokes which make the blood run cold. Lastly, we are compelled to say that we repose much more confidence in the writer's taste in architecture than in painting. It is enough to say that he evinces no feeling for the more simple and majestic compositions of Raphael; while the powerful contrasts, and magic of light and shadow displayed by Guercino and Tintoret, seem to exercise an undue fascination on his mind. It is only to the injurious effect produced by these blemishes that we can attribute the slender success with which the volumes have been attended; for at this moment we do not recollect having seen them noticed by any of those who assume to themselves the right of distributing the rewards and punishments of criticism.

Let us now look at one or two of Mr Whyte's sketches of Rome, or rather of the train of thought

called up by wanderings among its ruins, tracing the broken sweep of its ancient walls, or wandering among the stately aqueducts and nameless tombs of its dreary Campagna.

Fragments of Italy and the Rhineland. London: 1841.
A Pilgrim's Reliquary. By the Rev. T. H. Whyte, M.A. London: 1845.

The Walls of Rome.

"I wonder whether it be the fault of mine own inattention, or the absence of good taste in others, that I have heard and read so little of the Walls of Rome! To me they rank among the few, out of all the Wonders of the Eternal City that have exceeded my expectations. Solitude, their peculiar characteristic, has great charms for a companionless enthusiast like myself: it is, moreover, a description of solitude, the very reverse of melancholy. Mile after mile have I repeatedly roamed along the outer Pomœrium of those solitary rampires, and encountered perhaps a goatherd and his pretty flock, the tinkle of whose bells formed the only accompaniment to the honey notes of the blackbird:—or, perhaps, in sonorous solemnity, some great Bell would suddenly boom upon the silence, and be taken up in various tones from a hundred quarters, no vestige, mean time, of Minster or Monastery being visible; nothing but that enormous Adamantine Circlet rearing itself into the sky on one side, and the gateways and walls of villas and vineyards occupying the other. You might fancy those tolling chimes belonging to some City hidden by Enchantment. [Pg 251]

"Still, as I have proceeded in my mood, half enjoying, half moralizing the scene, those hundred towers, like Titan warders placed around the Seven Hills, would each after each look down upon me from their high and silent stations; till, as I came to know them, they seemed to meet my gaze with the sedate and pleasant welcome of a venerable friend. They were the incessant associates of my solitude, and I was never wearied of them. Of a surety their vast Circuit (fifteen miles) gives ample time and space enough for rumination!

"Their colossal cubits are the most perfect exemplar of Architectural sublimity. Their dismantled Battlements have no Watchman but Antiquity, no Herald but Tradition, and hear no clamour louder than the Church or Convent bells, or the dirge which the wind wails over them through the melancholy Cypress and the moaning Pine. The broad old belt of short flowery turf at the base, the Violet, the Gilliflower, and the vermilion spotted Mignonette, on their breast, and the chaplet of wilding shrubs upon their brows, give them a charm in the most common-place observation. With me, truant as I have been to the Classic page, it seemed a natural process of my desultory mind, to revert from a contemplation of such pensive dreamy realities of waking enjoyment as I have described, to visions, startling in their august grandeur, of the everlasting past,—visions of their great Architect, Aurelian; of their greater Restorer, Belisarius!

"These monstrous walls! I cannot divest myself of a certain awe and fascination, as if of a supernatural appearance, which attracts and detains me about them; not even the Colosseum more. There seems something so ghastly, so spectral, in the mockery of their unnecessary circuit, their impregnable strength, their countless towers, arrogating to themselves the circumference of a day's journey—and all for what? To guard a city, which, once dropsied with grandeur, has now shrunk with the disease into comparative atrophy; a city, which, having boastfully demanded their aid, has now abandoned them for miles. It is as though one should wrap a triumphal robe about a corpse, or place a giant's helmet upon a skeleton's skull. It is no poetical figure to look upon them as an eternal satire upon the great littleness of empire. The melancholy pride of their dimensions needs not the hollow wind, which howls around their towers, or the wondering sun, which lingers over their shrubby ramparts, to proclaim in the ears of thrones and senates the warning of Rome's ambition, the moral of Rome's downfall! It is but a poor recompense to their present unhonoured solitude, that their melancholy battlements are emblazed at intervals with the pontifical escutcheons. Those triple tiaras and cross keys, so perpetually recurring, do not half so much consecrate as they are themselves consecrated by the lonely bulwarks of this desolated city of the Cæsars!"

