

VIII.

ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN GRANT.

COLQUHOUN GRANT, a captain of one of our battalion companies during the Peninsular war, was a hardy, active, strong, and handsome Highlander, from the wooded mountains that overlook Strathspey. Inured from childhood to the hardships and activity incidental to a life in the country of the clans, where the care of vast herds of sheep and cattle, or the pursuit of the wild deer from rock to rock, and from hill to hill, are the chief occupations of the people;—a deadly shot with either musket or pistol, and a complete swordsman, he was every way calculated to become an ornament to our regiment and to the service. General Sir William Napier, in the fourth volume of his "History of the Peninsular War," writes of him as "Colquhoun Grant, that celebrated scouting officer, in whom the utmost *daring* was so mixed with subtlety of genius, and both so tempered by *discretion*, that it is difficult to say which quality predominated."

In the spring of 1812, when Lord Wellington crossed the Tagus, and entered Castello Branco, rendering the position of Marshal Marmont so perilous that he retired across the Agueda, by which the general of the allies, though his forces were spread over a vast extent of cantonments, was enabled to victual

the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Alameda, the 42nd, or old Black Watch, were with the division of Lieutenant-General Grahame, of Lynedoch. The service battalion consisted of 1160 rank and file, and notwithstanding the fatigues of marching by day and night, of fording rivers above the waist-belt, and all those arduous operations by which Wellington so completely baffled and out-generalled Marmont in all his attempts to attack Rodrigo—movements in which the sagacity of the “Iron Duke” appeared so remarkable, that a brave old Highland officer (General Stewart of Garth) declared his belief that their leader had the *second sight*,—not a man of our regiment straggled or fell to the rear, from hunger, weariness, or exhaustion; all were with the colours when the roll was called in the morning.

The information that enabled Wellington to execute those skilful manœuvres which dazzled all Europe, and confounded, while they baffled, the French marshal, was supplied from time to time by Colquhoun Grant, who, accompanied by Domingo de Leon, a Spanish peasant, had the boldness to remain in rear of the enemy’s lines, watching all their operations, and noting their numbers; and it is a remarkable fact that while on this most dangerous service he constantly wore *the Highland uniform, with his bonnet and epaulettes*; thus, while acting as a scout, freeing himself from the accusation of being in any way a spy, “for,” adds Napier, “he never would assume any disguise, and yet frequently remained for three days concealed in the midst of Marmont’s camp.”

Hence the secret of Wellington’s facility for circumventing Marmont was the information derived from Colquhoun Grant; and the secret of Grant’s ability for baffling the thousand snares laid for him:

by the French, was simply that he had a Spanish love, who watched over his safety with all a woman’s wit, and the idolatry of a Spanish woman, who, when she loves, sees but *one* man in the world—the object of her passion.

When Marmont was advancing, Wellington despatched Captain Grant to watch his operations “in the heart of the French army,” and from among its soldiers to glean whether they really had an intention of succouring the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo—a desperate duty, which, like many others, our hero undertook without delay or doubt.

Thus, on an evening in February, Grant found himself on a solitary mountain of Leon, overlooking the vast plain of Salamanca, on the numerous spires and towers of which the light of eve was fading, while the gilded vanes of the cathedral shone like stars in the deep blue sky that was darkening as the sun set behind the hills; and one of those hot dry days peculiar to the province gave place to a dewy twilight, when the Tormes, which rises among the mountains of Salamanca, and washes the base of the triple hill on which the city stands, grew white and pale, as it wandered through plains dotted by herds of Merino sheep, but destitute of trees, until it vanished on its course towards the Douro, on the frontiers of Portugal.

Exhausted by a long ride from Lord Wellington’s head-quarters, and by numerous efforts he had made to repress the cordon of picquets and patrols by which the French—now on his track—had environed him, Grant lay buried in deep sleep, under the shade of some olive-trees, with a brace of pistols in his belt, his claymore by his side, and his head resting in the lap of a beautiful Spanish peasant girl, Juanna, the

sister of his faithful Leon, a warm-hearted, brave, and affectionate being, who, like her brother, had attached herself to the favourite scouting officer of Wellington, and, full of admiration for his adventurous spirit, handsome figure, and winning manner, loved him with all the ardour, romance, and depth of which a Spanish girl of eighteen is capable.

Juanna de Leon and her brother Domingo were the children of a wealthy farmer and vine-dresser, who dwelt on the mountainous range known as the Puerto del Pico, which lies southward of Salamanca; but the vines had been destroyed, the *granja* burned, and the poor old agriculturist was bayoneted on his hearthstone by some Voltigeurs of Marmont, under a Lieutenant Armand, when on a foraging expedition. Thus Juanna and her brother were alike homeless and kinless.

The girl was beautiful. Youth lent to her somewhat olive-tinted cheek a ruddy glow that enhanced the dusky splendour of her Spanish eyes; her lashes were long; her mouth small, and like a cherry; her chin dimpled; her hands were faultless, as were her ankles, which were cased in prettily embroidered red stockings, and gilt zapatas. With all these attractions she had a thousand winning ways, such as only a girl of Leon can possess. Close by lay the guitar and castanets with which she played and sung her weary lover to sleep.

Her brother was handsome, athletic, and resolute, in eye and bearing; but since the destruction of their house, he had become rather fierce and morose, as hatred of the invading French and a thirst for vengeance were ever uppermost in his mind. He had relinquished the vine-bill for the musket; his yellow sash bristled with pistols and daggers; and with

heaven for his roof, and his brown Spanish mantle for a couch, he had betaken himself to the mountains, where he shot without mercy every straggling Frenchman who came within reach of his terrible aim.

While Grant slept, the tinkling of the vesper bells was borne across the valley, the sunlight died away over the mountains, and the winding Tormes, that shone like the coils of a vast snake, faded from the plain. The Spanish girl stooped and kissed her toil-worn lover's cheek, and bent her keen dark eyes upon the mountain path by which she seemed to expect a visitor.

