

IX.

THE STORY OF DICK DUFF.

DICK DUFF, the lieutenant of our light company in 1812, was one of the happiest and most lively fellows in the British service. He sang and was merry from morning till night, and was occasionally uproarious from night till morning; and not even all the horrors of the retreat from Burgos could repress his flow of spirits. Moreover, he was the terror of innkeepers, and made the lazy *hostaleros* and keepers of *posadas* attend to his various commands with a celerity that astonished themselves; for Dick Duff could swear with marvellous fluency in Spanish and five other foreign languages; he had served at Malta, in Egypt, and Holland; and was wont to boast that he had acquired the whole vocabulary of oaths. This was highly necessary, Dick was wont to allege, "lest in a casual war of words with any ragamuffin on whom one might chance to be billeted, an officer and gentleman should have the disgrace of being put down by the sauce piquant of a rascally foreigner."

Dick had joined the service as a full private in the year 1800, having been forced into the ranks by his chief or landlord.

He was the second son of a respectable sheep farmer on the mountains of Mull, where his forefathers had resided for ages. His elder brother

Hamish, when a child, had been swept out to sea (while playing among the fisher-boats on the beach) and was drowned, to the grief and dismay of his parents, to whom a wandering Scottish priest, Father John of Douay, had foretold his birth, and predicted his future usefulness and greatness in the church. His mother, an old Catholic of the house of Kerpoch, looked upon this elder child as blessed by Heaven, and in the fulness of her heart she gladly dedicated it to the then oppressed church of her forefathers, in token of which she had unavailingly tied to his neck a valuable *amulet*.

Their landlord, like many other Scottish feudatories in the year 1800, became desirous of appearing a person of importance in the eyes of the Government; to this end he resolved to raise a kilted regiment among his tenants, and on procuring a letter of service, immediately called upon them for their sons.

These tidings caused some consternation in Argyleshire, a county from which every war, prior to 1800, had swept at least *four thousand* of its best men, few of whom ever survived to return.

The aged father of Dick appeared with others before their feudal tyrant, who threatened to deprive every parent of his farm, if his sons delayed or declined to volunteer for service; and this can easily be done, as the Highland crofter has seldom a written lease to show, believing that the old hereditary cabin of his forefathers is his, as much as the air he breathes or the heather he treads on.

"Duncan Duff," said the laird, who had already donned the uniform of colonel, "I am raising a regiment for the King's service, and must have your son Dick; he is a stout, ar'ive fellow, and here is the bounty."

The old man wrung his hands, and said—

"Sir, my son is the only prop of my last days. I am getting old, and may not be able to work long at my little croft."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about your croft," sneered the laird.

"If my only son goes to battle, what will become of *me*?"

"The parish will attend to *that*," was the cruel reply.

The eyes of the old Highlander flashed fire, but reverence for his chief repressed the mingled threat and curse that rose to his tongue.

"Please yourself, Duncan," resumed the feudatory; "I have only to warn you that another person has made my factor an advantageous offer for your farm, and your son's enlistment or his disobedience will materially influence me in considering the said offer."

"My croft, sir! have not I and my fathers been here under your family for four hundred years and more; and is not our blood the same?"

"Stuff! I tell you that I must have a thousand men, and cannot spare your son."

"I had another son, sir—a poor child who was drowned in his infancy; had he lived, one should have gone to battle and one remained—but God deals hardly with me."

"I care not," was the dogged reply; "men I want, and men I shall have!" for the letter of service gave the laird an opportunity to nominating all his officers, nearly fifty in number.

So Dick became a soldier in the laird's regiment, and as the old man could not remain on his little farm alone, he became a soldier too, in his sixtieth year, and on the long dusty marches in Holland, poor

Dick was often seen carrying the knapsack, firelock, and canteen of his brave old father, whom he buried with his own hands after he was killed by the French at the battle of Alexandria, where he, and twenty others, perished in a rash attempt to rescue their chief, the colonel, who was there wounded and taken prisoner. Dick's promotion was rapid, and after passing through the intermediate ranks, he found himself, by his own merit, a lieutenant in the Highland regiment of this obnoxious laird in the year 1808; and his reason for leaving it and exchanging into ours, was a mishap that occurred to him in Glasgow.

His corps had been quartered for a year in the barracks of the Gallowgate in the capital of the west, and Dick, who was decidedly of convivial, and scandal whispered of somewhat nocturnal, habits, and having, moreover, a high appreciation of the virtues of Glasgow punch, was in the habit of going home every night in the happiest mood of mind; and on more than one occasion was assisted by the friendly arm of the watchers and warders of the civic guard, or of the corporal of the patrol. The regiment marched for Edinburgh, changing quarters with the brave old Pompadours, who were so called from the colour of their facings resembling Madame's gown; but Dick, having obtained a month's leave between returns, resolved to enjoy himself a little longer among his old haunts, and remained behind, exulting in freedom from duty and the seclusion of mufti.

A late after the regiment marched, Dick Duff found himself about midnight propped against a lamp-post in the High-street, with very vague ideas of his own name, rank, and residence, and seriously weighing in his own mind whether the pavement and row

of lamps extending to the right, or those that lay to the left, led to the barracks; for his faculties were so cloudy, that he had become utterly oblivious as to the circumstance of his being on leave, in plain clothes, and living at a west-end hotel.