The Villa Borghese.

"With the exception of an ostentatious parade of paltry equipages, tarnished liveries, and wretched horses on the Corso, and a frantic attempt at an opera, Rome, in May, is a picturesque receptacle for monks, and goatherds, and nightingales, and bells. Like some haunted place, it appears to be beloved and frequented only by the apparitions of an obsolete race. Yet many minds will find it infinitely more congenial thus, than amidst all the popular splendours of its holy week.

"Her tranquillity, nay, her very desolation, is enchanting. The summer's-day circuit

of the Seven Hills seems all your own. You wander whither you will, meeting few, and disturbed by none. In short, the very antiquity of the place is one perpetual novelty, and its grave monotony a serene recreation. I write this in the Villa Borghese, beneath groves of acacias, redolent with odours, and booming with myriads of bees, the yellow hay in aromatic quiles, pitched like pavilions below the old red walls of Rome, and nightingales and blackbirds contending in gushes of ecstatic song!

"Though not new to me, I had little conception of the intrinsic loveliness of the Villa Borghese till to-day. Picture to yourself a large village of the most variegated and romantic character; Church, casino, albergo, and farm, scattered amidst the turfy glades of a forest; and that forest composed of such trees as the beech, the elm, the ilex, and, above all, the sovereign pinaster, whose enormous trunks seem to have *condescended* to arrange themselves into avenues; the most charmingly artificial glades of the glossiest verdure, and vistas haunted by legions of dim waning statues; hero or demigod, nymph or faun, for ever intermingling but never interfering with each other; their various places of rendezvous emblazed with flowers of a thousand colours, and flashing with fountains of the most graceful fancies possible; while every vista discloses some antique portico, or rotunda, or vestibule of those gems that men call temples! Picture these scenes on some such May-day as this, [Pg 252]

'When God hath shower'd the earth;'

the dark evergreens rejoicing in the rain-drops, and the new-born leaves of silky green, transparent with the moisture, which had reluctantly ceased to shine on their delicate tapestries. Crown all this with a country palace, of lofty Italian magnificence, a treasure-house of antiquity, painting, and sculpture, disclosing the statues, frescoes, and gilding, of its noble façade and massive campaniles, at the extremity of its darkest grove of evergreens, glittering in this rainbow sunlight, and you may have some impression of the Villa Borghese.

"Such silence and solemnity, that you would never dream you were near the busy haunt of men, were it not, that a long linked diapason of bells, modulated by every possible inflection of their lofty language, convinced you that you were basking amidst all this voluptuous quiet, beneath the walls of a concealed city, and that city—ROME!"

THE RUINS.—THE CAMPAGNA.

"This afternoon we drove along the Via Appia Nova. The sun, rolling his chariot amidst a cavalcade of wild clouds, along the ruddy array of shattered arches, variegating the grassy plain with its uncouth palatial and sepulchral ruins, in ebony and gold, illuminated the purple and green recesses of the Sabine hills, and caressing with capricious fleetness their woody towers and towns, bequeathed to the north a calm blue vault, wherein, as in some regal hall of state, the dome of St Peter's, the rotunda of the Colosseum, the vast basilicas of Santa Maria Maggiore, and San Giovanni Laterana, that embattled sepulchre of Cecilia, and those lofty masses of the Pamfilipine, which hovered in the horizon like a feathery vapour, proclaim the illustrious domicile of Rome.

"The Temple of the Divus Rediculus (or whatever other title it may rejoice in) is one of those lovely little phantasies of architecture that one might imagine a London citizen would have coveted for a summer-house. The brilliant contrast between its vermilion pilasters and its pale yellow wall, the delicate moulding of its slender bricks and the elaborate elegance of its decoration, not to omit its pleasing, though diminutive proportions, arising from the wild green turf of this melancholy region, can scarcely fail of affecting with at least a spark of fancy, the flattest spirit of this work-day world. For my own part, I should be much less disposed to pronounce it a temple than a tomb; and, in fact, the whole appearance of this wide dull tract seems eminently adapted to sepulchral piles. It is most melancholy, most funereal; and even that glorious sun, and those majestic aqueducts, soaring, as they do, to salute his lustre, and to emulate his glory, cannot efface the feeling, that such a scene, and such memorials, should be visited only in the gloom of a sad and stormy sky; either amidst the sympathetic moans of an autumnal tempest, or the waning and mournful glimpses of an autumnal twilight."

