

VI.

STORY OF THE GREY MOUSQUETAIRE.

A FRAGMENT OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

AMONG the captains of "Ours" who had the honour of serving in the Seven Years' War was one named Allan Robertson, a gentleman of the clan Donnoghby, and a cadet of the loyal house of Struan, who bore the singular soubriquet of the *Mousquetaire Gris*, and whose adventures during the early part of his military career were very remarkable.

In his latter years, when leading a quiet "half-pay life" in the Scottish capital, Allan was known to all the military loungers about "Poole's Coffee-house," at the east end of Prince's Street, then the great rendezvous of the military idler, as a warlike octogenarian—a silver-haired remnant of other days—and as a brave and warm-hearted old Highlander, who was so devoted to the memory of the 42nd, that he never saw those two numerical figures, even on a street door, without lifting his hat, and saying, "God bless the old number!" for his heart swelled at everything that reminded him of the venerable Black Watch.

The manner in which Allan joined the regiment was in itself romantic and singular.

Among the French army at the famous battle of Minden, in the year 1759, when the Household troops were led by Prince Xavier of Saxony, brother of the French Queen, no cavalry distinguished themselves more by the fury and valour of their reiterated charges than the *Compagnie Franche*, or "Free Company" of the Chevalier Jules de Cœurdefer, and two other bands entirely composed of gentlemen of the highest rank and of irreproachable character, who were named from the colour of their uniforms *Les Mousquetaires Gris et Rouges*, led by the Vicomte de Chateaunoir.

In the fury of their last attack, the gallant Prince Xavier was slain by the 51st Regiment, and the leader of the grey troop (for all these noblesse served on horseback) was left behind bleeding on the ground, though a desperate rally was *thrice* made by the energy of one Grey Mousquetaire to rescue and carry off the colonel. These noble rallies were made in vain; for, after a third attempt, the Mousquetaires were swept from the plain of Minden by the terrible charge of the Scots Grey Dragoons, led by old Colonel Preston, the *last* soldier who wore a buff coat in the British service, and who had risen to command from being a kettle-drummer in the old Flanders War.

The faithful Mousquetaire fell in this flight, being pierced by a musket-shot from one of Lord George Sackville's Dragoons, and he lay all night on that sanguinary field, near the leader he had striven so valiantly and in vain to rescue.

A distinguished Highland officer, whose memoirs have been published, mentions that on the 2nd of August, the day after the battle, he rode over the plain, accompanied by Major Pringle of Edgefield.

"On one part of the field we saw a French officer,

who had been wounded in the knee, sitting on the ground, with his back supported by a dead horse. We accosted him, and offered any assistance in our power. He proved to be the commanding officer of *Les Mousquetaires Gris*, and was distinguished by several orders, which, with a handsome snuff-box, had probably excited the cupidity of some of the wretches who are never found wanting in the train of an army. We left him in high spirits, having undertaken to bring a cart or tumbril to carry him from the field; but with the hasty imprudence of young officers, we rode off together on this duty, instead of one of us remaining with the wounded man. It could not be more than ten or twelve minutes when we returned with the cart, and found—to our unspeakable concern—the murdered body of the poor French colonel (the Vicomte de Chateaunoir) lying naked on the ground."

Another officer adds, that near the corpse of the unfortunate colonel, which had been so ruthlessly stripped by the German marauders and death-hunters, lay, pistol in hand, the Mousquetaire, who had made such vigorous efforts to save him in the last charge of yesterday. He was still breathing, and after having his wound hurriedly dressed by a surgeon of the 51st, he was conveyed to the rear, in care of Major Pringle, who was a son of Lord Edgefield, a distinguished senator of the Scottish College of Justice. At the place where they found him, the adverse artillery had furrowed up the plain like a ploughed field by their shot, which lay so thick and half sunk in the turf, that they resembled an iron pavement, strewn with all the destruction and debris of battle.

The Grey Mousquetaire was a tall and handsome

man, bronzed by the weather and scarred by battle. On the breast of his grey uniform glittered those decorations which few of the corps were without—the golden crosses of St. Louis and St. Lazare.

Pringle conveyed him to his own tent, for he knew well that the Mousquetaires were all men of no ordinary rank, and there he supplied him with wine and other comforts. As yet, he had not spoken; but as he gathered strength, he began to mutter and talk to himself in a strange language.

“Assuredly this man is not a Frenchman!” said Pringle, kneeling down to listen.

The Mousquetaire Gris was praying in the Erse tongue!

“What—are you a Scotchman?” exclaimed the astonished major.

“A Highlander,” sighed the other.

“I recognised your Gaëlic at once.”

“Likely enough,” responded the other, in a low voice; “the Gaëlic was the first language I heard, and, please God, it shall be my *last*! I spoke but the tongue I learned at my mother’s breast!”

“And you are a Mousquetaire Gris?”

“Yes—that grey uniform is all the inheritance which the dark day of Culloden has left me.”

“Poor fellow!” said Major Pringle, with commiseration; “and you are—”

“Allan Robertson, of the house of Struan, who, thirteen years ago, was a captain in the Athole Regiment under his Royal Highness Prince Charles, whom God long preserve!”

“Hush—hush!” said Pringle, hurriedly; “remember that you are in the British camp.”

“I care not,” replied the other, with flashing eyes; “I have shouted his name at Preston, Falkirk and

Culloden, and why should I shrink from naming him here?”

Major Pringle kept the Jacobite officer in his quarters, and in a few days he was able to sit up in a camp bed, and converse with ease and coherence; and many Scottish gentlemen of the army whose political sympathies were with the exiled race, frequented the tent, and supplied him with whatever he required and their own necessities could spare. He asked particularly about the wounds on the breast of his dead colonel, the Vicomte de Chateau noir, and on being informed that they must have been done with a dagger, he became dreadfully excited, and exclaimed,

“Jules de Cœurdefer has murdered him!”

“Who?” exclaimed Major Pringle and several officers who were present.

“A wretch most justly named Cœurdefer, who serves in the French army, to its disgrace; a noble and an outlaw—a soldier and a robber! a ribaud, with whom the Mousquetaires Gris et Rouges have had more than one sword-in-hand encounter.”

Among the mass of papers and regimental memoranda, from which these legends are gleaned and prepared, I find this Chevalier Jules de Cœurdefer frequently mentioned as a prominent character during the early part of the Seven Years’ War; and some of Robertson’s adventures with him during his service in the Grey Mousquetaires were very remarkable. His narrative was as follows.

“We, the Red and Grey Mousquetaires, by forced marches from Paris, quitted the gay Court of Louis XV., and joined the army of M. de Contades about the

end of May, crossed the Rhine with him at Cologne, and on the same day the Free Band of the Chevalier de Cœurdefer joined us, to the great annoyance of the whole army; for our hitherto quiet and well-ordered camp became a scene of incessant disquiet, by drunken brawls, duels, and severe military punishments; for as this *Franche Compagnie*, like the wild Pandoors of Baron Trenck, subsist only by gambling and secret robbery in camp, and by open plunder and ruthless bloodshed in the field, you may imagine our repugnance to co-operate with them; and our astonishment that leaders so strict as M. de Contades or Prince Xavier of Saxony would tolerate their presence among us for a moment. Their ranks were filled by men of all nations—runaway students, spend-thrifts, cashiered officers, deserters, fugitive malefactors—in short, by men ready for any desperate work, and being deemed the cheapest food for gunpowder, they had enough of it.

“Their captain, the Chevalier Cœurdefer, is the representative of an ancient but decayed family in Lorraine, who spent his patrimony among the gambling-houses, the cabarets and bordels of Paris. Dismissed summarily from the French line when a captain in the Regiment du Roi for barbarously slaying a brother officer, after severely wounding him in a duel about a courtesan, he has now joined our army against the Prussians, in the hope of winning himself a new name by reckless bravery, cruelty, and outrage. He is handsome and young, but without fear of God or man; without religion, and without honour. Even their chaplain—”

“What! they have a chaplain?” exclaimed Pringle, laughing.