After long and serious pondering, Dick instinctively discovered the right way by old habit, and proceeded, somewhat deviously, of course, through the delightful locality known as "the Sautmarket," and along the Gallowgate, until he found himself before the dark gate of the barracks, and heard the familiar step of the great-coated sentry pacing slowly to and fro inside. Here he kicked with vigour, and struck up his favourite mess-room song—

"Who knows but our girls—
(We have known stranger things!)
When once they've got feathers,
May make themselves wings;
And like swallows in winter,
May soon take their flight;
And for lovers of 'ours,'
Bid their husbands good-night."

"Hallo! gate—gate!" shouted Dick, sprawling against it with outstretched hands.

"Who comes there?"

"Friend—particular friend of yours, my boy—very."

The drowsy sergeant of the guard unfastened the barrier, and sulkily passed a lantern once or twice across the face of the visitor, till it was knocked out of his hand by Dick, who exclaimed—

"D—n it, sir, what d'ye mean?—light me to my quarters."

"I beg pardon, sir," said the sergeant, who thought Dick might be one of the staff; but the lantern was

extinguished, so our friend resumed his song, and stumbled on alone to the old staircase, with which he was quite familiar; and ascending by mere force of habit to his room, found the door-handle on the right as usual, and entered.

"All right," muttered Dick, "all right. Here's the bed-post—and the candlestick should be *here*."

But he could neither find candle nor matches, and resolving to "row" his man in the morning, he threw off his clothes, tumbled headlong into bed, and was soon sound asleep.

Now it happened that the proprietor of the aforesaid quarters was the officer of the main-guard, who as the next day proved Sunday, was to come off duty at eight o'clock a.m., and duly at the hour of seven his servant entered to prepare a fire and lay breakfast. Hearing a vehement snore proceed from his master's bed, the servant drew back the curtains, and, to his no small surprise, discovered the dark, sun-burned, and well-whiskered visage of a stranger, whom he immediately awoke; but not without considerable difficulty and after reiterated efforts.

"Who are you," grumbled Dick; "and what the devil do you want?"

"What do *you* want here?"

"Where, old fellow?"

"In my master's bed."

"Master's bed, you scoundrel!" stuttered Dick; "how dare you intrude into an officer's room? be off, or I shall send you to the *shop* in a minute." And so, Dick Duff, believing that he had settled the little mistake satisfactorily, again composed himself to sleep, while the servant hurried to the main guard to acquaint his master that "a thief was in possession of

his bed and quarters." These tidings promptly brought up the officer with his sword in his hand, and a file of the guard at his heels.

Dick was once more roused, and wrathfully, too, from his slumbers, to find by his bedside two soldiers and an officer *cap-à-pie* in a strange uniform.

"What do you mean, fellow, by this unwarrantable in-in-in-trusion?" asked Dick, with great dignity.

"Who are you, sir?" asked the officer in a louder key.

"You'll soon find that out—off with you, sir, or by heavens I'll parade you where you won't like it. I have a pair of saw-handled pacifiers that are the deuce for hitting at fifteen paces."

"What the devil are you about in my quarters?"

"Your quarters?"

"Yes, sir, *my* quarters," thundered the Captain of Pompadours.

"Come, now—I like that."

"D—n it, sir?"

"Don't get excited, old fellow; is not this number three stair, four room?"

"Yes, of course it is."

"Then allow me to insinuate, sir, that you are drunk—very drunk, in uniform too—disgraceful; consider yourself under arrest. Sir, these quarters are *mine*—you will retire, if you please."

And Dick, who was still very groggy, again addressed himself to sleep. Trembling with anger, the Pompadour for a moment doubted the evidence of his own senses; but seeing all his own luggage and property in the room, and being certain that his brain was not turning, though the cool impudence of Duff confounded him,

"Coporal of the guard," said he, in a stifled tone of anger, "handcuff this insolent fellow, and march him to the cells."

"Handcuff—the devil!" shouted Dick.

This imperative order made him spring up, and at that moment, the recollection of the change of barracks, his month's leave, and the last night's potations, flashed upon him. Unhappy Dick was sobered in a moment, and his countenance fell, and he turned to explain—to apologize; but the Pompadour would listen to nothing. Our friend was ignominiously hauled from bed, hastily dressed, roughly handcuffed, and despite all his assertions that he was "an officer—an officer and a gentleman," &c. &c., he was marched to the guardhouse, into which he would have been thrust, had not a staff-officer, the friend with whom he had supped overnight, passed in at that moment and recognised him.

The officer explained, Dick expostulated, the Pompadour was sulky; but after fiery threats, mutual apologies and expressions of friendship for life were exchanged, and Dick dined that evening at the mess, of which he was made an honorary member; but the story "found vent," with a hundred absurd additions; and Dick was so quizzed about it by the small wits of his own corps, that he exchanged into Ours, and joined us about the time Corunna was fought.