THE COLOSSEUM.

"It was the twilight, that brief, that exquisite interval, which flings its purporoseate veil between the palace gates of day and night. You might have fancied it the car of Diana rolling on to some Olympian festival, and preceded by Venus, the only other planet visible in the sky. What a canopy!—Not the gaudiest velabrum that the ostentatious munificence of her Cæsars extended above its gilded cordage, ever equalled the empyrean pomp of this soft sky. Never could the artificial rains

of perfumed water surpass the dewy fragrance that steals around from evening's thousand urns.

"I say it was the twilight when we entered these gloomy corridors, whose solemn circuit uncoils its colonnades around the lordly pile; but before we had traversed half their extent night began her reign, and when we entered the arena it was difficult to say whether those faintly flushed skies, that single sparkling star, or the pallid hectic of the youthful moon produced the pathetic light that illuminated this enormous architecture.

"As it now stands, the Colosseum is *indeed* a wreck, rendered absolutely frightful by repair; and whether by sunlight or moonlight, compels you to lament the [Pg 253] 'melancholy activity' which, utterly inadequate to the restoration of its pristine glory, has deprived it of all those adventitious ornaments, trees, and herbage, and a thousand beautiful flowers, which, if they could not conceal, at least served to soften its injuries, and which mitigated the desolation they were unable to repair.

"Of course a thousand imaginations and memories hunt each other through one's head and heart in such a place and at such an hour as this, but to-night there were realities, which, where they do not dispel, must always reinforce such phantasies.

"Before the steps of the great cross in the centre, garnished with all the emblems of the passion, knelt a respectably dressed group, apparently father, mother, and daughter, absorbed in a rapture of devotion. The lamps were lighted before the fourteen shrines, which Benedict the Fourteenth erected around the arena, and flung a dusky light upon the successive stagioni of our Saviour's sufferings, by which each is distinguished; and we saw a solitary peasant, in the dark costume of his country, evidently faint and toil-worn, rise from his oraisons at *one* shrine, only to sink upon his knees before *another*.

"Ah! it was at once a simple and sagacious stroke of that priestly sovereign, who, in these prophaned ruins, planted the Cross, and, by a mightier spell than the magician's wand, arrested the rapacity of its patrician plunderers!"

Do not sketches such as these revive for us all those feelings which Rome awakened in ourselves, bringing back the clime, the sky, the loneliness, the mingled feeling of grandeur and situation—the gentle melancholy with which the eternal city impresses even the least imaginative mind? To us they appear to embody more of the poetry of travel than many a work which figures under the mask of poesy.

How much has been written on Venice, from Schiller and Radcliffe to Madame de Staël and Madame Dudevant! and yet we hardly know if any one, with the exception of the last, has more completely imbued his mind with the peculiar spirit of Venice, or reflected its impressions with more truth than Mr Whyte. Schiller, indeed, and Mrs Radcliffe, had never witnessed the scenes they described; their portraiture is the result merely of reading and description, warmed and vivified by the glow of their own imagination. Hence the glimpses of Venice conveyed in Schiller's beautiful fragment of the *Armenian*, are mere general outlines—true enough so far as they go, but faintly drawn, and destitute, as we might say, of local colour. Mrs Radcliffe's moonlight landscapes—masques and music—exhibit with great beauty one aspect of the city, but only one.