One arm was thrown around the curly head of the sleeper, and her fingers told her beads as she prayed over him; but her prayers were *not* for herself.

Innocent and single-hearted Juanna!

Suddenly there was a sound of footsteps, and a handsome young Spaniard, wearing a brown capa gathered over his arm, shouldering a long musket to which a leather sling was attached, and having his coal black hair gathered behind in a red silk net, sprang up the rocks towards the olive-grove, and approached Juanna and the sleeper. The new comer was her brother.

"Domingo, your tidings?" she asked, breathlessly.

"They are evil; so wake your Senor Capitano without delay."

"I am awake," said Grant, rising at the sound of his voice. "Thanks, dearest Juanna; have I been so cruel as to keep you here in the cold dew—and watch me, too?"

"Caro mio!"

"It *was* cruel of me; but I have been so weary that nature was quite overcome. And now, Domingo, my *bueno camarado*, for your tidings?"

"I would speak first of the Marshal Marmont."

"And then?"

"Of yourself, *senor*."

"Bravo! let us have the Marshal first, by all means."

"I have been down the valley, and across the plain, almost to the gates of Salamanca," said the young *paisano*, leaning on his musket, and surveying, first, his sister with tender interest, and then, Grant with a dubious and anxious expression, for he loved him too, but trembled for the sequel to the stranger's passion for the beautiful Juanna. "I have been round the vicinity of the city from Monte Rubio and Villares to the bridge of Santa Marta on the Tormes—"

"And you have learned?" said Grant, impetuously.

"That scaling-ladders have been prepared in great numbers, for I saw them. Vast quantities of provision and ammunition on mules have been brought from the Pyrenees, and Marmont is sending everything—ladders, powder, and bread—towards—"

"Not Ciudad Rodrigo and Alameda."

"Si, *senor*."

"The devil! You are sure of this?"

"I counted twenty scaling-ladders, each five feet wide, and reckoned forty mules, each bearing fourteen casks of ball cartridges."

"Good—I thank you, Domingo," said Grant, taking paper from a pocket-book, and making a hasty note or memorandum for Lord Wellington.

"Ay—Dios mi terra!" said Juanna, with a soft sigh, as she dropped her head upon Grant's shoulder, and Domingo kissed her brow.

"Now, where is Manrico el Barbado?" asked the captain, as he securely gummed the secret note.

"Within call," said Domingo, giving a shrill whistle.

A sound like the whirr of a partridge replied, and then a strong and ferocious-looking peasant, bare legged, and bare necked, with an enormous black beard (whence came his soubriquet of *el Barbado*), sprang up the rocks and made a profound salute to Grant, who was beloved and adored by all the guerrillas, banditti, and wild spirits whom the French had unhoused and driven to the mountains; and among these his name was a proverb for all that was gallant, reckless, and chivalresque.

"Is your mule in good condition, Manrico?"

"He was never better, *senor*."

"Then ride with *this* to Lord Wellington; spare neither whip nor spur, and he will repay you handsomely."

"And how about yourself, *senor*?"

"Say to his lordship that I will rejoin him as early and as I best may."

The Spanish scout concealed the note in *his beard* with great ingenuity, and knowing well that he could thus pass the French lines with confidence, and defy all search, he departed on his journey to the British head-quarters; and the information thus received from Grant enabled the leader of the allies to take such measures as completely to outflank Marmont, and baffle his attempts upon Alameda and the city of Rodrigo.

"So much for my friend Marmont," said Grant, "and now, Domingo, for *myself*."

"Read this," said Domingo, handing to him a document; "I stabbed the French sentinel at the bridge of Santa Marta, and tore this paper from the guard-house door."

It proved to be a copy of a General Order, addressed by Marmont to the colonels of the French regiments, "saying" (to quote General Napier) "that the notorious Grant, being within the circle of their cantonments, the soldiers were to use their utmost exertions to secure him; for which purpose guards were also to be placed, as it were, in a circle round the army."

"Caro mio, read this to me," whispered Juanna.

He translated it, and terror filled the dilating eyes of the Spanish girl; her breath came thick and fast, and she crept closer to the breast of her lover, who smiled and kissed her cheek to reassure her.

"Have you closely examined all the country?" he asked Domingo.

"I have, señor."

"Well?"

"There is but *one* way back to Lord Wellington's head-quarters."

"And that is—"

"At the ford of Huerta on the Tormes."

"Six miles below Salamanca?"

"Yes."

"I will cross the ford, then."

"But a French battalion occupies the town."

"I care not if ten battalions occupied it—I *must* even ride the ford as I find it; 'tis a saying in my country, Domingo, where I hope our dear Juanna will one day smile with me, when we talk of sunny Spain and these wild adventures."

"No—no—you will never leave Spain," said Juanna, with a merry smile. "Your poor Spanish girl could never go to the land of the Inglesos, where the sun shines but once in a year—not once every day, as it does here in beautiful Leon: but say no

more of this, or I shall sing *Ya no quiero amores*," &c., and, taking up her guitar, she sang with a winning drollery of expression which made her piquant loveliness a thousand times more striking:—

"My love no more to England—to England now shall roam,

For I have a better, fonder love—a truer love at home!

If I should visit England,

I hope to find them true;

For a love like mine deserves a wreath!

Green and immortal too!

But, O! they are proud, those English dames, to all who thither roam,

And I have a better, dearer love—a truer love at home!"

"You have *me*, Juanna—dearest Juanna!" exclaimed Grant, tenderly, as he kissed her.

"And now for Huerta," said Domingo, slapping the butt of his musket impatiently; "the moon will be above the Pico del Puerto in half an hour—vaya—let us begone."