But before the battalion embarked, he fell into another scrape by inserting in the Edinburgh papers the following advertisement!—

"Vive l'amour! any fair dame of spirit, maid . . . or widow, who would wish to see the world, and will join her fortunes with those of a gallant officer, about to embark for the seat of war—age 25, height five feet ten inches by one foot ten across the shoulders

—good looking decidedly, may have her offers carefully considered, by forwarding her name and qualifications to the President of the Mess Committee."

But for the hurry of embarkation, old Sir David Dundas, he of the "Eighteen Manœuvres," who then ruled at the Horse Guards, would have made this piece of impertinence a dear joke to Dick Duff.

The latter, at Torres Vedras was severely wounded in the left leg, and given over for a time to the care of a pretty patrona, who was so kind to him, and like Corporal Trim's Beguin, fomented the wounded part so tenderly, that Dick remained so long on crutches, we thought he would never get off them or be well; tell one night getting tipsy at the quarters of his friend Garriehorn of the Grenadiers, he walked home, he never knew how, *without them*; and as he had been heard singing his invariable and inevitable song,

"Who knows but our girls,
(We have known stranger things)," &c.

in the Plaza of Torres Vedras, he was obliged to report himself "fit for duty" next day, despite the tears of his patrona.

After serving at Busaco, Fuentes d'Onor, Badajoz, and Salamanca, his battalion, with Stirling's old Highland Brigade, endured all the horrors of the retreat from Burgos.

At the siege of the latter, the task of storming the famous hornwork, which had a hard sloping scarp of twenty-five feet, and a counter-scarp of ten, was specially confided to the 42nd Highlanders, who assailed the bastion after darkness had set in, and rushed on with great gallantry. Dick Duff was the first man up on the first ladder; and his feather bonnet was literally blown off his head by a volley of

balls; every man by his side was bayoneted; and as each poor fellow in his fall knocked down others, the loss was terrible!

Sword in hand, Major Cox entered the gorge; Major (afterwards General Sir Robert) Dick led the regiment on *en masse*, and the hornwork was immediately captured; but two lieutenants and thirty-two rank and file were killed; four officers, one volunteer, and one hundred and sixty-four Highlanders were wounded. Captain Donald Williamson expired that night of his wounds. Lane, the poor gentleman volunteer, was severely wounded and became senseless; but revived, on finding two of the Cameron Highlanders gently abstracting a gold watch worth fifty guineas from his pocket.

"I beg your pardon, my lads," said he; "but I am not quite done with this."

"We beg yours, sir," answered they; "but we thought you dead, and supposed we might take it, as well as others."

They carried him carefully to the rear; and as they were returning, two stray shots killed them both. Lieutenant Gregorson was killed, and found stripped naked, by Lieutenant Orr, who buried him in a trench. In the gorge of this hornwork, so fatal to the Black Watch, their old Quartermaster Blanket, had both his legs carried away; so he might fairly have sung,

"O now let others shoot,
For here I leave my *second legs*,
And the *Forty-second Foot*."

He lived long a prisoner at Bitche and Verdun, and by his fiery temper and wooden pins was named by the French *le Diable Boiteux*.

In this siege the regiment had other losses; but the concentration of the enemy's forces, and the advance of superior numbers, obliged the Duke of Wellington to retire into winter quarters on the frontiers of Portugal; and the fatigues and privations incident to this retrograde movement, fell on no regiment more heavily than on our friends of the Black Watch.

On a gloomy afternoon in the month of November, pressed by the enemy's cavalry, who were vastly superior to the British, the brigade of which the 42nd formed a part, entered the ancient and pleasant city of Valladolid, all drenched and bedraggled by fording the swift Pisuerga; for the French, to impede our previous advance, had blown up the principal arch of the bridge.

Dick Duff was taken prisoner by the French hussars in a taberna, at Villahoz, by the treachery of the keeper, a well-known Spanish rogue, named Antonio Morello. By his captors and the hostalero he had been stripped nude, but made his escape and rejoined the regiment (just as it was entering Valloria) clad only in a pair of short scarlet pantaloons, which he had taken from a dead Frenchman of the line, and his aspect created no small surprise in the ranks—but I cannot add merriment, for our soldiers were then at the lowest ebb of misery and desperation. During this terrible retreat the rain had been incessant, and poured pitilessly down on the wet, dripping sierras and rough muddy mule roads traversed by our troops, whose sufferings and privations were indescribable.

The baggage was generally far in the rear, and the troops were without tents or other means of shelter from the inclemency of the weather. The *vivas* that greeted the British advance were no longer heard—

gloom, sombre desperation, and scowling famine were in every eye. The arrears of pay were in many instances beyond parallel. Many regiments had not received a penny for nine months—nine months of constant fighting! (How many tradesmen in England would have worked for that period without wages?)

The officers were reduced to about a shirt each; most of the men had only the collars or wrists of their linen remaining—many had not a vestige. "Their jackets were so patched," says an officer of the Gordon Highlanders, in his narrative, "that I know nothing to which I can so aptly compare them as parti-coloured bed-covers; for there were not fifty in my own regiment but had been repaired with cloth of every colour under the sun."

So admirably is the kilt adapted for marching and activity, that the Highland corps were the only battalions *without stragglers*.