Very different are the Venetian *Sketches* of Madame Dudevant. She has drunk in the inspiration of Venice on the spot, has penetrated the very heart of its mystery, and reproduces the impressions which an intimacy with its peculiarities produces, with a degree of truth, force, and poetical feeling, that impart the most captivating charm to her Venetian *Letters*. Mr Whyte's *Fragments* exhibit much of the same sensibility, the same just perception of the spirit of Venice; and though they have not that brilliancy of style which the pictures of the French authoress possess, there is often even in this respect great beauty both of thought and expression. Mr Whyte, indeed, took the right course to enable him thoroughly to understand and appreciate Venice. Instead of confining himself to the stately vision of the Grand Canal, or the wizard magnificence of St Mark's, he seems to have habitually traced all the lesser canals; the little Rii, which, like small veins, shoot off from the great arteries of the Grand Canal and the Giudecca, carrying the circulation of the Adriatic through this unique city; exploring their high, dark, and narrow recesses, pondering on the strange contrasts of misery and magnificence, squalid filth and luxurious ornament, which they present side by side; and heightening the impression thus created, by selecting all varieties of aspects, from the bright flashing sunshine pouring down into these dark chasms, as into a well, to the shadowy evening, the magic contrasts of moonlight, the gloom of wind and rain howling through the balconies, driving the ocean wave impetuously through these water-ways, and beating against their thousand bridges; or those thunder-storms—nowhere more magnificent than at Venice—where the gleam of the lightning forms so fearful a [Pg 254] contrast with the Cimmerian gloom of the canal, and the peals are reverberated with such magnificence from those piles of masonry with which they are lined. There is, indeed, no spectacle that can be conceived, more impressive than some of these smaller canals, particularly if you enter them towards sundown. You glide into a gulf of buildings, rising high on each side—almost meeting above your head—most of them ruinous and dilapidated, sinking by piecemeal into the green element which they have displaced for centuries, but which, through the slow agency of the sap and mine, is visibly resuming his oozy empire. You pass some church with its unfinished marble face. Again, a set of poor rickety and mean edifices follow; when suddenly you come upon some pile of massy grandeur, looming gigantic in the twilight, in whose colossal, but

beautiful proportions, you can trace the hand of Sammichele or Sansovino. You come nearer, and perceive the fretted windows broken, stuffed with rags, and patched with paper; rough boards nailed up against the gilded beams; grand portals, of which the doors have disappeared, allowing the eye to penetrate into a dark perspective within: perhaps a sign-board over-tops a glorious cornice of grim masks or armorial bearings; and from latticed windows, on which Palladio had lavished all the delicate beauty of his architecture, some flaunting and gaudy rags are hung out to dry. You enquire what is the building, and to whom it belongs, and you are answered: It is the palace of one of the classic nobility of ancient Venice—now tenanted by a Hebrew, who lets out the apartments at so many *lire* a month!

But let Mr Whyte speak for himself.

The Bridge of Sighs.

"The Canal Orfano, the Ponte di Sospiri! what a day to behold these long pictured images of darknes and terror, for the first time! Such a blaze of May sunshine, such a soothing repose broken by a few distant bells or the nearer laugh of the gay Gondoliers. I looked upon the narrow, immured waters under the Bridge of Sighs, then to the high arch that like the heavy embossed clasp of some old solemn book united its decorated Gothic Piles (those volumes of bloody Story) on either side, and instead of shuddering at inquisitions and racks, and Piombi and Pozzi, as in common decency I ought, away fled my intractable thoughts to merry England's old Sabbath Chimes, her village spires, village greens, village elm lanes, and decent peasantry.

"Yet those high and antique abodes of venerable crime, those wild barbaric piles, in which old age palliates and almost hallows infamy! giving it somewhat the same prescriptive sanctuary as Milton bestows on the Palace of his Pandemonium! That cruel slinking flood, the only firmament the stone vaulted pits below were conscious of! Each looked as malignant and dangerous as they could, beneath the triumph of such a glorious sun; that light to which their aspect once was hateful, and their deeds untold.

"My gondolier dipt his oar into the canal just under the Bridge of Sighs, and at half its length it was arrested by a hollow substance which he told me was the marble roof of the Pozzi, whose unfathomable tiers of dungeons stretched one under another beneath this dreadful water gallery. It was not here, however, that the secret midnight drownings took place, (as I had fancied,) but in that widest, deepest portion of the Canal Orfano, far out in the Lagoons situated between the towery Isola Servilio and the lovely groves and monastery of San Grazia. This murder-hole of the Adriatic is called Marani, and to this day it is forbidden to fish in its accursed depth. To-day it looks not only innocent, but gloriously bright.