“Yes, a canon of Notre Dame, who was unfrocked

by the Archbishop of Paris for having an affair with a citizen's wife in the Faubourg St. Antoine. He is a burlesque on the clerical character, and fights—as I was about to say—more duels than even the chevalier his leader. One of this choice band plundered a church at Cologne, and as sacrilegic could not be tolerated, Prince Xavier made a great hubbub about it. The thief had been seen; he wore the tattered uniform of the *Franche Compagnie*, and had huge red whiskers. The chevalier paraded his men next day for inspection. Bearing a piece of the true cross, the holy fathers came along the line in solemn procession to discover the culprit; but lo! every man was shaven to the eyes, and not a vestige of whisker was to be seen in the whole band of the Chevalier Jules.

“On the 2nd June, 1759, with the force of M. de Contades, we joined the Maréchal Duc de Broglie near Giessen, and left M. d'Armentieres with twenty thousand men to oppose Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, in the neighbourhood of the Wesel; and on this important day we had an open rupture with the Free Company of Cœurdefer, for when detailed together to form the advanced guard of horse, the gentlemen of the Mousquetaires Gris et Rouges flatly refused to share a post of honour with a corps of outlaws. Then the chevalier, flaming with irrepressible fury, flung his glove in the face of our colonel, Henri the Vicomte de Chateaunoir, with whom he had an old unfinished feud, and a duel to the death was only prevented by the determination of the maréchal duc, who bound them both down by solemn promises to keep the peace towards each other, at least until the close of the campaign; but the villain Cœurdefer made a vow of vengeance, swearing to ‘lay the vicomte at his feet, where he had laid many a better man;’ and you

see how he has kept that vow, for by him or by his men our wounded leader was murdered on the field on the morning after Minden!"

"I do not understand," said Major Pringle, in whose tent this conversation took place one evening, when, with a few droppers-in, he and the now-convalescent Mousquetaire lingered over a few bottles of Rhenish wine; "in fact, it seems to me a marvel how a gallant soldier such as the late Prince Xavier of Saxony could tolerate the presence of such a ruffian and bully as this Captain Cœurdefer."

"For various reasons; he is brave——"

"Bravery is no strange quality in the French or Imperial armies, I think," said one of the 51st.

"Moreover, he is an expert forager, skilful in war, useful in council, and leader of two hundred troopers, who have only one virtue—their devotion to him. Besides, the brutal qualities he displays are not singular in the history of wars in Germany. We have had many such examples as he among the mixed races which make up the armies of France and Austria.

"In the last century there was the terrible Count Merode, a colonel of musketeers, whose name has become a proverb for all that is vile; and there was the ferocious Jehan de Wart, a colonel of horse, who in Bavaria spared neither man, woman, nor child, when the lust of blood glowed in his fiery heart."

"Thank Heaven! we have no such fellows among us," said the officer of the 51st, complacently.

"Sir," said Allan Robertson, with a cloudy brow, "you forget the nine of diamonds—the exterminating order of Cumberland, written on the night before we fought you at Culloden."

"But the assassination of your poor colonel,"

began Pringle, hastily, to change the turn the conversation was taking.

"Ah! that was a frightful episode in this new war; and yet believe me, my dear major, Cœurdefer has committed many such acts, and has always contrived to elude the hand of justice. Witness his vow to lay our colonel at his feet, where better men had lain. Liar that he is! Chateau noir was the first gentleman in France! But true it is that, of the many who have lain at the feet of Jules, few have fallen in battle or fair combat."

"You seem to have serious cause for disliking him," said Pringle.

"Disliking!" reiterated Robertson, while his eyes sparkled and his pale face glowed with anger—"say abhorring him!"

"You had your sword," said the officer of the 51st.

"But it is the sword of a Mousquetaire," replied Robertson, sternly; "the chevalier ranks with a field officer."

"True," said Pringle; "you must pardon my friend, who forgets surely what discipline inculcates. And the cause of this animosity?"

"Is a dark and painful story," sighed Robertson, as he drained his green glass of Rhenish, and tossed it on the turf floor of the tent.

"Let us hear it."

"Before the rising of the clans in 1745," began Robertson, "I was a student at the Scottish College of Pontamousson, where I learned Latin and the classics under the tuition of old Father Innes. I had then a dear friend named Louis d'Herblay, a native of Remiremont, at the foot of Mount Vosge in Lorraine. Louis was handsome, brave, and courteous; an expert maker of verses; a tolerable player on the guitar,

and a smart handler of his sword, which he had seldom occasion to use, for he was beloved by every one; a successful love affair with Mademoiselle Annette, a pretty and sprightly girl, had put him in the best of humours with all mankind. Annette was the only daughter of the old Marquis de Chateaunoir, father of the vicomte of that title, Great Maréchal of Lorraine and Bar-le-Duc.

“Jules Cœurdefer, the spendthrift, gambler, and roué, was then, to our great regret, at college with us too, and having not yet come to his estates, his finances being far below his ambition and expenditure, to keep these equal he had betaken him to cards, dice, successful bets, to bullying some and cajoling others—and to every means his wild and wayward course of life permitted—a course which was the scandal of the good fathers of Pontamousson, and soon procured him the only favour he wished at their hands—expulsion.

“Between him and Louis d’Herblay there grew an aversion—a hatred that waxed stronger daily; an antagonism on his side, but on the part of Louis a cold and haughty bearing; for he despised the life and habits of Cœurdefer, whom he had thrice fought and thrice disarmed, when involved with him in tavern brawls beyond the college gates; for *within* these barriers no sword or other weapon was ever worn. But in the very spirit of a Venetian bravo, Jules was known, or suspected, to bear about his person a small *crystal poniard*, the most savage of all weapons for inflicting a wound; as the blade, when broken off at the hilt, remained like a deadly sting in the body of the victim. It was a weapon which could be used but *once* only, and then with terrible effect.

“I have mentioned that my friend D’Herblay had

a successful love affair. As a trophy of it, he wore at his breast an antique cameo of great size, set round with diamonds, and within it was the hair of Annette concealed by a secret spring. He was not rich, but was sufficiently wealthy and well born to render him an acceptable suitor even to the most wary of fathers; thus it had been arranged that, as soon as he left college, his marriage would be celebrated. Father Innes, our old preceptor, was to perform the ceremony; all the students congratulated Louis, and looked forward to his nuptials as to a *fête*—at least, all save Cœurdefer, who kept ever aloof from him, and smiled with the quiet covert smile of malice and hate, when D’Herblay or his affairs were mentioned in his presence.

“At last came the time appointed for Louis to leave the college, and I was to accompany him to Remiremont. He bade adieu to all the old Scottish priests of Pontamousson, and severally shook hands with all his brother students—all till he came to where Cœurdefer was lounging outside the gates smoking a huge German pipe; and D’Herblay, in the happy fulness of his honest heart, being unwilling to leave a foe behind him, approached and held out his hand, saying—

“‘Farewell, M. le Chevalier, though we have not always been the best of friends, I hope we do not part as enemies. Here is my hand to you—my hand, in token of friendship and future amity.’

“Despite the honest frankness that beamed in the blue eyes of D’Herblay and the confiding generosity of his speech, the coarse Jules Cœurdefer gave him a sullen frown, and while rudely emitting a volume of smoke full in his face, with a sullen gesture of contempt, strode away.

"All the students muttered 'Shame!' and for a moment a cloud hovered on the usually smooth brow of D'Herblay.

"'Bah!' said he, turning to me, 'one who is so happy as I, can well afford to pity the wrath of one so poor in spirit and in Christian charity. Farewell, Jules,' he added, as we leaped on our horses; 'when next we meet, we shall part less sullenly.'

"'Yes—when *next* we meet, our parting *shall* be different,' replied Cœurdefer, looking over his left shoulder, with a black frown in his face, as we trotted from the college gates.

"'He means me mischief—pooh! let the fool do his worst,' said Louis. We soon dismissed him from our thoughts, and laughing and chatting gaily, waving our hats to the old people, and kissing our hands to the young girls, we rode through the old familiar streets of Pontamousson, and took the road that led direct to D'Herblay's home, which lay more than twenty leagues distant. And now, gentlemen, observe that *within one hour* after we left the college gates, Jules de Cœurdefer, alone and unattended, also departed on horseback, ostensibly to return to his father's house on the French side of the Rhine.