Grant placed Juanna on the saddle of his horse, a fine, fleet, and active jennet presented to him by Lord Wellington, and led it by the bridle, while Domingo slung his musket, and followed thoughtfully behind, as they descended the hill with the intention of seeking the banks of the Tormes; but making a wide detour towards the ford. The moon was shining on the river when they came in sight of Huerta, a small village, through which passes the road from Salamanca to Madrid. A red glow at times shot from its tile works, showing the outlines of the flat-roofed cottages, and wavering on the olive-groves that overhung the river, which was here crossed by the ford. While Grant and Juanna remained concealed in a thicket of orange-trees in sight of Huerta, Domingo, whose god-father was a tile-burner in the town, went forward to

reconnoitre and make inquiries; and in less than twenty minutes he returned with a gloomy brow and excited eye.

"Well, Domingo, what news?" asked Grant, on whose shoulder the head of Juanna was drooping, for she was nearly overcome by sleep and fatigue.

"I have still evil news, Senor."

"Indeed."

"The French battalion occupies Huerta, and the main street is full of soldiers. Guards are placed at each end, and cavalry videttes are posted in a line along the river, patrolling constantly backwards and forwards, for the space of three hundred yards, and two of these videttes meet always *at the ford*, consequently, be assured, they know that you are on *this* side of the Tormes."

"The deuce!" muttered Grant, biting his lips. "M. le Maréchal Marmont is determined to take me this time, I fear; but I *will* cross the ford, Domingo, in the face of the enemy too! Better die a soldier's death under their fire, than fall alive into their hands."

"A soldier's death, and a sudden one, is sure to follow, Senor Capitano," added Domingo, gloomily, and poor Grant was not without anxiety for the issue. He thought of Juanna, and some recollection of the ignominious fate of the gallant Major André, when found beyond the American lines, under similar circumstances, may have flashed upon his memory.

"Do not weep, Juanna," said he to the Spanish girl, who strove to dissuade him from attempting the ford; "your tears only distress and unman me, when all my courage is wanted."

"Caro mio, if you love me, stay, for you cannot

deceive me as to the peril—it is great—and if taken, what mercy can you expect from Marshal Marmont?"

"But I will *never* be taken, alive at least," responded the Highlander, with a fierce and sorrowful embrace; "'tis better to die than be taken, and perhaps have the uniform I wear—the uniform of the old Black Watch—disgraced by a death at the hands of a provost marshal."

The young Spanish girl caught the fiery enthusiasm of her lover, and nerved herself for the struggle, and for their consequent separation; but Domingo had once more to examine the ground and so many points were to be considered, that day began to brighten on the Pico del Puerto and the Sierras of Gredos and Gata, before Grant mounted his horse; and by that time, the French drums had beaten *reveille*, and the whole battalion was under arms at its alarm-post, a greensward behind the tile-works. Juanna and her lover parted with promises of mutual regard and remembrance until they met again.

"When will it be—oh, when will it be?" she moaned.

"In God's appointed time—quando Dios sera servido," replied Grant. "Farewell, Juanna mia, a thousand kisses and adieux to you."

"Bueno—away!" said Domingo, taking Grant's horse by the bridle—"away before day is quite broken!"

As they hurried off, Juanna threw herself on her knees in the thicket, and prayed to God and Madonna for her lover. She covered her beautiful head with that thick mantle usually worn by the women of Leon, to shut out every sound; but lo! there came a loud, yet distinct shout from the river's bank, and

then a confused discharge of firearms that rang sharply in the clear morning air.

"O Madonna mia!" exclaimed the Spanish girl, and with a shriek she threw herself upon her face among the grass.

Meanwhile Grant had proceeded in rear of the tile-works, close by where the French regiment was paraded in close column at quarter distance, and so near was he, that he could hear the sergeants of companies calling the roll; but a group of peasants assembled by Domingo, remained around his horse, with their broad sombreros and brown cloaks, to conceal it from the French, along *whose front* he had to pass to reach the ford. From the gable of a cottage, he had a full view of the latter—the Tormes brawling over its bed of rocks and pebbles, with the open plain that lay beyond, and the two French videttes, helmeted and cloaked, with carbine on thigh, patrolling to and fro, to the distance of three hundred yards apart, but meeting at the ford.

"Their figures seem dark and indistinct, in the starry light of the morning," said Grant.

"But we know them to be dragoons," said Domingo.

"Si, senores," added the brother of Manrico el Barbado; "from this you may perceive that their helmets and horses are afrancesado."

"Frenchified—yes; now when I whistle, let go my horse's head, and do you, my good friends in front, withdraw to give me space, for now the videttes are about to part, and I must make at dash at it!"

At the moment when the patrols were separated to their fullest extent, and each was one hundred and fifty yards from the ford, Grant dashed spurs into his horse, and with his sword in his teeth and a cocked

pistol in each hand, crossed the river by three furious bounds of his horse. Receiving without damage the fire of both carbines, he replied with his pistols, giving each of the dragoons a flying-shot to the rear, but without injuring either of them. There was an instantaneous and keen pursuit; but he completely baffled it by his great knowledge of the country, and reached a cork-wood in safety, where he was soon joined by Domingo de Leon, who, being attired as a peasant, and unknown to the French, was permitted to pass their lines unquestioned.

Marmont's rage on Grant's escape was great; the sentinels at the ford were severely punished, and the officer commanding the regiment in Huerta was deprived of his cross of the Legion of Honour. Grant was not satisfied with the extent of his observations, for he became desirous of furnishing Lord Wellington with still further intelligence.