"I was out in the Lagoons this evening, for the purpose of visiting by twilight that solitary Isle of St Clements, where Monks exchange the voluntary seclusion for penal dungeons, (l'un vaut bien l'autre!) the sky glowing with its last light, lingered over its tall belfry and few old trees, and a sea as smooth as a crystal pavement slept at the base of its grim walls, all in vain; Campanile, Convent, Grove, and that pyramidal Powder Magazine, looked obdurately sullen enough to tell their own uses, had I not known their chronicle."

The Small Canals.

"I thence directed my gondolier to row under the Bridge of Sighs, through the intricacies of the interior canals; and if ever a man wished to be fed to the full with solemn, ay, appalling gloom, he may be gratified by following my example. From the weltering surface of a labyrinth of channels, let him look up till it wearies him, to the awful roofs of the mansions, whose walls of immeasurable height, and scarfed with black masses of shadow and glaring moonlight, seem to close over his head and to barricade his path, as they interlace and confound each other in endless circuits; and he will have quite enough to kindle the torch of his darker imagination, even if he did not know those tremendous gulfs of masonry to be Venice, and those heart-sinking portals and windows of barbaric sculpture, the homes of her inexorable oligarchy. Yes, you may anticipate Naples, you may picture to yourself Rome, and Florence may have fulfilled much of your previous fancies; but no conception can prepare you for Venice. [Pg 255]

"What enchantment lingers still about every stone of this mourning city! My affection for her dismantled palaces is almost morbid.

'Like an unrighteous and an unburied ghost,'

do I nightly haunt that Tartarus of antique masonry, the interior canals of Venice, uniformly entering or departing from them by the Bridge of Sighs. To me their hideous height, their appalling gloom, (for the meridian cannot touch their waters, and the moon glides like a spectre over their huge parapets,) their bewildering intricacies, their joyless weltering floods, the countless bridges, each with its

sculptured monster-heads yawning as if to swallow up the silently sweeping gondola in its arch of shadow; their deep dead silence only broken by the sullen plash of the oar, the dreary word of warning uttered by the gondoliers before turning a sharp angle, or the shrill rattling creak of innumerable crickets; but principally those old Gothic posterns with deep-ribbed archways, like rat-holes in proportion to the enormous piles, and their thresholds level with the water, some blockaded with ponderous doors, others developing their long withdrawn passage by a lamp, that not only makes darkness *visible*, but *frightful*; while others (as in the Martinengo palace to-night) disclose wide pillared halls, and stately staircases, and moonlight courts —to me, I say, all these attributes of the interior of Venice are irresistible. Were you to see these old porticos by a summer's daylight, you would not fail to find an old fig tree in broad leaf and full of fruit, or a lattice-work of vine, most pleasantly green in its deep court, where sun and shadow hold divided reign; while the hundred shaped windows of those gloomy walls are variegated with geranium and carnation, and perhaps a sweet dark eye fairer than either.

"They are so obviously the symbols of her hollow oligarchy itself, which to the world and to the sun in heaven, (like the brave palaces on her chief canal,) displayed a gallant guise, at once sublime, glittering, and august; while, within, its tortuous policy was twisted into murky and inextricable labyrinths, of which Necessity, Secresy, and Suspicion, formed the keystone; where Danger lurked at every winding, and whose darkling portals were watched by Mystery, and Stratagem, and Disgrace, and Fate!

"It is impossible to scrutinize these dread abysms of mansions, without experiencing that strange mixture of repugnance and attraction which certain spectacles are wont to call forth in animated nature. It is impossible to mark their melancholy and downfallen, yet portentous aspect, without deeming them at once the theatre and monument of those 'secret, black, and midnight crimes,' which history and tradition ascribe to the domestic, as well as to the state policy, of this Gehenna of fourteen centuries dominion.

> 'Visendus Ater flumine languido
> Cocytus errans.'

"Perhaps it would be difficult to conceive any thing more abhorrent to the soul and body of man, than the time, manner, and place, of death, distinguishing those executions which have rendered the gulfs of the Canal Orfano immemorably infamous.