Hollow-eyed and gaunt, bearded and grisly, emaciated and miserable in aspect, footsore and shoeless, their jackets turned to black and purple, their feather bonnets reduced to quills, and all trace of pipeclay long since washed out of their belts, yet heavily laden with knapsacks, great-coat, blanket, havresack, wooden canteen, camp-kettle, sixty rounds of ball-cartridge, their arms and accoutrements covered with mud and mire—after many days' of incessant alarm, halting and forming square to repel the enemy's cavalry, who at times charged into the rivers up to their very holsters—the Black Watch defiled along the quaint old streets of Valladolid, with their pipes playing a fiery *spaidsearach Gaelhealach*, or Highland march; but it failed to rouse either the spirit or bearing of the men.

As our troops were retreating, their entrance excited no enthusiasm in the sullen and ungrateful Spaniards. They gazed apathetically from under their heavy eyebrows and broad sombreros, as battalion after battalion defiled past, nor manifested the smallest interest until some Highland regiment approached, when cries of—"Look at the Scots," broke from every quarter.

"*Mira los Escosses! Viva los valiantes! Viva los Escosses—los hombres valerosos.*"

Others, who knew the number of the Black Watch, varied the cry with—

"*Viva la Regimento Quarenta Dos!*"

Through streets of old and decaying houses the regiment defiled to the Plaza Mayor, while the bells of San Bemto, St. Paul, and the Scottish College were tolled mournfully. All the balconies there were covered with tapestry; and amid a profusion of crimson velvet, a portrait of Ferdinand VII. was hung in the great Plaza. There the battalion dispersed in search of billets; the officers to inquire if the baggage had come up; to sigh for camp-beds and portmanteaux, that might be stuck in the mud twenty miles off; or to swear at stupid servants or drunken bat-men, who had let them fall into the hands of pillagers and paisanos.

Wellington and his aides-de-camp had taken up their quarters in the Scottish College, the rector of which, an old Highlander, though sick and dying, welcomed them warmly.

Dick Duff, Garriehorne, the captain of Grenadiers, and Colquhoun Grant, the famous scouting officer, whose adventures are already, we hope, familiar to the reader, made their way straight to a posada, previous to entering which an "examination of ammu-

nition" took place, and among four purses two duros could only be mustered. At this time, many officers actually sold their silver epaulettes to the Jews of El Campo for bread.

"Ugh!" said Dick; "this comes of one's paymaster being nine months in arrear! and yet, though we have scarcely a tester among us, we are fighting for an island which, according to the learned Bochart, was named by the Phœnicians emphatically—the land of tin!"

An arched door gave admittance from the street to the lower story of the posada, where the horses and mules were generally stabled; from this, an open ladder gave access to the common hall; a second ladder led to the sleeping apartments, which were minus carpets, bells, plaster, and almost without windows or furniture; but, as Dick said to the grumbling captain of Grenadiers, no one looks for such things in a Spanish inn.

Several Spanish officers were already in the public room, all travel-stained and splashed with mud, but wrapped in their cloaks, and all with their feet planted on the only brassero, round which they sat in a circle, smoking and making themselves as comfortable as circumstances would admit; while the host, an old and sour-visaged Asturian, with clumsy hands and enormous shoulders, superintended the cooking of various edibles, which simmered and sputtered in stone jars on the flat hearth, the fuel piled upon which cast a lurid glow from under the broad impending mantel-piece on his swarthy visage, his stealthy eyes, and black grisly beard. This fellow was repulsive in aspect; but his wife, *la patrona*, was a pretty paisana, not much above eighteen years of age, dressed in the picturesque costume of the country, and having her

handsome legs encased in the tightest and brightest of scarlet stockings. She welcomed us with smiles of the utmost good humour that two brilliant eyes and a mouth filled with the finest teeth could express.

"All right, Garriehorne," said Dick, in his bantering way; "here is one of the beautiful sex—come esta senora, how handsome you look to-night; 'pon my soul, I feel quite inclined to fall in love with you. Senor Patron—what is in the crocs, old fellow?"

Displeased by Dick's mode of addressing his young wife, the host affected not to hear.

"What can you let us have for supper, senora?" asked Garriehorne, unbuckling his sword, "hot castanos and garlic, of course, with Xerez and ripe grapes."

"Ripe grapes in November," growled the sulky patron; "what the devil are you talking about, senor oficial?—*Ninas y vinas son mal de guardar!*"

"Which means—"

"That ripe maidens and ripe grapes require vigilance to keep long," said the pretty patrona, with a waggish smile. "We have a fine guisado in this croc, senor."

"A guisado!" exclaimed Dick. "By Jove, the very thought of it makes me more hungry than ever."

"What is it made of?" said the captain of Grenadiers, doubtfully.

"Don't you know—everything! hare, rabbit, chicken, pheasant, claret and water, bacon, salt, garlic, onions, pepper, pimentos, Valdepenas butter, a bunch of wild thyme—"

"The deuce! what more?"

"A little oil, and then it would add glory to the wedding of Camacho," said Dick.

"The senor caballero is quite a Spanish cook,"

said the pretty patrona; "but," she added, with a furtive glance at Dick's pair of French pantaloons, "I hope we shall not lose—"

"Lose—not at all, my dear senora. You shall be paid in gold as pure as your wedding ring."