From the conversations of French officers whom he had overheard, he made ample notes, and proved that means to storm Ciudad Rodrigo were prepared; but he was resolved to judge for himself of the direction in which Marmont meant to move, and also to see his whole division on the line of march. For this purpose he daringly concealed himself among some copice on the brow of a hill near the secluded village of Tamames, which is celebrated for its mineral springs, and lies thirty-two miles south-west of Salamanca. There he sat, note-book in hand, with Leon, smoking a cigar, and lounging on the grass, while his jennet, unbitted, was quietly grazing close by, and the whole of Marmont's brilliant division, cuirassiers, lancers, infantry, artillery, and voltigeurs defiled with drums beating, tricolours waving, and eagles glittering through the pass below; and Grant's skillful eye counted every cannon

and reckoned over every horse and man, with a correctness which astonished even Lord Wellington. The moment the rear-guard had passed, he mounted, and although in his uniform, rode boldly into the village of Tamames, where he found all the scaling ladders left behind. With tidings of this fact, and the strength of Marmont's army, he at once despatched a letter to Wellington, by Manrico el Barbado, who, as before, concealed it under his nether-jaw; and this letter, which informed the allies that the preparations to storm Rodrigo were, after all, a pompous *feint*, allayed their leader's fear for that fortress, and to Marmont's inexpressible annoyance, enabled him to turn attention to other quarters,

Fearless, indefatigable, and undeterred by the dangers he had undergone, Grant *preceded* Marmont (when that officer passed the Coa) and resolved to discover whether his march would be by the duchy of Guarda upon Coimbra, the land of Olives; or by the small frontier town of Sabugal, upon Castello Branco, which stands upon the Lira, a tributary of the Tagus, and still displays the ruins of the Roman Albicastrum from which it takes its name.

Castello Branco is a good military position; but to reach it, a descent was necessary from one of those lofty sierras that run along the frontier of Portuguese Estramadura, and are jagged by bare and sunburned rocks, or dotted by stunted laurel bushes. From thence, he traversed a pass, at the lower end of which stands the town of Penamacor in the province of Beira, thirty-six miles north-east of Castello Branco. There, our adventurous Highlander, accompanied by Manrico el Barbado and the faithful Domingo de Leon, concealed himself in a thicket of dwarf-oaks; and there a very remarkable adventure occurred to

him, while waiting the approach of the French, whose advanced guard he hourly expected to see in the dark mountain pass below. Their horses were beside them.

Wrapped in their cloaks, the captain and his two Spanish comrades, after a supper of broiled eggs—*huevos estrallados*—sat by a fire of leaves and withered branches, and after sharing a bottle of vino de Alicant, composed themselves to sleep—a state of oblivion soon obtained by the two sturdy paisanos; but Grant remained unusually restless, thoughtful and awake. His mind was full of other times and past events—of distant scenes and old familiar faces. He thought of his home, of the regiment, and of Juanna, whom he had left at Huerta; and as the red sunset deepened into night upon that lofty mass of rock which is washed by the Eljas and crowned by the picturesque houses, the strong fortifications, and the three churches of Penamacor, the light and shadow blended into one, and darkness came broadly and steadily on; then a strange and mysterious sensation of sadness stole over him—a solemn melancholy which he strove in vain to account for and dispel.

At last, when about to drop asleep, about ten o'clock, he started up, for a broad blaze of light illumined all the citadel of Penamacor. He saw its solid ramparts and the sharp spires of its three churches standing in black and bold relief against the unwonted glow that filled the sky above the city; he heard the clanging of an alarm-bell, the hum of voices, and the tread of feet, as two vast and dark columns of infantry debouched from the pass and began to descend the mountains towards the bridge of the Eljas.

"The enemy—the enemy!" he exclaimed. "Up, Domingo—Manrico, awake!"

Roused by his voice they sprang to his side; but lo! at that moment, the light faded away from the citadel; the sounds of the alarm-bell, the hum of distant voices, and tread of marching feet died away; the columns vanished, and the hollow way from the pass to the river was lonely and silent as before, in the clear light of the star-studded sky!

Of all these alarming sights and sounds, Manrico and Domingo had seen and heard nothing!

"It was a dream!" said Grant, as he threw himself on the sward in alarm and perplexity, while his heart beat wildly and strangely—and for the remainder of that night sleep never closed his eyes. The three wanderers passed the whole of the next day lurking in the oak woods that overhang the pass of Penamacor, and Domingo, who, after sunset, ventured into the town for some provisions for supper, returned to say that *no* lights had been burned, and *no* alarm had been given last night, as *no* fear was entertained of the approach of Marmont.

Night again drew on, and the three companions were all alike watchful and awake.

The hour of ten began to toll from the bells of Penamacor. At the first stroke Grant felt a nervous sensation thrill over his whole body, while the same solemn melancholy of the same time last night again weighed down his heart.

At the tenth stroke, lo! a brilliant light flashed across the sky. It shot upward from the citadel of Penamacor! Again, as before, the crenelated battlements and the sharp spires of the three churches stood darkly out from the blaze, which was streaked by the ascent of hissing rockets; again the alarm-bell sent its iron clangour on the wind, but mingled with the boom of cannon; again came the hum of voices,

and again two dark and shadowy columns debouched from the black jaws of the mountain gorge and descended towards the bridge of the Eljas; but this time there came horse and artillery; the uplifted lances and the fixed bayonets gleamed back the star-light, while the rumble of the shot-laden tumbrils rang in the echoing valley.

"Madre de Dios! the enemy!" exclaimed the two Spaniards, starting to their muskets.

"What! do you, too, see all this?" exclaimed Grant, wildly, as he smote his forehead; for now he had begun to distrust the evidence of his own senses, and a horror that these mysterious visions, known in Scotland as *the second sight*, were about to haunt him, made his head reel.

"See them—yes, senor, plain as if 'twas day," said Domingo.

"O! senor capitano, 'tis the French—the French! the ladrones los perros!" exclaimed Manrico, rashly firing his musket at three or four soldiers, whose outline, with shako and knapsack, appeared on a little ridge close by. Four muskets, discharged at random, replied, and in a moment the three scouts found themselves fighting hand to hand with a mob of active little French voltigeurs.

The latter recognised the Highland uniform of Grant, and finding him with two Spaniards, knew him at once to be the famous scouting officer, for whose arrest, dead or alive, Marmont had offered such a princely reward, and uttering loud shouts, they pressed upon him with bayonets fixed, and muskets clubbed.

Strong, active, and fearless, he hewed them down with his claymore on all sides. He shot two with his pistols, and then hurled the empty weapons at the

heads of others, and, with Leon, succeeded in mounting and galloping off; but Manrico was beaten down, and left insensible on the mountain side.