"We cantered along the road to Nancy, between the yellow cornfields, feeling happy as boys in our new freedom, and singing together a song which Louis had composed in honour of Annette de Chateaunoir, and thus we pushed on without halting at the capital of the duchy, save for a few minutes at a jeweller's, where my friend bought a diamond bracelet for his future bride. Blaziers and Neufchateau were soon passed, and then we reached Epinal, which, in 1466, was bestowed upon the once independent princes of

Lorraine; and their castle, now a ruin, crowns an eminence above it.

"Epinal is within ten miles of Remiremont, and there we were compelled by the state of our horses to halt, notwithstanding the impatience of my friend, to whom a night spent so near the residence of Annette seemed an age, and the ten miles that intervened a thousand leagues; but we called for supper and made ourselves comfortable at an auberge. Louis assumed his guitar, and we sought to while away the time; and the hours flew quickly, for we had a thousand plans to form and things to talk of.

"Alas! how little did we dream that Jules de Cœurdefer, like a bloodhound, was tracking us swiftly and surely, by Nancy, Blaziers, and Neufchateau, and had actually lodged himself in an auberge opposite ours, at Epinal.

"After sitting up late, we retired. Overcome by an excessive lassitude, induced by the long and arduous journey of the past day, I fell into a deep and profound sleep—so deep indeed, that the noon of the next day had rung from the church bells ere I awoke, and inquired for my companion. Thus, you may see, sirs, the difference between one who is a lover and one who is *not*.

"Louis had been up with the lark, as the aubergiste informed me, and full of impatience to visit his mistress, had mounted a fresh horse, and set forth alone, leaving a message for me to follow him to the mansion of the marquis, near Remiremont; adding, as an apology for his abrupt departure, that he was loth to rouse me from a slumber so comfortable and profound.

"I ordered my horse, paid my bill, and departed at leisure, for I had no hope of overtaking him. An

easy trot of ten miles brought me to Remiremont, which is a pretty little town on the left bank of the Moselle, and without difficulty I reached Chateaunoir, the fosse of which was filled by the river. The edifice was ancient, surmounted by heavy turrets and all built of *black* stone (hence its name), and it stood embosomed among fine old trees.

"I sent up my name, and inquired for M. d'Herblay.

"'How—is he not with you, M. Allan?' asked the old marquis, with astonishment in his tone and manner.

"'No,' said I; 'he quitted Epinal at least four hours before me, leaving a message for me to follow him hither.'

"'Four hours before you, and he has not arrived yet!'

"'This is most perplexing, M. le Marquis!' said I.

"'Oh, mon Dieu! what can have happened?' exclaimed mademoiselle, whom I now saw for the first time, and who was a fair blonde, with a beautiful skin and long dark eyelashes, which lent a softness and inexpressible charm to her face.

"I could not reply. My heart misgave me; for knowing D'Herblay as I did, I feared that something most unusual must have occurred to prevent his appearance at the chateau.

"Noon passed; the sun verged westward, and still he did not appear. I became seriously alarmed; the old marquis was perplexed and irritated; while Annette wept in silence.

"Horses were ordered at last, and with Chateaunoir, his son the Vicomte Henri, afterwards Colonel of the Grey Mousquetaires, and all his servants, I set forth to search the roads and inquire for my friend.

For some time we prosecuted this object in vain; but after much labour and anxiety, judge of our horror, when in a secluded orangery, about two miles from Epinal, the young vicomte found a man lying on the grass wounded, bleeding and dying, surrounded by a group of pitying and terrified vine-dressers.

"The damps of death were on the brow of this unfortunate, who proved to be my friend, poor Louis d'Herblay.

"He was frightfully pale, having received several wounds—one of these in the bosom occasioned him the most exquisite agony. From this wound he had bled for some hours undiscovered, and now he was beyond all hope of recovery. Revived partially by our presence, by a cordial poured between his lips, and by the stoppage of the crimson tide which had soaked the soil whereon he lay, in broken accents and at long intervals, he related what had befallen him; and every word he uttered there, so slowly, painfully, and laboriously, sank deeply in our hearts, for they were too surely the last words of the dying.

"Loth to arouse me untimeously at Epinal, my kind friend had arisen, and softly descended the wooden stair, saddled his horse, and left the auberge by dawn. He departed from Epinal at a canter, and in the overflowing happiness of his heart was singing merrily, when at a solitary part of the road, he heard the hoofs of a galloping horse, and a voice impetuously calling upon him to stop. Believing this follower was I, who had discovered his secret and hasty departure, he turned to find himself confronted by a tall stranger, whose face was concealed by a black velvet mask, and whom he believed to be a brigand or assassin.

“ ‘Monsieur,’ said the strange horseman, in a voice which, by its varying tones, was too evidently disguised as his face, ‘you are abroad betimes.’

“ ‘As you also are,’ replied Louis; ‘but was it you, monsieur, who called upon me to stop?’

“ ‘It was.’

“ ‘For what purpose?’

“ ‘That you shall shortly see.’

“ ‘Shortly—nay, as soon as you please, for I am in haste.’

“ ‘Indeed!’ said the other scornfully and slowly.

“ ‘What is your wish, sir?’

“ ‘Simply, that you measure swords with me in this meadow.’

“ ‘Why?’ asked Louis, with astonishment.

“ ‘I intended to have pistolled you through the back, *sans cérémonie*, at first; but my heart relented; thus, I mean to afford you a chance of saving your miserable life—though I must have your purse and valuables.’

“ ‘You are, then, a robber.’

“ ‘If one whose funds are down to zero, and who is desperate, be a robber, then I *am* one,’ replied the mask, still in his feigned voice.

“ ‘I am no poltroon, yet I will gladly save your soul the commission of a double crime,’ said poor D’Herblay, who was the very mirror of generosity; ‘here is my purse, good fellow—pray accept it and be gone, for I have no time to trifle with you.’

The unknown coolly put the purse in his pocket and drew his sword, saying, with an ironical laugh—

“ ‘I thank you, though I would have had it, at all events; but still,’ he added, grinding his teeth, ‘you must fight with me!’

“ ‘Leave me until to-morrow,’ said Louis; ‘there

is one awaiting me at Remiremont—one expecting me to-day—whom I would not disappoint—a lady who loves me, monsieur.’

“ ‘The stranger laughed scornfully.

“ ‘Let me see her but once again, and I shall meet you with joy.’

“ ‘The stranger laughed louder, and said bitterly—

“ ‘Why not meet me now?’

“ ‘I know not,’ urged poor D’Herblay, who was anxious to ride on; ‘but your presence chills my heart—I have a dark and solemn presentiment.’

“ ‘For a third time the other laughed ferociously, while his eyes sparkled through the holes in his mask, and he menaced D’Herblay with his sword, saying—

“ ‘Fight—fight!’

“ ‘To-morrow—I tell you, to-morrow.’

“ ‘Never—be it now or never!’

“ ‘I am too full of happiness to fight.’

“ ‘Happiness!’

“ ‘She whom I love—she whom I am to wed, expects me at Remiremont.’

“ ‘She whom you love, and whom you hope to wed, shall never see you, but as a breathless corpse, fool!’

“ ‘If I am slain, who will bear my last words to Annette?’

“ ‘The spirits of the air or the demons of hell—I care not which,’ was the fierce response.

“ ‘Fool that I was to leave the auberge without my friend. Moreover, I decline to fight with a rascally *ferrailleux*!’

“ ‘This epithet, which is used in France to distinguish a person who, without provocation, delights in quar-

relling and forcing others to fight, made this highway brawler tremble with rage.

“ ‘ Coward ! ’ he thundered out.

“ ‘ Hah ! ’ exclaimed Louis, leaping from his horse, and in his passion forgetting all but vengeance.

“ ‘ Coward, come on ! ’ reiterated his assailant.