"If we have it," added Garriehorne, aside.

"So serve up the guisado. Its odour is exquisite! By Jove, we four Hannibals have here found our Capua! But, Senor Patron," continued Dick, speaking with his mouth very full, "you are singularly like an ugly fellow whom I met yesterday—what is your name?"

"Morello."

"The devil it is! that name proved an unlucky one to me lately."

"Where, senor?"

"At Villahoz."

"I have a son there—"

"Keeper of a venta?"

"Si, senor."

"The villain! he betrayed me to the French for ten dollars."

"Likely enough of Antonio," said the young wife; "he is my step-son, and proves mala, mala—very bad."

"Step-sons frequently do in a step-mother's eyes, my dear patrona."

"He hates his father—"

"The unnatural wretch!"

"Hates him for having married *me*."

"In that I almost agree with him," said Dick.

"But he hates me, too."

"Hates you—so young, so charming!"

"Yes, senor, and daily vows to have revenge; believing that I have cheated him out of his birthright."

"Dick, what are those fellows round the brassero jabbering about?" asked the grenadier.

"Oh, they are mere cazadores, who say we should not have given up Madrid, or Burgos either, without a battle."

"Faugh! don't speak of Burgos; I am sick of shelling, storming, and mining. A battle, indeed! but, perhaps, they know better than Lord Wellington."

"A pretty woman that patrona is, ugh!" added Dick, as he drew off his boots. "See how muddy and deep the path that leads to glory and Portugal is! There are three inches of the mud of immortality, at least."

By this time our friends had finished the guisado, which proved excellent, and—a huge leathern bota of Xerez had been passed rapidly from hand to hand. They became comfortable—then jolly. Dick sang his usual song, and they all retired to pass the night in a crazy garret, and to thank Heaven that they were not for out-picquet on the Burgos road, and that they were to halt and not march all the next day.

Exhausted by toil, and perhaps somewhat overcome by their potations, and what our old friend Sancho Panza would term "the blessed scum" of the hot and savoury guisado, Colquhoun Grant and Garriehorne fell into a sound sleep on the hard floor, with plaids around them, and their swords at hand; but poor Dick Duff's restless disposition kept him long awake.

He thought of the young and pretty patrona, with her taper legs and melting black eyes; of her scowling old spouse, and the rascal, Antonio Morello, who yesterday had so nearly procured him—the said Dick Duff—three inches of a French bayonet, or a three years' sojourn at Bitche or Verdun on parole. Then,

as the moon shone brightly, he rose and looked out upon the scenery, where the bright flood of her silver light fell aslant on the spires of the churches, and gilded with a white lustre the pinnacles and litle-square belfries of the convents. On one side lay a narrow street which led to the Plaza Mayor; on the other, spread a wilderness of flat roofs, from amid which the huge cathedral, begun, but never finished, by Philip II., reared its dark outline; beyond, lay the beautiful plain watered by the Esqueva, stretching away in the moonlight and the haze it exhaled. All was silent and still, and no one seemed abroad save one man, whom Dick perceived to be reconnoitring the posada with stealthy eyes and steps. He placed a short ladder against one of the lower windows, which opened in two halves. He pushed the lattice open and entered.

"Is this fellow a thief or a lover?" thought Dick; "if an affair of gallantry, it is no business of mine. Bah! what is there to steal from a Spanish posada? and to interfere with the nocturnal rambles of some loving stableboy or amatory muleteer would be rather an insane proceeding on my part."

With these reflections he resumed his place on the floor, and was about to drop asleep—for on service all curiosity becomes blunted; the value of property and the risk of death but of little consequence—when a cry pierced his ear.

A cry! it was a wild and despairing one, that rang terribly along the wooden corridor; a struggle—the stamping of feet—the explosion of a pistol, with the fall of a body heavily on the floor followed; and then all became still save the barking of the *perro de casa*, or house-dog, in the yard. Duff's first thought was of the enemy—that their cavalry were in the town—

and that the picquets had been repulsed on the Burgos road. Then he thought of the intruder.

"Up, Grant," said he; "get your sword, Garriehorne—the French or the devil are at work here!"

"Help, senores caballeros—help!" cried a piteous voice in the corridor.

"Is that you, senor patron?"

"Si, senor—'tis I and the senora patrona—open, por amor de Dios—the posada has been attacked by thieves."

"By thieves"—

"Yes; and by the holy of holies, I have had the narrowest of escapes," he added, dragging in his young and pretty wife. Both were in their night dresses; both were breathless and ghastly pale.

"What was the meaning of that pistol-shot?"

"You shall hear, senor—you shall hear," replied the host, staggering to a seat. "Dios mio! I was sound asleep, my day's work has been a severe one, so many noble caballeros have been about the house all day long. I was asleep; but the senora patrona saw a man in our room; he carried a pistol in one hand, a lantern in the other. Her cries awoke me, and I sprang from my bed to reach my Abacete knife, which usually lies on a stool close by; when lo! there was a flash in my eyes, a pistol-ball grazed my right ear, and buried itself in the pillow I had just left! Santiago! my knife was in my hand; I became blind! I rushed upon the would-be assassin; once, twice, ay, thrice, my knife was buried in his heart; at first there was a cry of agony, then I heard the breast-bone crack, as, with a heavy sob, he was dead. Ouf!" he added, as a light was brought; "see how my right hand and arm are drenched in blood."