"To me, the element, in its most serene and smiling state, wears a look of furtive menace; and I am free to confess, that even when gliding on a mid-summer night over that sweetest Lake of Derwentwater, beneath the shadows of its moonlit isles and fair pavilions, I have not been without a certain sensation of uncomfortable awe. But what must have been the feelings of the victim, whether criminal or innocent, who, from this accurst Maranna, cast around him his last straining look of agony, and uttered his last cry of supplication or despair! The conviction that his family, parent, wife, or son, were at that hour of horror in profound ignorance *sometimes* of his very absence, *often* of its cause, or at least, only perplexed with [Pg 256] conjecture, and *always* unconscious of its horrible event, must have constituted no trifling pang in that mortal hour. Then that old familiar, though melancholy, water, more terrible to his feelings than the dreariest wilderness of ocean! For, girdling the dusky horizon, could he not see the domes and campaniles of Venice, perhaps the very lamps in his own palace windows, from whose festal saloons he had just been decoyed; just distant enough to be beyond the reach of help? but too, too near for that despairing gaze that recognized and bade adieu for ever at the same glance? There too were not those nestling lovely islands, each with its convent tower gleaming to the moon, and from which the sonorous bells were tolling, the sacred Anthems swelling for the last time on his ear! Alas! those chaunted masses were not for *his* conflicting soul; yea, it would have a strange comfort to feel that passing bell was proclaiming to the world that his spirit was parting from its scarcely worn weeds! But no! even that miserable solace was prohibited to *him*; he was to be obliterated from society, and his inexorable judges had decreed that society was not to know that he was gone. No grave for his dust; no monument for his name, to palliate his faults and perpetuate his virtues. The ghastly element that moaned and shuddered under the Gondola, as if remorseful for its own involuntary cruelties, was to spread its weltering pall over his hearseless bones."

The Bells of Venice.

"The islands constituting the Venetian Archipelago are about fifty in number, of various size and extremely picturesque. They were each of them the seat of a monastery or nunnery, till Napoleon came, who overthrew these saintly receptacles, converting them into forts, mills, public gardens, &c. In short, these islands are among the most beautiful contingents of this magic scene. Each has its

graceful campanile, and its various structures of castle, convent, mill, or summer-house; each its due girdle of blue sea, fenced by walls that rise round its margent, and embroidered with groves and arbours of the most delightful green.

"This evening I cruised past many of them in my gondola after sunset; and was particularly struck with the beauty of the large Isle of Murano, and its attendant San Michaele (the latter one entire cemetery,) whose thin tall campaniles throw up their slender figures in fine relief against the long wavy purple of the Acharnean Hills in the west, at the head of the Adriatic.

"Night gathered round, as we floated under that prodigious monument of the departed majesty of the Republic, the arsenal, whose ramparts high and endless, and as ugly as either, lay weltering many a rood upon their wooden piles. Every bell in the city was tolling for Nones, and sang aloud to the surrounding islands, whose campaniles replied with sympathetic thunder, a solemn diapason of Corybantine brass, to my taste, wonderfully in unison with the funeral mole of the defunct Arsenal, the repose of the purple mountains, and the fainting splendour of that twinned vault and pavement, the opal sea and sky, smooth, soft, and bright enough for Juno and Amphitrite to hold a gossip, each from her own imperial element.

"Probably it is to the peculiarity of its situation, that one may attribute the sweetly solemn melodies produced by the bells of Venice. Flinging their prolonged notes down those immense hollows of architecture, sweeping round their narrow streets, and floating over their liquid pavement, they derive every advantage from that element which always so fondly detains and dallies with music, in addition to the depth and power with which they are endowed, by those pillared and winding concaves, that, like the tubes of some vast organ, receive and redouble the airy strain.

"Whatever be the case, I never felt any thing so fully coming up to my idea, of 'most musical, most melancholy.'"

We bid Mr Whyte adieu, in the hope that, if a second edition of these volumes be called for, he will subject them to a very thorough revision—connecting together many passages, which, though relating to the same subject, are at present unnaturally disjoined—omitting much, which, instead of heightening, interferes with the effect which it is his object to produce—and, above all, eschewing the indulgence of pleasantries which certainly produces no corresponding impression on his readers.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] This was the explanation actually given by Develuz, our consul at Adrianople, of his exaggerated account of the strength of Diebitsch's army, at the moment when Diebitsch's best hope was, that he might effect his retreat across the Balkan with the shattered and debilitated remnant of his troops! Yet on this authority the Sultan was recommended to yield at discretion, and the treaty of Adrianople was signed!