“ Louis pressed to his lips the cameo locket which contained the hair of Annette, and with a prayer to Heaven that he might be spared to see her, rushed upon his furious antagonist. A desperate duel began, and so ably were the voice and costume of the masker disguised, that never once did a thought of Jules de Cœurdefer cross the mind of D’Herblay. They had withdrawn from the roadway into an orangery, and taken off their coats and vests to afford them greater freedom. A perfect fencer, Louis stood erect, with his head upright, his body forward on a longe, all the weight on his left haunch—feet, hands, body, arm and sword *in a line*, and completely covered by his weapon.

“ Their swords clashed and gleamed in the bright morning sun ; both were expert combatants, and most of their passes were skilfully made and as skilfully parried. The masker made a feint to the left, but changing the attack, suddenly ran his weapon through the sword-arm of Louis, fairly wedging the blade between the bones below the elbow, and covering his shirt with blood in a moment. Paralysed by this, his future defence was feeble. He received repeated wounds, and was at last laid prostrate on the earth, bleeding and senseless.

“ ‘ Lie there, thou moonstruck fool ! ’ exclaimed his ruthless conqueror, giving him a final stroke in the breast. Tearing away the cameo locket, he left the unhappy D’Herblay a dying man, for he expired in

our arms as we were conveying him to Remiremont.

“ On examining the wound in his breast, we found that it had been made by the blade of a *small crystal poniard*, which was purposely broken off from the hilt and left rankling in the orifice to insure by a mortal stroke the death of the victim !

“ My first thought was of Cœurdefer, whom I knew to be the possessor of such weapons, which he had brought from Venice, where they are commonly used by the bravoës ; but the proofs I could adduce were too slight for me, a stranger and a foreigner, to accuse the son of a powerful baronial family ; thus the terrible suspicion remained locked in my own breast—a suspicion that grew less, however, when I remembered that the victor, like a common foot-pad, had taken the purse and locket of my poor friend.

“ The grief of a kind, warm-hearted, and affectionate girl like Annette may be imagined. She wept little, but her sorrow was the deeper that it was unrelieved by any external manifestations. She was long inconsolable.

“ Now came the war consequent to the League formed at Vienna, in 1757, to strip the King of Prussia of his dominions, and an alliance was formed by France, Austria, Russia, and Sweden, when Britain declared war against the former, and all Europe seemed to ‘ go by the ears ’ at once.

“ The old Marquis de Chateaunoir marched as Colonel of Horse under the Maréchal d’Estrées, and fell at the passage of the Rhine. His son, the Vicomte Henri, became a soldier, too, and soon obtained the command of the Mousquetaires Gris, into which I, then a fugitive from the Scottish Highlands, was admitted by

his request ; but long before all this poor little Annette had become a canoness of Remiremont.

"This ecclesiastical establishment, by the peculiarity of its constitution, is one of the most singular in the church. It was founded by St. Romerick, a famous abbot, who lived in the days of Clotaire II., and who built his first convent on what was then a bare and desolate place, at the foot of Mount Vosge. All the ladies in it, the abbess excepted, take certain vows, reserving to themselves the right of quitting the convent and marrying if they please ; and all must prove their nobility by four descents before admission. The abbess had both spiritual and temporal power under the Pope and Dukes of Lorraine.

"Annette was a canoness for three years, and lived in peace, viewing the world only as a place wherein to practise those little acts of kindness and Christian charity which the ladies of St. Romerick practised so freely as to make their establishment a boon and a blessing to that sequestered little city among the mountains. There her virtues, her attention to the sick, and her charity to the poor, excited the admiration of all, as her sorrowful story, and sad, grave manner won their sympathy. So three years glided away, until in an evil hour Jules de Cœurdefer came to visit his sister, who was the superior of this remarkable establishment.

"He saw Annette unveiled in the garden ; her pale beauty, her exceeding gentleness, and her loneliness raised a passion in his breast. Impetuous in all things, he at once besought his sister to intercede for him with Annette ; and after many objections to engage in a task so unsuited to the nature of her office, the abbess, inspired by a natural regard for her only brother, and a desire to obtain for him the object

of his choice, whom she justly deemed a pearl among women, and one whom she loved dearly and highly esteemed, left nothing unsaid to urge his suit. M. Jules became a regular visitor at the convent parlour, and daily saw Annette in the presence of the abbess, who, believing that his conversation and gaiety (for he was fresh from Paris, and the camp of Maréchal d'Estrées) might amuse and interest the lonely girl, foresaw that in a second love affair she might gradually be drawn from the terrible memory of the first and of its fatal end.

"They soon became intimate, and all Remiremont rang with gossip ; the old condemned the lax discipline of the abbess, and the young rejoiced that the pretty canoness Annette de Chateaunoir was to become the wife of the handsome chevalier.

"In submission to the stronger will of the lady superior, and to the energetic mind of Jules, and perhaps dazzled a little by the brilliance, the splendid uniform, handsome figure, and gay conversation of that redoubtable personage, she passively admitted his addresses. But this new lover's deep dark eye seemed to exercise some mysterious and magnetic influence over her ; for, as the poor girl afterwards told me, there were times when his glance seemed full of a terrible fascination, and when she alternately loved and felt a strange coldness—almost an involuntary repugnance for him.

"She strove to conquer this emotion, the origin of which she failed to fathom, and anxious, perhaps, to forget the terrible sequel to her first love among the gaiety proffered by the second, she consented to receive the chevalier as her husband ; and lest she might retract, the ceremony was hurried on with a haste on his part which the good-natured gossips of

Remiremont averred to be somewhat indelicate at least.

"His sister perceived the strange waverings and misgivings that agitated the mind of poor Annette, and on the marriage morning she embraced and kissed her tenderly.

"'Beware what you do, dearest Annette,' said she, 'lest you repent the hour you leave us. In marriage the love of the mind and character must be blended with and united to the love of the person, or there can never be any duration of tenderness or of mutual confidence. Oh, I pray Heaven, I may not have acted wrong in this affair!'

"The misgivings of the good abbess came too late.

"Full of hope, the gentle Annette smiled through her tears; full of love and triumph, the exulting chevalier led her away, and they were married. Before leaving the convent, Jules placed in her hand a case containing a complete set of brilliants—a tiara for her head, a necklace, bracelets, and rings. Among these jewels was a *cameo locket*, studded with the purest diamonds.

"On perceiving this well-known trinket, Annette grew pale, and tottered to a chair. It seemed to come like a signal from the grave of Louis d'Herblay to reproach her! Her features became convulsed and her voice tremulous, for in a moment she recognised her own gift to Louis, previous to his last departure for Pontamousson, and there occurred to her a strange, but just and dreadful suspicion, that for a moment paralysed her and rendered her totally incapable of repelling the chevalier, who held her in his arms, and perceived at once, and with no little confusion, the misfortune or discovery which was impending.

"'Cursed fatality!' he exclaimed, through his clenched teeth.

"'Whence came this trinket, Jules? How came it into your possession? Speak!' she exclaimed, in accents of terror, and with the gestures of passion.

"'I do not understand you, dear Annette,' said he, finding that nothing but perfect confidence and a bold falsehood would carry him through this *malheur*. 'I had that locket made for me by a jeweller of the Rue St. Honoré, in Paris, many years ago, as a gift for my mother.'

"'It is false all this; for, four years ago, I had it made here in Remiremont.'

"'Annette!'

"'Has it any secret spring or clasp?' she asked.

"'No—none, I am assured,' he answered, boldly.

"'You are sure of this, Jules?'

"'I swear to you Annette,' he urged, becoming frightfully agitated, while the perspiration rolled like beads down his brow.

"'Swear not—you have lied enough already,' she exclaimed wildly. 'See, monsieur,' she added, pressing a spring and opening the locket by a secret hitherto unknown to Cœurdefer, 'it contains my miniature and a braid of my hair—mine, given in a happy, happy hour to Louis d'Herblay! O, Louis! look down on me from heaven, and see how fate has avenged thee! Away, chevalier—away; come not near me, and touch me not! If other proof were wanting that you were his murderer, it is here.'

"These words were rashly spoken, yet they stung Jules to the soul. She tore her bridal chaplet and veil from her brow, trampled on them with gestures of frenzy, and was borne away insensible in the arms of the canonesses.

"In one hour after that *dénouement* the exasperated chevalier had left Remiremont for the French camp—left it to return no more."