He flung the knife on the floor, and it sounded like a knell.

"Grant, look to the poor patrona," said Duff. "Come, Garriehorne, the man may not be dead yet."

"O, senor, I warrant him dead enough; my first stab went straight to the heart," replied the hostalero, grinding his teeth with savage energy.

Proceeding along the dingy corridor, they reached his bedroom, where a man, in a pool of thickening blood, lay prostrate on the floor.

"He is quite dead," said Garriehorne.

"Grant, turn the poor devil over, and let us see what like he is," said Dick Duff.

He was turned on his back, and a hoarse cry burst from old Morello, on recognising in the relaxed jaw and fixed eye-balls of the corpse the features of—
his son Antonio!

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"Come, gentlemen, let us quit this place," said Dick, with a shudder; and, as they issued into the empty streets, daylight was beginning to struggle through their sinuous windings, while the merry rattle of the British and Portuguese drums was heard, as they beat *reveille* in El Campo, the market-place, and before the old royal palace, where Anne of Austria first saw the light, and which, to the fourth story, was full of allied troops. The inlying picquets (always turned out in those days an hour before daylight) were standing under arms, looking pale, wan, and drowsy in their dark great-coats, in the Plaza Mayor. This place was square, and surrounded by an arcade, within which are shops, and the brick houses have balconies of gilded iron at all the windows. At a corner of the old palace our rambles passed under a curious projecting clock, like that of

Strasbourg; but being a loyal old Spanish clock, of true Castilian origin, it had never gone since the French entered Spain.

"Senor," said Dick Duff to a Spanish cazadore who passed, and who seemed, like himself, to be on the look-out for a place of entertainment, "what house is that?"

"You mean the house without windows?"

"Si, senor, and which has only those little holes to admit light through its high walls."

"The Holy Office, senor."

Dick shrugged his shoulders and quickened his pace.

"And is that place opposite the convent so famed for its pretty nuns?"

"Which, senor?"

"The convent of the Bleeding Heart."

"No, senor," said the don, with a dark look; "it is the monastery of the Bloody Nose."

"You seem to be a wag, my friend—well, and what place is that which the staff are just leaving?"

"El Colegio de los Escosses."

"Bravo—the Scots College!" said they altogether; "muchos gracias, senor—we shall go there."

And just as Wellington, cloaked and muffled, with a telescope slung over his shoulder, his blue cape and cocked hat covered by oiled skins, trotted into the Plaza Mayor, followed by his aides-de-camp, one of whom was Prince Leopold, now King of the Belgians, Dick Duff and his comrades presented themselves at the arched doorway of the ancient Catholic seminary.

"A college of priests!" said Dick; "I would infinitely prefer a convent of nuns—but we cannot choose, unfortunately."

"Now, Duff," said Garriehorne, "you must behave with propriety."

"Oh, you shall see; I am arranging my face to a most becoming length."

While they were speaking the door unfolded, and a grave, dark-complexioned priest, clad in a long black satann, appeared before them. His mild glance of anxious inquiry expanded into a kind smile when he saw the tartans and plumed bonnets of the visitors; for he was a Scotsman, and in those days, anterior to the Catholic emancipation, the Scottish clergy of the ancient faith were all but outcasts, and usually exiles from their own country; thus the poor man's heart filled and his eyes glistened, as he stretched out his hands inviting them to enter, and led them through the garden towards the main building of the college.

This Scottish college at Valladolid was founded by the family of Semple, one of whom, Robert, known as the great Lord Semple, was long ambassador from James VI. of Scotland to Philip II. of Spain; a service on which he acquitted himself with reputation and honour to his country, while his rigid adherence to the Catholic Church won him the respect of the Spaniards. The revenue of this college is about 1000*l.* per annum, and the edifice was anciently a house of the Jesuits. Its lands are to be held of the Spanish crown *while vines shall continue to grow on them*, and in its cellars is a jolly wine-tun capable of holding eighteen thousand bottles—the mention of which made Dick Duff's eyes twinkle with delight. Its chapel had a crucifix which grew out of a thorn-tree to convert a Jew, but is now in the cathedral; and still better, it had a valuable library, wherein hangs a portrait of the founder in rich robes carrying a baton, and another of his lady, Agnes Montgomery,

daughter of Hugh, Earl of Eglinton. Six miles from the city, the college has a handsome country mansion, which Wellington occupied for one night during the Burgos retreat.

The ancient faith in Scotland was then all but extinct. A few wandering priests, braving the severe penalties of the Scottish law, lurked in the wildest parts of the Highlands, and, protected by the gentle ties of clanship, administered the rites of the Roman Church to its scattered adherents. At Glenlivet, in the eighteenth century, a little academy was maintained by them almost in secret; there philosophy and divinity were taught to boys of talent, after which they were sent abroad to the Scottish colleges of Rome, Douay, Ratisbon, or Valladolid, from whence, as Jesuits or secular priests, they returned to preach once more unto the clans the faith in which their fathers died.