"Grant and his follower," says General Napier, "darted into the wood for a little space, and then, suddenly wheeling, rode off in different directions; but at every turn new enemies appeared, and at last the hunted men, dismounting, fled on foot, through the thickest part of the low oaks, until they were again met by infantry detached in small parties down the sides of the pass, and directed in their chase by the waving of the French officers' hats on the ridge above. (Day had now broken). Leon fell exhausted, and the barbarians who first came up killed him, in spite of his companion's entreaties."

"My poor Juanna, what will now become of you?" exclaimed Grant, on seeing his faithful Domingo expiring under the reeking bayonets of the voltigeurs; and now, totally incapable of further resistance, he gave up his sword to an officer, who protected him from the fury of his captors. He was at last a prisoner!

A few days after this, Manrico, covered with wounds and with one arm in a sling, appeared sorrowfully before Lord Wellington, to announce that Grant, "el valoroso capitano," had been taken, after a desperate conflict in the pass of Penamacor. Lord Wellington was greatly concerned for the safety of his favourite officer, and the greatest excitement prevailed in the ranks of his regiment, for Colquhoun Grant was well beloved by the soldiers of the Black Watch. To the guerilla chiefs Wellington offered a thousand dollars for the rescue of Grant, and his letters proclaiming this reward were borne by Manrico and the broken-hearted Juanna through some of the wildest and most

dangerous parts of the frontier; but Marmont took his measures too well, and kept his valuable prisoner too securely guarded, for rescue or escape to be thought of.

The officer who had captured him, M. Armand, was a young sous-lieutenant of the 3rd Voltigeurs (the same who had destroyed the *granja* of Leon the farmer); but he had a heart that would have done honour to a marshal of the empire; and, with all kindness and respect, he conducted him to the quarters of the Marshal Duc de Raguse.

The latter invited the captive to dinner, and chatted with him in a friendly way about his bold and remarkable adventures, saying that he (Marmont) had been long on the watch for him; that he knew his companions, Manrico the Bearded, Leon and his sister Juanna (here Grant trembled), and that all his haunts and disguises were known too.

"Disguises—pardon me, M. le Maréchal," said Grant, warmly—"disguises are worn by spies; I have never worn other dress than the uniform and tartan of my regiment."

"Vrai Dieu! the bolder fellow you!" exclaimed the Duc de Raguse. "You are aware that I might hang you; but I love a brave spirit, and shall only exact from you a special parole, that you will not *consent* to be released by any partida or guerilla chief on your journey between this and France."

"Monseigneur le Duc, the exaction of this parole is the greatest compliment you can pay me," replied Grant, who, on finding matters desperate, gave his word of honour, and was next day sent towards the Pyrenees with a French guard, under M. Armand, his captor. Grant, without suspicion, was bearer of a treacherous letter to the Governor of Bayonne, in

which he was designated by Marmont "a treacherous spy, who had done infinite mischief to the French army, and who was not executed on the spot out of respect for *something resembling a uniform* (i.e., the Scottish dress) which he wore; but he (Marmont) desired that at Bayonne Grant should be placed IN IRONS, and sent up to Paris." (*Peninsular War*, vol. iv.)

On the first night of his march to the rear, M. Armand halted in a grove of cork and beech-trees, within a mile of Medellin, on the Guadiana—the birth-place of Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico; but as a guerilla chief with 5000 desperadoes held possession of the town and bridge, our lieutenant of Voltigeurs, with his prisoner and escort, were forced to content themselves with such shelter as the light foliage of the wood afforded.

The night was pitchy dark; the blackness that involved the sky, the mountains, the vale through which the Guadiana wound, and the wood where our travellers bivouacked, was palpable, painful, and oppressive; but at times it was varied by the red sheet lightning which shot across the southern quarter of the sky, revealing the lofty Sierra, whose sharp peaks arose afar off like the waves of a black sea, and the stems and foliage of the cork and beech-trees in the foreground.

On this night occurred the most horrible episode of Grant's military adventures.

After having drained their canteens of Lisbon wine, and discussed their ration of cold beef and commissariat biscuit, Grant and Armand, the voltigeur, lay down fraternally side by side in their cloaks to repose; their escort lay close by, long since asleep; for Grant had given his parole that he "would not attempt to escape," and such were their ideas of mili-

tary honour and value for a soldier's word, that these brave Frenchmen never doubted him.

Just as the two officers were about to sleep, they became aware of various cold and dewy drops, or clammy creeping things, that continued to fall upon them from the beech trees overhead.

"Sangleu!" exclaimed the lieutenant of Voltigeurs; "we are all over creepers or cockroaches, and they drop like rain from this old beech upon us."

"Let us seek another tree, my friend," said Grant, drowsily; "one place is the same as another to me now."

"Diable! let us shift our camp then—but do you smell the lightning? It must have scorched the grass."

"Why?"

"There is a stench so overpowering here on every breath of wind."

Moving a few paces to their left, they lay down at the root of another beech tree; but there the same cold dewy drops seemed to distil upon them like rain; yet the night was hot, dry, and sultry; and ever and anon there fell those hideous creepers, whose slimy touch caused emotions of horror.

"Tudieu!" shouted the Frenchman, springing up again; "I cannot stand this! We had better have beaten up the guerillas in their quarters at Medellin. Holo, Corporal Touchet—flash off your musket, and let us see what the devil is in these trees!"

Roused thus, the corporal of the escort cocked his piece; and as he fired, the two officers watched the beeches in the sudden and lightning-like gleam that flashed from the muzzle.

Lo! the dark figure of a dead man swung from a branch, about twelve feet above them!

“Ouf!” said the voltigeur, with a shudder of horror.