"And what of Annette?" asked some one.

"She took the black veil, and is now nun of the convent of St. Nicole, seven miles from Nancy. With that day's discovery began and ended the wedded life of Cœurdefer; and since then he has led a wild and reckless career, committing innumerable acts of daring, which by some strange fatality have passed as yet unpunished; but the assassination of D'Herblay—for that he *did* assassinate him, I have not the slightest doubt—is the blackest of his acts; unless, indeed, that other episode at Minden be a deeper and a darker one.

"The marriage prevented the Vicomte Henri alike from prosecuting him at common law as a felon, and from challenging him to a solemn duel, and so time passed on; but he hated my colonel—the handsome young Mousquetaire—with the hate of a tiger; hence I doubt not that by his hand, or the hands of some of his lawless troop at his behest, my leader perished on the field of Minden!

"France has not in all her army a more splendid soldier than that Mousquetaire Gris!

"After the junction of the French army under M. de Contades and M. de Broglio, as I have related, on their approach Prince Ferdinand retreated, first to Lippstadt, and afterwards to Ham, where he mustered all the forces in the Bishopric of Munster, and was joined by the soldiers of Imhoff, while we advanced and took possession of Cassel, Minden, and Beverungen.

"While we lay at Cassel, engaged in repairing and strengthening the fortifications, the vicomte, our

leader, was engaged in two pieces of service, which savoured of the romance of the Middle Ages in Germany.

"There came to the colonel of the Mousquetaires, from the Lower Saxon side of the Weser, a certain old knight named Otto of Burgsteinfort, who though an adherent of the enemy, implored him as a soldier and a gentleman to attempt the rescue of his daughter, an only child, who had been carried off by a party of savage Uzkokes or Hungarian infantry, who had been subsidized by the King of Prussia, and formed a portion of the column commanded by Prince Ferdinand, but were more immediately under the orders of Count Hatzfeld in Munden, twelve miles distant on the Weser; and these wretches, he added, had borne her into a forest in the Bishopric of Paderborn, where he dared not follow them, alone at least. Pitying the distress of the old man, Chateau noir left Cassel on this errand of mercy with forty gentlemen of the Mousquetaires Gris. Of these forty I had the honour to be one.

"Will not Count Hatzfeld do this service for you, baron?" I asked.

"No—though on my knees I prayed him; I who never have bent my knee before to aught but a minister of God."

"Why?"

"Because our families are and have been long at feud."

"Good—I can understand that, for in my country we are not without hereditary hatreds. Yet in this instance his conduct has been alike ungenerous and wicked."

"True; thus I, a German, appeal to French chivalry."

“‘In a happy moment, baron,’ said Chateau noir, ‘and your appeal shall not be made in vain. This abduction—’

“‘Occurred three days ago.’

“‘Peste! then we have no time to lose!’

“We crossed a range of mountains in the night, and entered the Bishopric of Paderborn, pushed on towards the forest, riding with such speed, that, to prevent our horses being knocked up, at a village near Borcholz, we refreshed them in the old Reiter fashion, by bathing their nostrils with vinegar, giving them water and wine to drink, and folding round their bits a piece of raw flesh sliced from a stray cow, which we shot, and cut up for the purpose.

“Otto, the knight or baron (for we named him both), acted as our guide, and such was the deadly treachery so frequently practised by those Germans, that we were not without fear that the whole story of the abduction might be a snare to lure away into ambush those who were considered by the King of Prussia as the right arm of the French general; and thus our colonel gave me express orders to keep by the old man’s side, and on the first indication of treachery, or attempted flight, to pistol him without mercy!

“The harvest moon was shining full and yellow in her placid beauty high above the steep green mountains that look down on Liebenau; but now it was on the wane, for the east was marked by the coming day, as in silence and circumspection we approached the fortress of the lawless Uzkokes. Every leaf was still, the sky was of the purest blue, and spread like a starry curtain behind the dark mountain peaks, and the sombre forest scenery was reflected like inverted trees of bronze in the calm lakes and tarns which we passed

in our progress through this wild region of solitude and old romance.

“An old servant of the baron, who had been lurking about the forest in the vague hope of succouring his young mistress, now joined us, and threw himself at the feet of his master. For two nights and days this faithful fellow had been lurking in the vicinity of these terrible depredators, and now he acted most efficiently as our guide. His appearance, his tears, and enthusiasm dissipated our fears of a snare, and made me feel somewhat ashamed of having encouraged them.

“The Uzkokes, about twenty in number, were deserters from Count Hatzfeld’s garrison in Munden, and had possessed themselves of an old and deserted hunting lodge of the Electoral Bishops, built at the foot of a rock; from thence they had been issuing from time to time, to plunder the peasantry, to rob wayfarers and to shoot deer.

“The sound of guttural voices in loud altercation, mingled with savage laughter, informed us that we were in the immediate vicinity of those enterprising worthies who had abducted the baron’s daughter. Then we saw the gleam of a red wavering light between the stems and branches of the trees. This came from a huge fire around which they were all bivouacked, drinking, sleeping, or making merry, and being apparently without any proper watch or scout, as we were enabled to approach them by a forest path unchallenged and unseen. The reason of this seeming confidence was soon explained, when we found one of their number lying across the narrow way stretched upon his musket, either sottishly drunk or in profound slumber; but *which* we never had time to discover, for, quick as thought, the servant of the baron, a

bloodthirsty Westphalian boor, dispatched him by one slash of his short and sharp *couteau de chasse*.

"The father was by my side as we advanced. Bare-headed, he was praying with his clenched hands pressed upon his breast. The poor old man was full of agony and terror.

"They are twenty in number, you say?" asked Chateau noir.

"Exactly twenty, mein herr," replied the old servant, wiping his hunting-knife on the grass with grim care before he sheathed it.

"Then ten of *us* are enough for them," replied our heroic young colonel; "let the ten gentlemen next me dismount and take their pistols with them. You are sure, my friend, that your young mistress is still among them?"

"Sure as I live, mein herr," replied the boor.

The baron groaned.

"See!" exclaimed a Mousquetaire, "there is a white dress amid their circle.

"*Christi kreutz!* it is my young lady!" whispered the servant, in a breathless voice.

"I placed my gloved hand on the baron's mouth lest he might utter a cry, and spoil all.

"Where—where?" asked Chateau noir.

"At the foot of that elm-tree, and, *mein Gott!* she is tied to it with a cord."

"Creeping forward after Chateau noir (for he would allow no man to precede him) I saw a very remarkable scene.

"Around a huge fire of dried branches that crackled, sputtered, and blazed, casting a red and lurid glow on the gnarled trunks of the old oak-trees and on the leafy canopy formed by their twisted and entwined foliage overhead, were the twenty Uzkokes, all fierce-

looking little men, of powerful, active, and athletic figures, with hooked noses, keen eyes, and wild in gesture. They were bearded to the cheekbones, and wore round fur caps and brown pelisses, or short jackets, and wide red breeches, ending in brodequins, or half-boots. They had each a short musket, slung across his body, with a crooked sabre, which was worn in front, so that the hilt came readily to the right hand. A few were asleep, snorting off the fumes of the midnight debauch, as they sprawled among staved barrels, broiled bones and broken dishes. The rest were engaged in a vehement dispute, while near them drooped the poor object of their contention, a pale-cheeked and slender young girl, secured to a tree by two broad buff waist-belts and a cord; her dress was disordered; her flaxen hair dishevelled and unpowdered; her face bowed down in her hands, which rested on her knees.

"This was the daughter of Otto of Burgsteinfort.

"Once she looked wildly up to heaven, and then bowed down her face again in hopeless misery. She was ghastly pale, and had a hopeless glare in her blue eyes. Beauty, if she really possessed it, seemed to have been quite scared from her.

"*Morbleu!* how pale she is—'tis quite a little spectre!" muttered the mousquetaires.

"Hush, gentlemen," said the vicomte, cocking a pistol and drawing his sword; "we have come at a critical time. These wretches are all insanely drunk, and, if I understand their barbarous jargon aright, are now in vehement dispute as to whose property their fair prisoner shall be."