All these odds and ends of information *anent* this Scoto-Spanish establishment were told to the military visitors by Father John Cameron, in a low and gentle tone, as if he feared to wake some one, and all the Scottish priests and students, who crowded about the Highland officers in the little refectory, where wine and fruit were freely proffered, spoke in the same remarkable manner, stopping ever and anon as if to listen for a passing sound; while gravity and anxiety were impressed on every face.

Rattling Dick Duff had so completely adopted the bearing of a modest, quiet, and seriously-disposed young man, that the heart of Father John Cameron, a priest well up in years, was quite won; and Dick began to feel some compunction, while telling him with the utmost gravity, that "a natural abhorrence of gaiety and military uproar, with a love of retire-

ment and of cloistral seclusion, &c. &c., had brought him and his companions, Captain Garriehorne and Colquhoun Grant, the famous scout who so tormented the Duc de Raguse, to visit them;" but he added, "what the devil is the matter? Is any one dead or hidden here—what's the row, that you all speak in whispers, as if the walls had ears?"

"It is a strange story," said the old priest, Father Cameron; "our beloved rector, without an apparent ailment, believes himself at the point of death. It is a sad narrative to me, for I loved the rector as a younger brother; although many years his senior (more than I dare reckon now), his talents and his piety made him superior to us all. He believes that the day, the hour—yea, the moment of his departure is fixed: it is a solemn, a terrible presentiment—but you, as soldiers, will be inclined to smile at it and me."

"Nay, sir," replied Dick, "you wrong us there; for on service we see every day the most terrible fulfilment of presentiments. I had a brother drowned upon the 16th of November—my father ever said it was our *fatal day*, and had been so for ages. He was wounded by my side on the 16th of November, when our Highlanders stormed one of the West India Isles, and on the 16th of November he was killed near the city of Alexandria, and with my own hands I buried him the day before we marched towards the Nile. Poor old man!"

"And there was poor old Major Wallace of Ours," said Grant, "who had always a presentiment that he would die on the 18th of March, the day he was wounded as an ensign at the blockade of Alexandria in 1801, and on the 18th of last March we found him dead in his tent, killed by a random shot, when we were covering the siege of Badajoz."

"Ay," sighed the priest, "there was poured forth the hot blood of many a gallant heart."

"So you see, my dear sir, that solemn presentiments are to be found in the camp as well as in the cloister," added Dick, draining his wine-horn, with a thoughtful smile.

"Our reverend rector is powerfully possessed by the idea that he will not outlive the 16th of this month of November, the day on which his patron——"

The priest hesitated.

"Don't hesitate, my dear sir," said Dick; "for I am come of an old Catholic stock—say on."

"The day on which his patron-saint died, and for a year past this conviction has become stronger in his mind as the time approached; yet he is a hale man and well, though somewhat more feeble than he was wont to be. His patron is Margaret, Queen of Scotland, who died on the 16th of November, and this day is the *fifteenth*. A month ago, he felt this presentiment come more strongly, mysteriously, and solemnly upon him; so that he could no longer attend to his duties as rector, but spent his whole time in abstemious fasting and earnest prayer, as one preparing for a great change. He dismissed all the professors, students, servants, and other inmates to a country house which we possess, six miles from the city, telling us to enjoy ourselves for a brief space, as a dark day of mourning was at hand.

"Impressed by the solemnity of his manner, we set out for the place, and remained there anxiously waiting to hear tidings from him, for he is dearly loved by us all, and by none more than me. A week elapsed, but we heard nothing from Valladolid; at last, I turned back, being his dearest friend, and

moreover, the oldest priest in the college—for I can remember the days when Charles of the Two Sicilies sat on the Spanish throne, and I was one of those who chanted the *De Profundis* by the grave of Charles Edward Stuart; I can remember when the spires of seventy convents towered over Valladolid, for in El Campo every alternate house was a religious one; and now there are but sixteen and only twenty-four convents. Well, gentlemen, I came back to inquire, and soon saw enough to fill me with alarm. In our absence the rector had hung the college chapel with black; he had moreover raised the pavement before the shrine of St. Margaret, and after measuring his own height, had there dug a grave for himself, eight feet deep, and as I crossed the aisle, its ghastly depth in the black and bone-impregnated earth that lay piled on each side, struck me with awe and terror. I searched for the rector, but was unable to find him in any of the dormitories, refectory, library, or garden. At last, barefooted and bareheaded, clad in sackcloth, and girt by a cord of discipline, I found him kneeling near the grave he had dug; he was praying earnestly, and never did the divine Murillo conceive a head more noble, or a face more expressive of piety, enthusiasm, worship, and prayer, in all its glory, than those of our rector as I saw him at that moment, with his eyes uplifted from a book of vespers towards the crowned statue of the Scottish Queen, around which twelve little lights were sparkling; and I could hear the words that came from his pale lips, though they fell faintly and slowly,

“Deus, qui beatam Margaritam, Scotorum Reginam, eximiâ in pauperes charitate mirabilem effecisti: da, ut ejus intercessione et exemplo, tua in cordibus nostris charitas jugiter augeatur.”