“These beeches bear strange nuts,” said Grant, as they hastily left the wood, and passed the remainder of the night on the open sward in front of it. When day dawned, Grant went back to examine the places where they had first attempted to sleep. The corpses of a man having a voluminous beard, and a woman with a profusion of long and silky hair, were suspended from the branches; and, as they swung mournfully and fearfully round in the morning wind, the crows flew away with an angry croak, and a cry of horror burst from the lips of Grant on recognising Manrico el Barbado and—*Juanna de Leon!*

* * * *

Three weeks after this, Colquhoun Grant saw the long blue outline of the Pyrenees undulating before him, as he approached the frontier of France, a country for which he had now the greatest horror; and during the whole march from Medellin towards Bayonne, the young subaltern of Voltigeurs experienced the greatest trouble with his prisoner, on whom that frightful episode in the cork wood had left a dreadful impression.

In his hatred and animosity to France and everything French, Grant, from that hour had resolved, that though he could not with honour attempt to escape while in Spain, he would spare no exertion or trouble, no cunning or coin, to leave France, and return once more to find himself sword in hand before the ranks of Marshal Marmont, whom he now viewed as the assassin of that poor maiden of Leon.

As they approached Bayonne, he took an early opportunity of deliberately tearing open the sealed letter which the marshal had given him for the Governor of

that fortress, and made himself master of its contents. Instead of finding its tenor complimentary and commendatory as he had been told, he saw himself therein designated as a “dangerous spy who had done infinite mischief to the French army,” and who should be marched in fetters to Paris, where no doubt tortures such as those to which Captain Wright was subjected in the Temple, or a death on the scaffold awaited him! The contents of this letter more than released him from any parole.

“Oho, M. le Duc de Raguse, is this your game?” said Grant, as he tore the letter into the smallest bits, and buried them in a hole. “Let me see if I cannot make a Highland head worth a pair of French heels.”

Arrived at Bayonne, Lieutenant Armand presented him to the governor and bade him adieu. Then Grant confidently requested, in the usual way, to be furnished with a passport for Verdun, the greatest military prison in France. This the governor at once granted him, little suspecting that he meant to commence an escape the moment he left the garrison. Aware that, guarded as all the avenues from Bayonne and the Pyrenean passes were by French troops of every kind, flight towards Spain was impossible, he resolved to make the attempt in the *opposite*, and consequently less to be suspected, direction. The moment he left the governor’s quarters, Grant quietly put the passport in the fire, and repairing to the suburb of St. Esprit, which, from time immemorial has been the quarter of the Portuguese Jews, he sold his silver epaulettes and richly-laced Highland uniform, to a dealer in old garments, and received in lieu the plain frogged surtout, forage cap, and sabre of a French staff-officer; he stuck the cross of the Legion

of Honour at his button-hole, and after promenading along the superb quay, after repairing boldly to the "Eagle of France," an hotel in the Place de Grammont, he ordered an omelette and a bottle of vin ordinaire with all the air of a Garde Imperiale and sat down to dinner.

Inquiring of the waiter "if there were any officers in the house about to proceed to Paris?" he was told that "M. le General Souham was about to leave that very night." Grant procured a card, and writing thereon *Captain O'Reilly, Imperial Service*, sent it up, and was at once introduced to old Souham, who was just about to start, and was in the act of buckling on his sabre.

"Captain O'Reilly," said he, frowning at the name, and glancing round for a French Army List, but fortunately none was at hand.

"Of what regiment?"

"Lacy's disbanded battalion of the Irish Brigade."

"Ah! And in what can I serve you, monsieur?"

"Allowing me to join your party about to proceed to Paris."

"You do me infinite honour, M. O'Reilly."

"Thanks, general."

"From whence have you come?"

"The banks of the Coa."

"Sacre! the banks of the Coa!"

"Yes; I am attached to the staff of M. le Duc de Raguse."

"Ah! old Marmont. Peste! he is my greatest friend. M. Armand of the 3rd Voltigeurs brought me a letter from him, in which he says that a dear friend of his would join me on my way to Paris."

"How kind of brave Marmont," said Grant; "he never forgets me."

"So he has captured the notorious Scaramouche, Captain Grant?"

"Yes; a wonderful fellow that!"

"Quite a devil of a man; allons, let us go; you have a horse of course?"

"No, M. le General."

"One of mine is at your service."

"Mille baionettes! You quite overwhelm me."

In half an hour after this, Grant, with Souham and two other French officers had crossed the wooden draw-bridge of Bayonne, and left the citadel of M. Vauban with all its little redoubts in their rear, as they all rode merrily *en route* to Paris; Souham by the way telling twenty incredible stories of Wellington's prince of scouts, the Scottish Captain Grant. In a house of entertainment in the Rue Royale at Orleans, Grant fortunately made the acquaintance of a man who proved to be an agent in the secret service of the British Government. This person furnished him with money and a letter to another secret agent who lived in an obscure part of Paris, where he arrived, still disguised as an officer in the suite of General Souham, and as such, for a time, he visited all the theatres, the gardens, the operas; and all splashed and travel-stained, as fresh from the seat of war, was presented to the great Emperor, who patronizingly spoke to him of the probability of restoring Lacy's Irish Regiment, "by recruiting for it among the Irish in the prisons of Bitche and Verdun, in which case his services would not be forgotten," &c., "and his promotion to a majority would be duly remembered," &c. &c. Grant could not foresee that in *three* years after this, the old Black Watch, after raising the cry of "Scotland for ever" at Waterloo, would make the Tuileries ring to their Highland

pipes, and that he would actually compose the well-known parody—

“Wha keep guard at Versailles and Marli,
Wha, but the lads wi’ the bannocks of barley?”

He spoke French with fluency, having been a pupil of the famous Jean Paul Marat, when that notable ruffian taught French in Edinburgh, where, in 1774 he published a work entitled “The Chains of Slavery.”

Grant thanked the Emperor, and thinking that the daring joke had been carried quite far enough, he doffed his French uniform, sabre and all, and making a bundle thereof, flung the whole into the Seine one night. Then, attiring himself in an unpretending blouse, he repaired to the house of the secret agent, presented his letter, and obtained more money to enable him to reach Britain.

“Monsieur is in luck,” said the agent; “I have just ascertained that a passport is lying at the foreign office for an American who died, or was found dead this morning.”