[2] The present Prince, on public occasions, always wears the fez with an aigrette of diamonds, as a recognition of the suzerainté of the Porte; his predecessor, Michel Obrenovich, gave great offence by wearing a cocked hat.

[3] The old Emperor, Francis of Austria, when a Russian general was to be presented, would say, "Now bring in the northern firmament, and all its stars."

[4] Sokol must here be a slip of the pen for Szoko. Sokol, the birth-place of the famous Mohammed Sokolli, vizier of Soliman the Magnificent and his two successors, is in the heart of Bosnia, near Gradachatz.

[5] In the supplement to the *Biographie Universelle*, vol. lxi., a strange tale is told, that Czerni George was a native of Nanci, who fled in his youth to Servia—but this is a mere romance.

[6] Lamartine (*Voyage en Orient*) and other writers represent Kara George as having died in confinement in an Austrian fortress, soon after his flight in 1813-an error which has probably arisen from a confusion between his fate and that of Alexander Hypsilantis, who headed the insurrection in Walachia in 1821, and died in Mongatz, after three years' imprisonment.

[7] These firmans, with the *hatti-shereef* of 1838, &c., were printed and laid before the House of Commons in May 1843.

[8] The contrast in this respect, between the progress and results of the Servian and Greek revolutions, is forcibly stated in an extract from a MS. document by Wuk Stephanovich, author of the Servian Anthology, in Parish's *Diplomatic History of the Monarchy of Greece*.—Pp. 387-90.

[9] From an early period of the war, the Spanish dragoon regiments, both light and heavy, were armed with the lance, that weapon being considered the most efficient for the

mountain warfare in which they were frequently engaged.

[10] *Coxe*, III. 156. *Instructions pour le Sieur Recoux. Cardonell Papers*.

[11] "Count Piper said, 'We made war on Poland only to subsist; our design in Saxony is only to terminate the war; but for the Muscovite he shall pay *les pots cassées*, and we will treat the Czar in a manner which posterity will hardly believe.' I secretly wished that already he was in the heart of Muscovy. After dinner he conveyed me to headquarters, and introduced me to his Majesty. He asked me whence I came, and where I had served. I replied, and mentioned my good fortune in having served three campaigns under your Highness. He questioned me much, particularly concerning your Highness and the English troops; and you may readily believe that I delineated my hero in the most lively and natural colours. Among other particulars, he asked me if your Highness yourself led the troops to the charge. I replied, that as all the troops were animated with the same ardour for fighting, that was not necessary; but that you were every where, and always in the hottest of the action, and gave your orders with that coolness which excites general admiration. I then related to him that you had been thrown from your horse, the death of your aide-de-camp Borafield, and many other things. He took great pleasure in this recital, and made me repeat the same thing twice. I also said that your Highness always spoke of his Majesty with esteem and admiration, and ardently desired to pay you his respects. He observed, 'That is not likely, but I should be delighted to see a general of whom I have heard so much.' They intend vigorously to attack the Muscovites, and expect to dethrone the Czar, compelling him to discharge all his foreign officers, and pay several millions as an indemnity. Should he refuse such conditions, the King is resolved to exterminate the Muscovites, and make their country a desert. God grant he may persist in this decision, rather than demand the restitution, as some assert, of the Protestant churches in Silesia! The Swedes in general are modest, but do not scruple to declare themselves invincible when the King is at their head."—*General Grumbkow to Marlborough, Jan. 11 and* 31, 1707. *Coxe*, III. 159-161.

[12] *Coxe*, III. 167-169. The authenticity of this speech is placed beyond doubt by Lediard, who was then in Saxony, and gives it *verbatim*.

[13] *Coxe*, III. 174-182.

[14] "I cannot venture unless I am certain of success; for the inclinations in Holland are so strong for peace, that, if we had the least disadvantage, it would make them act very extravagant. I must own every country we have to do with, acts, in my opinion, so contrary to the general good, that it makes me quite weary of serving. The Emperor is in the wrong in almost every thing he does."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, June 27, 1707*; *Coxe*, III. 261.