"All seemed inflamed by the desire of possessing the prize by the strong hand; hence sabres were drawn, and a brawl, which might have saved us all

further trouble, was about to ensue, when a corporal, who was leader of the gang, and evinced more brutality even than his comrades, swore 'that none should have her but the wolves,' and unslinging his musket, levelled it full at her head; but at that moment a shot pierced his chest and he fell dead upon his face, with arms outspread upon the earth. Death had come to him from the ready pistol of Chateaufort, who now led us on, and taking them by surprise, we cut down almost the whole party without resistance. Four who were asleep and dead drunk we hanged at our leisure, before mounting to return.

"We then, without loss of time, retraced our steps, lest we might be discovered and cut off by troops of Count Hatzfeld or Prince Ferdinand, and rode on the spur towards the Weser.

"To the grateful Baron Otto and his daughter we bade adieu within a few miles of Hatzfeld's headquarters, and sent the count an ironical message, complimenting him on his chivalry and gallantry to the fair sex. After this we reached our quarters in Cassel next evening, without the loss of a man, and so ended our adventure in the forest at Paderborn.

"The next affair to which I referred, is as follows:—

"We remained quietly in our new quarters for a few days until the Duc de Broglio devised an attack upon Munden, the fortifications of which were increasing under the eye of Count Hatzfeld. The Mousquetaires Gris et Rouges marched on this service, and early that morning, long before our trumpets sounded, I was roused by the din of the chopping blocks, of which every French troop has one, to cut straw for the horses before marching.

"With the dragoons of Brissac we formed the advanced guard of this expedition, which included the Regiments of Picardie and Normandie; and here I may mention that our mounted comrades were not named from Brissac in Alsace, but from a little town of the same name in Anjou, which belonged to the ancient family of Cosse, one of whom, Charles de Cosse, was made a peer by Louis XIII., with the title of *Maréchal Duc de Brissac*.

"*En route* to the scene of our operations, the guide, a wild-looking denizen of the neighbouring forests, clad almost entirely in wolf's fur, and having a shock head of flaxen hair, which he seemed to comb on an average once in a year, left us in a wooded gorge to shift for ourselves, as he knew full well that the rocks and thickets on both sides were manned by his Prussian friends. We were thus caught in an ambush of infantry led by Count Hatzfeld in person! From both sides of the path there suddenly opened a destructive fire upon us. Night was just closing, and an immediate confusion ensued. After a short and feeble resistance the Dragoons de Brissac, believing themselves to be, as the French say, *écharpe*, or cut to pieces, fell back in a panic on our infantry, who were about a mile in the rear, and we, finding ourselves alike bewildered and unsupported, retired, leaving several of our comrades shot or unhorsed. Among these, unnoticed and unseen, was our Colonel, the Vicomte de Chateaufort, whose horse had been killed by a musket-shot. The animal, after plunging thrice, fell heavily, and severely bruised the rider's right leg, which was crushed by its weight in his jack-boot, though the latter was lined by ribs of tempered iron. Thus he lay helpless and unable either to rise or extricate himself. Close by him lay a chevalier of the

Golden Fleece, gorgeously attired, with silver aiguillettes on his shoulders. The blood was oozing from a wound in his breast. Chateauoir strove to staunch it, and ultimately succeeded.

“‘Leave me, monsieur,’ said the sufferer, who was in great agony; ‘leave me that I may die, and go to that God who for you and me suffered more than I this night endure!’

“With these pious words he became insensible, and this chevalier, so daring and devout, was poor Prince Xavier of Saxony, who was afterwards slain on the field of Minden.

“The moon rose above the mountains to light the scene of this misfortune, and while stretched on the ground, enduring great pain and thirst, Vicomte Chateauoir had the horror of beholding many of his wounded companions butchered (even as he, perhaps, was butchered at Minden!) by the sabres of some prowling Jagers in search of plunder; and though he lay still, feigning death, such would too probably have been his own fate, had not a sudden torrent of rain mercifully driven them into an adjacent wood for shelter.

“Believing himself to benow altogether lost—for if not rescued by his French comrades, he was certain when day dawned to be slain by the Jagers or the Westphalian peasantry—he lay bruised, sore, and helpless under the drenching rain, and was on the point of becoming insensible from exhaustion and suffering, when the tremulous light of a lantern gleamed along the wet grass, and glinted on the scattered weapons, the shot-riven soil, and the pale faces of the dead. Two dark figures approached noiselessly, and then he heard a female crying—

“‘Hatzfeld—Count Hatzfeld;’ and near him

there passed a young woman of great beauty, muffled to her chin in a mantle of furs, and attended by an old man bearing a lantern, the light of which, (while shuddering at the terrors it revealed), they turned from side to side on the faces of the dead and wounded among whom they threaded their way.

“‘If you seek Count Hatzfeld, madame, you seek in vain,’ said the vicomte, faintly.

“‘Who spoke?’ said the lady, pausing in terror.

“‘I—a wounded Frenchman!’

“‘And wherefore say you so, monsieur?’ asked the lady, while her large dark eyes seemed to dilate with alarm; ‘is he wounded—slain?’

“‘Nay, I hope not, as *you* are interested in his safety; but he has simply fallen back with his victorious infantry towards the town of Munden.’

“‘Thanks—thanks,’ said she, turning away; and then, seeing by the light of her lantern that the speaker was a young and very handsome man, she added—‘Pardon my selfish anxiety, for Count Hatzfeld is my husband; but you—who are you?’

“‘To-night I am your humble servant, madame; this morning I was colonel of the brave Mousquetaires Gris, under Louis XV.’

“‘Your name—’

“‘Henri, Vicomte de Chateauoir.’

“‘Who was the first to cross the Rhine at Cologne?’

“‘I had that honour, madame.’

“‘Oh, monsieur, I have heard of you very often.’

“‘Then I would pray you, madame, a Prussian though you be, to give me but a cup of water; for even under this falling rain I am dying of thirst.’

“The Countess of Hatzfeld hastened to give him

some wine from a flask borne by her attendant, and she even proposed to remain beside him.

“ I would rather perish of cold and exhaustion, or die by the knives and sabres of those rascally Jagers or Uskokes, than have you remain here in such a pitiless night as this, lady,” replied Chateau noir. “ I am a Mousquetaire Gris. I thank you, Madame la Comtesse ; but leave me to my fate. I have done my duty to God and his Most Christian Majesty, and am quite willing to leave the event to chance.”

“ But this dame with the gentle eyes and black tresses was one of the Douglasses of Esthonia,* and was resolved to leave the event in the hands of one quite as fickle as fate, to wit, herself, and she protested that she would not and could not quit the vicomte ; but with the assistance of her old valet, whose silence and fidelity could evidently be relied on, she succeeded in extricating him from his fallen charger ; she bound up the bruises of his limb, and, supported partly by the hard paw of the old German valet on one side, and by her soft arm on the other, he was conveyed to an adjacent mansion, of which the Prussians had taken possession. It stood about a mile from the field ; and there the lady laid him on a couch, and attended him with every care, while her attendant a cunning old fellow—kept watch, to announce when the count, a young and fiery soldier who had vowed extermination to the enemies of the Great Frederick, should return.

“ When Chateau noir found himself in a luxurious bed, within a handsome apartment, hung with green silk festooned by golden cords and massive tassels,

* Where the ruins of their castle are still to be seen on the Douglasberg. They were descended from a Scottish Douglas who served the Teutonic knights.

and having buhl toilet-tables, covered with Mechlin lace festooned with white and silver ; large oval mirrors, lighted by rose-coloured candles in girandoles of glittering crystal, and vases of flowers between, he believed himself to be in a dream, the more so, as with half-closed eyes he saw a beautiful woman, with remarkably white hands, long tremulous eyelashes, and fine eyes, gliding noiselessly about his couch, and from time to time watching over his slumbers and recovery. So he thought,

“ ‘Tis a spirit-woman, and this is some enchanted castle on the Rhine, or *under* it, perhaps. In Paris, I have often heard tales of such adventures in this land of diablerie, and seen them, too, in the theatres.”