“How is your American named?”

“Monsieur Jonathan Buck.”

“Very good—thanks! From this very hour I am Jonathan Buck,” said the reckless Grant. He reloaded his pistols, concealed them in his breast, and repairing to the Foreign Office, demanded his passport with the coolness of a prince *incog*.

“Your name, monsieur?”

“M. Jonathan Buck,” drawled Grant through his nose.

The passport was handed to him at once, and long before the police could ascertain that Monsieur Buck had departed this life at 9 A.M., and yet had received his papers at 9 P.M., on the same day, our hero had

left Paris far behind him, and was travelling post towards the mouth of the Loire.

On reaching Nantes, he repaired at once to Paimbœuff, twenty miles further down the river, where all vessels, whose size was above ninety tons, usually unloaded their cargoes; and there he boarded the first vessel which had up the stars and stripes of America, and seemed ready for sea. She proved to be the *Ohio*, a fine bark of Boston, Jeremiah Buck, master.

“’Tis fortunate,” said Grant through his nose, as he was ushered into the cabin of the Yankee; “I am a namesake of yours, captain—Jonathan Buck, of Cape Cod, seeking a cabin passage to Boston.”

“All right—let me see your passport, stranger?”

“Here it is, skipper.”

“Well, for a hundred and fifty dollars, I am your man,” drawled the Boston captain, who was smoking a long Cuba; “but it *is* darned odd, stranger, that I have been expecting *another* Jonathan Buck, my own nephew, from Paris; he is in the fish and timber trade, and hangs out at old Nantucket; but he took a run up by the dilly to see the Toolerie, the Looover, and all that. Well, darn my eyes, if this is not my nephew’s passport!” exclaimed the American suddenly, while his eyes flashed with anger and suspicion. “Stranger, how is this?”

In some anxiety, Grant frankly related how the document came into his possession, and produced the letters of the secret agent, proving who he was, beseeching the captain, as a man come of British blood and kindred, to assist him; for, if taken by the French, the dungeon of Verdun or Bitche, or worse, perhaps, awaited him.

The Yankee paused, and chewed a quid by which he had replaced his cigar. Full of anxiety, yet without fear, Grant summoned all his philosophy, and

recalled the words of Bossuet, "That human life resembles a road which ends in frightful precipices. We are told of this at the first step we take ; but our *destiny* is fixed, and we *must* proceed."

Natural sorrow for the loss of his relative, and the native honesty of an American seaman, united to open the heart of the captain to our wanderer, and he agreed to give him a passage in the *Ohio* to Boston, from whence he could reach Britain more readily than from the coast of France, watched and surrounded as it was by ships and gunboats, troops and gens d'armes, police, spies, passports, &c. Believing all arranged at last, Grant never left the ship, but counted every hour until he should again find himself in Leon, the land of his faithful Juanna, with his comrades of the Black Watch around him, and the eagles of Marmont in front.

At last came the important hour, when the anchor of the *Ohio* was fished ; when her white canvas filled, and the stars and stripes of America swelled proudly from her gaff-peak, as she bore down the sun-lit Loire with the evening tide ; but now an unlooked-for misfortune took place. A French privateer, the famous *Jean Bart*, ran foul of her, and, by carrying away her bowsprit and foremast, brought down her maintopmast too. Thus she was forced to run back to Paimbœuff and haul into dock.

For our disguised captain of the 42nd Highlanders to remain in the docks, guarded as they were by watchful gens-d'armes, was impossible ; thus, on being furnished by the skipper of the *Ohio* with the coarse clothes of a mariner, and a written character, stating that he was "Nathan Prowse, a native of Nantucket, in want of a ship," he stained his face and hands with tobacco-juice, shaved off his moustache, and repaired

to an obscure tavern in the suburbs of Paimbœuff, to find a lodging until an opportunity offered for his escape. Under his peajacket he carried a pair of excellent pistols, which he kept constantly loaded ; and a fine dagger or Albacete knife, a gift of poor Domingo de Leon.

As he sat in the kitchen of this humble house of entertainment, his eye was caught by a printed placard above the mantelpiece. It bore the imperial arms, with the cipher of the Emperor, and stated that "the notorious spy Colquhoun Grant, a captain in a Scottish regiment of the British army, who had wrought so much mischief behind the lines of le Maréchal Duc de Raguse, in Leon, and who had been brought prisoner to France, where he had broken his parole, was wandering about, maintaining a system of espionage and Protean disguises ; that he had, lastly, assumed the name, character, and passport of an American citizen, named Jonathan Buck, whom he had wickedly and feloniously murdered and robbed in the Rue de Rivoli at Paris ; that the sum of 2,000 francs was hereby offered for him dead or alive ; and that all prefects, officers, civil and military, gens-d'armes, and loyal subjects of the Emperor, by sea and land, were hereby authorized to seize or kill the said Colquhoun Grant wherever and whenever they found him."

With no small indignation and horror, the Highlander read this obnoxious placard, which contained so much that wore the face of truth, with so much that was unquestionably false.

"So Buck, whose papers I have appropriated, has been murdered—poor devil!" was his first reflection ; "what if the honest skipper of the *Ohio* should see this precious document and suspect *me*? In that case I should be altogether lost."

He retired from the vicinity of this formidable placard, fearing that some watchful eye might compare his personal appearance with the description it contained; though his costume, accent, and the fashion of his whiskers and beard altered his appearance so entirely that his oldest friends at the mess would not have recognised him. He hastily retired upstairs to a miserable garret, to think and watch, but not to sleep.

When loitering on the beach next evening, he entered into conversation with a venerable boatman, named Raoul Senebier, and an exchange of tobacco pouches at once established their mutual good-will. Grant said that "he was an American seaman out of a berth, and anxious to reach Portsmouth in England, where he had left his wife and children."

The boatman, an honest and unsuspecting old fellow, seemed touched by his story, and offered to row him to a small island at the mouth of the Loire, where British vessels watered unmolested, and in return allowed the poor inhabitants to fish and traffic without interruption.