[15] *Despatches*, III. 142-207.—So much were the Dutch alienated from the common cause at this time, and set on acquisitions of their own, that they beheld with undisguised satisfaction the battle of Almanza, and disasters in Spain, as likely to render the Emperor more tractable in considering their proceedings in Flanders. "The States," says Marlborough, "received the news of this fatal stroke with less concern than I expected. This blow has made so little impression in the great towns in this country, that the *generality of the people have shown satisfaction at it rather then otherwise*, which I attribute mainly to the aversion to the present government."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, May* 13, 1707. *Coxe*, III. 204.

[16] *Coxe*, III. 196-205.

[17] *Marlborough's Despatches*, IV. 49.

[18] *Desp.* IV. 95-101. *Coxe*, IV. 128-131.

[19] *Desp.* IV. 79-102. *Coxe*, IV. 130-132.

[20] "The treachery of Ghent, continual marching, and some letters I have received from England, (from the Queen and the Duchess,) have so vexed me, that I was yesterday in so great a fever, that the doctor would have persuaded me to have gone to Brussels; but I thank God I am now better, and by the next post I hope to answer your letters. The States have used this country so ill, that I noways doubt but all the towns in it will play us the same trick as Ghent if they have the power."—*Marlborough to Godolphin, July 9, 1708. Coxe*, IV. 38.

[21] The above description of the field of Oudenarde is mainly taken from *Coxe*, IV. 134-135; but the author, from personal inspection of the field, can attest its accuracy.

[22] *Coxe*, IV. 140-143.

[23] *Marlborough to Count Piper, 15th July 1708.—Desp.* IV. 115. *Coxe*, IV. 144-145.

[24] *Coxe*, IV. 146-151. *Marlborouqh to Count Piper, 16th July 1708.—Desp.* IV. 115. *Duke of Berwck's Mem.* II. 12.

[25] *Marlborough à M. De Themgue, 15th July 1708.—Desp.* IV. 111.

[26] *Desp.* IV. 111. Berwick himself states the prisoners at 9000.—*Marlborough*, II. 12. *Marlborough to the Duchess*, *July* 16, 1708.—*Coxe*, IV. 157.

[27] *Marlborough to Lord Godolphin, July 16 and 19, 1708.—Coxe*, IV. 158, 159.

[28] Conscious of the panic which prevailed in France, and aware that some brilliant enterprise was requisite to prevent the Dutch from listening to separate overtures for peace, Marlborough proposed to meet at Lille, and penetrate by the northern frontier into the heart of France. An expedition fitted out in England was to co-operate on the coast. But the design of penetrating direct into France seemed too bold even to Eugene,

and, of course, encouraged strong opposition from a government so timid and vacillating as that of Holland.—*Coxe*, IV. 165.

[29] *Marlborough to Godolphin, July 23, 1708.—Coxe*, IV. 165.

[30] "I need not tell you how much I desire the nation may be at last eased of a burdensome war, by an honourable peace; and no one can judge better than yourself of the sincerity of my wishes to enjoy a little retirement at a place you have contributed in a great measure to make so desirable. I thank you for your good wishes to myself on this occasion. *I dare say, Prince Eugene and I shall never differ about our laurels*."—*Marlborough to Mr Travers*, July 30, 1708.

[31] *Coxe*, IV. 216-219.

[32] *Marlborough to Godolphin, August 30, 1708.—Coxe*, IV. 222.

[33] *Desp*. IV. 241-260.

[34] *Desp*. IV. 260-271. *Marlborough to Godolphin, September 24, 1708.—Coxe*, IV. 243.

[35] *Marlborough to Godolphin, October 1, 1708.—Coxe*, IV. 254.

[36] *Desp.* IV. 271, *Marlborough to Godolphin, October 24, 1708.—Coxe*, IV. 263, 264.

[37] "You will find me, my Prince, always ready to renew the patent for the government of the Low Countries, formerly sent to you, and to extend *it for your life*."—*King Charles to Marlborough, August 8, 1708. Coxe*, IV. 245.

[38] Any collection of houses, or even a single farm-house, is termed a town in Cornwall.

[39] In Cornwall, any number beyond two is termed a pair.

[40] "Bal" signifies a mine.

Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Hughes, Paul's Work.

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