“ But the hands and arms of this ‘spirit woman,’ when they touched the vicomte were remarkably unlike those of a spectre or spirit ; moreover, she had a bright roguish eye, and, by her manner, seemed not at all reluctant to receive compliments, or to indulge in a little innocent coquetry, being, as most pretty women are, charmed by the admiration she excited. She had resided long at Berlin, and as our young colonel was almost fresh from the King’s antechamber at Versailles, she was charmed to find a chevalier so gallant in that sequestered district which lay between the Weser and the (then) wild forests of Paderborn. “ Three days slipped pleasantly away at that quiet old German chateau.

“ On the evening of the 3rd, the galloping of horses was heard in the avenue, and Count Hatzfeld, still flushed by the success of his ambushade, which, for a time, had completely delayed the advance of the Maréchal Duc de Broglio towards Munden, accompanied by a squadron of Blue Prussian Hussars,

arrived at the mansion, and, without removing his soiled and blood-stained uniform, hastened to embrace his countess. Pale and confused, the latter had barely time to conceal the vicomte in a secret alcove, or ancient hiding-place which she had discovered, and which opened by a sliding panel at *the back* of the couch, whereon he had been reposing when Hatzfeld entered, and after a few gay words of greeting, threw aside his hussar cap, gloves, sabre, and rich pelisse, and with an exclamation of pleasure, satisfaction, and weariness, stretched himself on the same place and the same pillow where the vicomte had lain but a moment before!

"Trembling with apprehension, and paler than ever, the poor little countess sat near a mirror, dreading even the expression of her own face, and scarcely trusting herself to speak.

"And now scarcely a long, tedious, and terrible hour had elapsed, when a casual sound, or some vague suspicion excited by her peculiar manner, prompted Hatzfeld suddenly to unclosethe long panel of the alcove, wherein lay the stranger almost side by side with himself. With a shout of angry astonishment, the count leaped up, and sprang to his lately relinquished sabre.

"'Stay,' exclaimed the countess, throwing herself upon his sword-arm; 'he is only a poor wounded man, whom I have saved and concealed.'

"'In my bed—or beyond it—could you find no more fitting place, madam?' exclaimed her husband, endeavouring to free himself from her impetuous grasp, while sombre fury and fierce suspicion sparkled in his eyes.

"'Hatzfeld—believe me—Hatzfeld, I speak the truth!'

"'Swear that you do,' said he, menacing her white neck with the gleaming weapon.

"'I swear it,' she exclaimed, 'by our Lady of Oetingen, I swear——'

"'What?'

"'That he is only a poor stranger.'

"'And that you never saw him before?'

"'Never before the night of the ambush.'

"'And that he is—who?' queried the count, sternly.

"'A mousquetaire of King Louis.'

"'O Christi Kreutz! a soldier of King Louis!' reiterated the count; 'what matters it—Frenchman or Austrian—one can reach hell as soon as the other!'

"He made a thrust at Chateau noir, who though weak from his bruises, sprang from the alcove, and would infallibly have been slain had not the countess hung upon her fiery husband's sword-arm, praying him by all he held sacred and dear to spare her the horror, the disgrace, and lifelong reproach of an act so cruel as this man's slaughter in her chamber; but she spoke to one who heeded and who heard her not.

"In his blind fury or suspicion, the count disdained to hear her, and coarsely strove to thrust her from him, bruising her tender breasts and hands, as she clung about him wildly. Though so faint that he could scarcely stand, Chateau noir had now reached and drawn his sword; and how this matter might have ended, there are no means of knowing, had it not at this crisis been cut short by the ball of a field-piece passing through the house with a frightful crash, and then they heard the sharp shrill notes of the Prussian trumpets sounding *to horse*, as a party of the Duc de Broglie's Cavalry, who were again advanc-

ing towards Munden, approached the mansion, and seeing a squadron of Blue Hussars in the lawn with a standard displayed, had suddenly opened a fire on them from three pieces of flying artillery.

“Leaving our colonel to the care of his advancing friends, Hatzfeld had to depart on the spur for Munden, which was his head-quarters and nearest fortified post, while his fair young countess became the lawful prisoner of the Mousquetaires Gris. The vicomte treated her with every courtesy, and she was escorted with all honour to the quarters of the Duc de Broglio, whose timely approach had arrested an act of assassination.

“In his anger at Count Hatzfeld, and anxiety to remain with us, Chateau noir, immediately on procuring a new horse, assumed once more the command of the Grey Musketeers, and marched at our head, on the expedition against the town of Munden.

“The sun was setting when we, who formed the advanced guard, came in sight of Munden, at the confluence of two streams, which there unite and are named the Weser; and its current rippled in pink and gold as the tints of evening deepened on the laden barges that floated by the quays, on the spires of the churches, and the quaint architecture of the streets. The scenery was neither bold nor striking; but the sun seemed to linger for a time ‘at the gates of the west,’ casting upward his rays through cloud and sky, diverging like the fiery spokes of a mighty wheel, and these continued to waver and play, to fade and gleam again from below the dark line of the horizon, long after the sun himself had disappeared from our eyes.

“As the last bright vestige of his flaming disc went down, a cannon—the solitary evening gun—boomed

from the fortifications of Munden, and the Prussian standard was slowly lowered for the night; and this was to us a significant notice that as yet our approach was unseen.

“Munden we considered one of the most important places on the Weser. On one side it had eight solid bastions faced with stone, full of earth and impenetrable to cannon-shot. A half-moon lay before every curtain and the ditch was broad. The counterscarp, covered way and palisadoes were all in the best order, and the town was garrisoned by three thousand men, five hundred of whom were Irish, whose backs had never been seen by an enemy. Count Hatzfeld commanded the whole, and his second was the Baron O’Reilly, a soldier as resolute and determined as himself, consequently we had every reason to expect that broken heads would be numerous enough.

“If my warlike friends expect a detail of the siege and capture of Munden, I regret that I can afford them but a brief note of the operations, which were pressed by M. de Broglio with great vigour. The battalions de Picardie blockaded it on one side, while those of Normandie enclosed it on the other. M. de Contades broke ground before the strongest bastions, and M. de Broglio undertook to storm and destroy the works and bridges on the Weser, while the Vicomte de Chateau noir, with the Mousquetaires Gris et Rouges and the cavalry, covered the roads and collected supplies.

“The fire of our artillery, which was heavy, was neutralized by the elevation at which they were discharged, and by the compactness of the earthen parapets; but ultimately a breach was effected in two days, and a host of brave fellows volunteered for the assault. Among these were all the Grey Mousque-

taires and about a hundred of the Dragoons of Brissac, dismounted. The honour of leading the stormers at midnight was assigned to the vicomte, who appeared in his brilliant state uniform, with all his orders sparkling on his breast.

"Is this wise, vicomte?" asked the old Duc de Broglio.

"Wherefore, *maréchal*?"

"You will be the mark of every musket to-night."

"So much the better for others," replied the gay noble. "Allow me to please myself, *Monseigneur le Duc*. I may as well be killed in my best coat to-night as have it sold at the drum-head to-morrow."

"The second volunteer for the storming party was a mere child—a son of the Comte de Brille, who had been unjustly executed for losing a military post under General Lally, in India. The boy was serving as a private soldier under M. de Contades, and was burning for an opportunity to distinguish himself; thus when we advanced towards the breach mingling together pell-mell, men of all ranks and arms united in a mass, and falling fast on every side, with shot of every sort and size passing us with an incessant *hum* or *whistle*, tearing up the turf, shattering stones, and rending huge branches off the trees that grew on the banks of the river, the vicomte turned, with an emotion of pity, and said to the boy—

"M. de Brille, my young brave, return while there is yet time."

"My father perished innocently on the scaffold in the *Place de Grève*, vicomte," replied the boy, on whose pale cheek glowed the light of the fireballs, which filled the air above and sputtered in the muddy ditches below; "and I shall to-night redeem his

coronet from the temporary tarnish it has suffered, or die. I, too, am a *De Brille*!"

"But the breach is just before us."

"Well!"

"And you have no fear; pardon me, boy, I am your senior officer, and, believe me, your sincere friend."

"I thank you," said he, haughtily; "fear—I have none."