"I can feel for you, my friend," said old Senebier; "for I was taken prisoner at the battle of Trafalgar, and was seven years in the souterrains of the *Château d'Edimbourg*, separated from my dear wife and little ones, and when I returned, I found them all lying in the churchyard of Paimbœuff."

"Dead—what, all?"

"All, all, save one—the plague, the plague!"

"Land me on the isle, then, and ten Napoleons shall be yours," said Grant, joyfully, and in twenty minutes after, they had left the crowded wharves, the glaring salt-pans which gleam on the left bank of the Loire, and all its maze of masts and laden lighters, as

they pulled down, with the flow of the stream and the ebb-tide together. The fisherman had his nets, floats, and fortunately some fish on board; so, if overhauled by any armed authority, he could pretend to have been at his ordinary avocation. They touched at the island, and were told by some of the inhabitants that not a British ship was in the vicinity, but that a French privateer, the terrible *Jean Bart*, was prowling about in these waters, and that the isle was consequently unsafe for any person who might be suspected of being a British subject; so, with a heart that began to sink, Grant desired old Raoul Senebier to turn his prow towards Paimbœuff.

Morning was now at hand, and the sun as he rose reddened with a glow of Italian brilliancy the tranquil banks of the Loire, and the sails of the fisher-craft that were running up the stream. No vessels were in sight, for terror of the British cruisers kept every French keel close in shore; but suddenly a large white sail appeared to the southward, and in the lingering and ardent hope that she was one of our Channel squadron, Grant prevailed upon Raoul to bear towards her. The wind became light, and all day the two men tugged at their oars, but still the ship was far off, and yet not so distant but that Grant, with a glistening eye and beating heart, could make out her scarlet ensign; when evening came on, and a strong current, which ran towards the Loire, gradually swept the boat towards the coast of France, and just as the sun set, old Raoul and the fugitive found themselves suddenly close to a low battery, a shot from which boomed across the water, raising it like a spout beyond them. Another and another followed, tearing the waves into foam close by.

"We must surrender, monsieur," said Raoul, wring-

ing his hands; "and I shall be brought in irons before M. le Prefect for aiding the escape of a prisoner of war."

"Call me your son," said Grant; "say we were fishing, and leave the rest to me."

"I have a son," said Raoul; "he escaped the plague by being where he is now, on board the *Jean Bart*."

They landed under the battery; a little corporal in the green uniform of a Voltigeur, with six men, conducted them with fixed bayonets before the officer in command. He was a handsome young man, and Grant in a moment recognised his former captor and companion, M. Armand, the sous-lieutenant of the 3rd Voltigeur Regiment.

"Milles demons! is this you, monsieur?" exclaimed Armand, who knew Grant at once.

"Exactly, Monsieur le Lieutenant," replied Grant, with admirable presence of mind; "'tis I, your old companion, Louis Senebier, captain of a gun aboard the *Jean Bart*, from which I have a day's liberty to fish with my father, old Raoul of Paimbœuff, whom you see before you here; but understanding that a rascally British cruiser is off the coast, we were just creeping close to the battery when monsieur fired at us."

"Is this true, M. Senebier?" asked Armand, with a knowing smile.

"All true; my son is said to be very like me," replied the old fisherman, astounded by the turn matters had taken.

"Like you? Not very, bon! But you may thank heaven that I am not M. le Prefect of the Loire. Leave us your fish, M. Senebier, and be off before darkness sets in. See," he added, with a furtive but

expressive glance at Grant; "see that you keep your worthy father clear of yonder British ship, which will just be abreast of the battery and two miles off about midnight."

Armand placed a bottle of brandy in the boat, and, while pretending to pay for the fish, pressed Grant's hand, wished him all success, and pointed out the bearings of the strange sail so exactly, that the moment darkness set fairly in, Raoul trimmed his lug sail and ran right on board of her; for her straight gun streak, her taper masts, and her snow-white canvas shone in the moonlight above the calm blue rippled sea, distinctly in the clear twilight of the stars.

"Boat ahoy!" cried a sentry from the quarter; "keep off, or I shall fire."

"What ship is that?" asked Grant, in whose ears a British voice sounded like some old mountain melody.

"His Britannic Majesty's frigate *Laurel*, of thirty-six guns."

"Hurrah!"

"Who the devil are you?"

"A prisoner of war just escaped."

"Bravo!" cried another voice, which seemed to be that of the officer of the watch; "sheer alongside, and let us see what like you are. Stand by with the main ropes—look alive there!"

Grant shook the hard hand of Raoul Senebier, gave him five more gold Napoleons, and, in a moment after, found himself upon the solid oak deck of a spanking British frigate. Now he was all but at home, and his Proteus-like transformations and disguises were at an end. A single paragraph from the "History of the War in the Peninsula" will suffice to close this brief story of Colquhoun Grant's

adventures, of which I could with ease have spun three orthodox volumes, octavo.

“When he reached England, he obtained permission to choose a French officer of equal rank with himself to send to France, that no doubt might remain about the propriety of his escape. In the first prison he visited for this purpose, great was his astonishment to find the old fisherman (Raoul Senebier of Paimbœuff) and his real son, who had meanwhile been captured, notwithstanding a protection given to them for their services. But Grant's generosity and benevolence were as remarkable as the qualities of his understanding; he soon obtained their release, and sent them with a sum of money to France. He then returned to the Peninsula, and within four months from the date of his first capture, was again on the Tormes, watching Marmont's army! Other strange incidents of his life could be told,” continues General Napier, “were it not more fitting to quit a digression already too wide; yet I was unwilling to pass unnoticed this generous, spirited, and gentle-minded man, who, having served his country nobly and ably in every climate, died not long since, exhausted by the continual hardships he had endured.”

But his name is still remembered in the regiment by which he was beloved; and his adventures, his daring, and presence of mind, were long the theme of the old Black Watch at the mess-table, the bivouac, and the guard-room fire.