"Thou art a brave chick—*Vive M. le Comte de Brille*!" exclaimed the stormers, and the eyes of the lad flashed fire.

"I know, vicomte," said he, "that at this moment my poor old mother, the widowed countess, is praying for me at home; and God," he added, pointing with his sword to the starlighted heaven, "will spare the widow's son!"

"Bravo; forward, then, to the assault—to the assault! France and *Vive Louis le Roi*!"

"But he was *not* spared; he fell, pierced by a mortal wound. Like a swollen surge the stormers swept over him, and through the ghastly gap in the shattered rampart hewed a passage into the heart of the place, driving the foe before them. Count Hatzfeld was among the first who fell, for, after a brief encounter, Chateau noir slew him at the third pass. After this the Prussians gave way, and the only resistance we experienced was from O'Reilly and his Irishmen, who took possession of a Lutheran church, where they fought like incarnate devils, swearing to blow themselves up, if they had powder enough, but never to surrender.

"By noon, however, they hoisted a white flag on the steeple, and agreed to leave the place with the honours of war, which we were glad to accord them.

By this time there were only two hundred left alive ; and at their head the gallant O'Reilly marched out, with one standard displayed ; it bore the Irish harp and Prussian eagle. One drum was beating before them ; and, in the old fashion, each man had a bullet in his mouth and four charges of powder in his pouch.

" We cheered them heartily and saluted them with all the honours of war, and then the drums of the Regiment de Normandie were beaten before them down through that terrible breach, which was strewn with dead and wounded, and where the blood was battenng in the sun or oozing and trickling between the stones ; and from thence they crossed the Weser, and marched to Beverungen.

" On our advance towards the latter place, they were soon compelled to retire again ; for, when we carried the town by assault, they retired from it on the Prussian side.

" My next service was on the field of Minden, where—but, gentlemen, you know the rest."

Such was the varied narrative of Allan Robertson, the Grey Mousquetaire.

On his recovery, being sick of exile and of the French service, he expressed a great desire to join any of our Highland regiments, even as a volunteer. His wish was warmly seconded by the officers of the 51st Regiment, and his hopes were realized beyond his expectations ; for, by their desire and the recommendation of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, he was gazetted to an ensigncy in the Forty-second—the old Black Watch—then serving under General Amherst on the American Lakes ; but before leaving the camp

of the Allies, from whence he was first sent home in charge of sick and wounded soldiers, he had the satisfaction of seeing the strange career of his enemy, the Chevalier de Cœurdefer, terminated with abrupt ignominy.

At Fellinghausen—a severe battle, the name and results of which are now absorbed and forgotten in the greater glories of the previous encounter at Minden—the Free Company of the chevalier charged our 51st or Second Yorkshire Regiment, to which Allan Robertson had for a time attached himself as a volunteer. This occurred among those dense and ancient forests which surround Fellinghausen, and which, on this day in particular, rendered the operations of the cavalry on both sides almost futile.

Issuing from a jungle, heedless of the shells which exploded in the air or roared and hissed along the ground, and of the leaden rain that sowed the turf about them, the wild troopers of the Franche Compagnie fell *sabre à la main* on the 51st, who formed square in a trice, and by a withering fire swept them back in disorder. Then the Black Prussian Hussars, led by Count Redhaezl, a dashing noble, in his twentieth year, by a furious flank movement, cut them wholly to pieces. Beneath the sabres of the hussars a hundred men and horses rolled upon the earth, and many prisoners were taken. Among these were the Chevalier Jules, his chaplain, and a score of his troopers, all of whom were more or less wounded. They were immediately enclosed by the square of the 51st, and were soon after transmitted to the rear.

After the battle, the chevalier and his ghostly friend, the late canon of Notre Dame de Paris, were deemed such desperate characters that their paroles were not accepted, and they were placed in a secluded

house with the other prisoners, under a guard of Keith's Highlanders, commanded by Captain Fotheringham, of Powrie, an officer who had covered himself with distinction in the late battle. There they remained for some time without Maréchal Broglio, who was probably but too glad to be rid of them, making the least effort for their ransom or exchange, until Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, to whom a report was made on the subject, declared "that to supply such fellows with rations was simply feeding what ought to be hanged."

In an evil moment over their cups, the chaplain informed the chevalier that he had, concealed about him, notes and gold to the value of fifty thousand francs, the plunder of various persons and places.

"Fifty thousand francs!" said the chevalier; "*mordieu!* with that sum I should soon gild over the most watchful eyes and achieve my liberty."

This thought haunted him day and night, and with one so unscrupulous the sequel may easily be guessed.

One night the chaplain was roughly wakened by a hand being heavily laid on his throat, and he found a masked man standing over him, armed with a bayonet, and commanding him to yield his ill-gotten wealth on pain of instant death!

A loud cry, cut short by a death-stab in the throat followed, and, in less than a minute, the chevalier found himself a prisoner in the hands of the startled quarter-guard, beside the dead body of his comrade and with a blood-dripping bayonet, as a terrible testimony against him.

A court-martial next day made short work with him, and he was sentenced to death—a doom which he met with the most singular coolness and contempt.

His fate was announced to him at night, and he was chained to a tree lest he should escape before *reveille* next morning, when the sentence was to be put in execution. He conversed with his guards, smoked, laughed and sang catches, and was provokingly cool and gay to the last. On perceiving his old brother student, Robertson, loitering near him, he said,

"You have the odds of me to-night, *mon ami*; but a Prussian bullet ere long may, perhaps, enable you to overtake me *en route* to the infernal regions."

"Be thankful, chevalier, that you end your life in camp, and not in Paris," replied the Mousquetaire, quietly.

"Wherefore?"

"Because a soldier's death and a soldier's grave are a better fate than a felon's on the dissecting-table."

"Perhaps so—*peste!* unpleasant thought to have a parcel of medical *gamins* amusing themselves with one's intestines and arteries."

"Think, sir," said Allen, gravely and with pity, "you are to die to-morrow morning."

"Better then, than to-morrow night, if it is to be. *Allons!* comrade, another light; for, *sang Dieu!* my pipe has gone out!"

So passed his last night on earth.

Grey morning came and the great-coated guard got under arms. The chevalier was unchained from the tree and marched to a secluded spot, where his grave, which the pioneers of the 51st had dug overnight, yawned in the damp mould among the bright green grass. He walked calmly round it and looked down with all the curiosity of an amateur or mere spectator. He then stood erect opposite the provost-marshal's guard, with a scornful smile and with folded arms.

"I thank you, M. le Prevot," said he, smiling gaily; "all is as it should be—'tis just my length; five feet ten inches."

The guard, or firing party, which was composed of twenty men of the 51st, were confounded, and, perhaps, disgusted by his unparalleled coolness. He declined to have his eyes bound up.

"Make ready!" said the provost-marshal, and his guard cocked their arms at the *recover*, according to the position of those days.

"*Pardonnez moi*," said the unmoved chevalier; "I have a little request to make of you, M. le Prevot."

"What is it, sir?"

"Don't bury that devil of a friar near me."

"You mean your victim?"

"*Peste!* so you name an avaricious monk, who wanted fifty thousand francs all to himself."

"Your chaplain."

"Yes—so don't bury him near me, I say."

"Why, chevalier?"

"He might trouble me in the night, for he has been a worse fellow in life than I, and is not likely to sleep so sound in that dark hole as poor Jules de Cœurdefer; so now with your permission, I shall end this scene myself. Once more, *soldats, appretez-vous armes!*"

The muskets were levelled at him, and steadily he looked at the twenty iron tubes before him.

"*Joue!*" he added rapidly, "FEU!"

The report of twenty muskets rang sharply on the still morning air, and pierced by eleven bullets the chevalier fell dead.

His body, shattered and covered by the blood that spouted from his wounds, was lowered, while warm,

into the grave by the pioneers of the 51st; but before they covered it up, an officer stepped forward and took the cloak from his own shoulders to wrap up his miserable remains.

He who performed this last act of kindness to the earthly tenement of the wild and reckless spirit that had fled, was Allan Robertson of "Ours," the *soi-disant* Mousquetaire Gris.