“When I approached, he fainted. I had him at once conveyed to bed and applied restoratives; but so low had his strength and system ebbed by excessive fatigue, prayer, and fasting, that we have scarcely a hope of recovering him, and the conviction that he shall die to-morrow, on the 16th November, the anniversary of his patron’s death, seven hundred years ago, is so vividly impressed upon his mind, that knowing its breadth of thought and unyielding energy of purpose, a solemn sadness has come upon us all, and we wait in terror the issue of this gloomy presentiment.”

The military visitors were deeply impressed by this strange and fantastic story; and on Father Cameron requesting them to visit the couch where the rector lay, in the hope that their Highland garb might rouse some other emotions in his breast, they at once assented and followed in silence to his chamber.

Under cloisters arched and old, they were led through the ancient chapel, where many a stern Jesuit who had heard Loyola preach, and where many a poor priest of the Scottish mission, were at rest from their labours; and past the newly-dug grave where a stone already bore the name of the rector, cut by his own hand. Duff paused for a moment and read thereon,

M.S.

Don Iago de Santa Margareta; Rector del Collegio de los Escosses; Valladolid. Requien a Dios por el.

“Mater Salvatoris, ora pro nobis!” muttered Father Cameron, as he hurried past, and led them into the gloomy little apartment, in which the further to mortify his flesh, the rector had taken up his quarters.

It was square, and floored with red tiles; on the dull and discoloured walls were two or three Murillos and Alonzo Canos; in the window, around which the naked vines had clambered, lay a skull before a crucifix; around were shelves laden with books, many being old tomes of Scottish theology; and there were many old engravings of the House of Stuart in ebony frames, Prince Charles, James VIII., and Cardinal York.

Dick Duff took all this in at a rapid glance, and then his eyes rested on a thin, wan, and emaciated figure that lay on a plain and uncurtained Spanish bed in a corner of the apartment. The rector's eyes were closed and his hands were clasped. He scarcely seemed to breathe, and yet he was praying earnestly. His profile was sharp and thin; he did not seem to be much above forty years of age; yet the hair that clustered round his high and intellectual temples was prematurely silvered over.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Dick, in a suppressed voice, and with a start of terror, "how like my poor old father he looks just now!"

"Like your father?" reiterated Garriehorne.

"Yes—yes: he is the poor old man's image—just as he lay dead at Alexandria, when I rolled him in my blanket and buried him in the sand, digging his grave with my bayonet—God rest him!"

"The rector's history is a strange one," said Father Cameron; "but we know not his name, therefore we call him James of St. Margaret."

"But how came he here?"

"Listen," replied the priest in a low voice, and they all drew aside. "Many years ago I was at sea, flying for safety from Argyllshire, having been hunted from parish to parish, because I had dared to say mass in

secret to our people—for to perform the offices of our faith in Scotland was then to commit a crime. Our vessel was running seaward down the Sound of Mull, when a boat was discovered adrift, without sails or oars; and in that boat we found a little child—a boy—asleep, or worn by terror and the tossing waves into a dreading torpor. He was brought on board, and to me the discovery of a boy floating thus upon the sea, like Amadis de Gaul or Florizel in their baskets, as we read in the old romances; or like Moses or Judas Iscariot, as we may read in the writings of the Fathers, seemed of great import—the more so, as I found an amulet, or reliquary, at his neck, wherein was a relic of St. Margaret, with a prophecy written by one whom I knew, for I was then but a youth—yea, knew well——"

"Father John of Douay?" exclaimed Dick Duff.

"Yes; John Macdonald of Douay—how know *you* that?"

"Ask me not—ask me not, sir—but proceed."

"Yes, written by the most reverend father, John of Douay (who was butchered by the French in Flanders), foretelling that this child would yet become great in the church, and would serve God at His altar long and faithfully——"

"This was in the year 1772?" exclaimed Dick, who had listened breathlessly.

"It was, sir. The poor child could tell me nothing of his parents, and knew only that his name was Hamish—that he had seated himself in an old boat upon the beach, and fallen asleep, after which he was awaked by the rough rocking of his new cradle, as it tumbled on the waves, which had risen and floated it out into the Sound. He wept for his mother long and passionately; but I brought him hither, and in

the bosom of our Mother Church he soon learned to forget his earthly mother, who is now, perhaps, awaiting him in heaven——”

“For her wish has doubtless been mysteriously fulfilled,” said Duff, incoherently. “Eternal Power! if this should be the case! Tell me, good sir, is there a scar——”

“Upon his left side?—yes.”

“The mark of a stag’s-horn, which gored him on the rocks of Loch-na-Keal.”

“Yes, yes.”

“Then this child whom you found floating on the sea, and who has lived to become the Rector of your College, is my *brother*, Hamish Duff, for whose supposed drowning in the Sound of Mull, our poor mother died of grief on the sixteenth of November.”

“The *sixteenth* of November! the very day on which he has so long believed he is himself to die.”

Dick threw down his plumed bonnet and hastened to the bedside with his eyes full of tears and a wild expression in his face.

“O how like our old father he looks!” he exclaimed, as he turned down the coverlet.

There was no motion; he placed a hand on the rector’s heart; but there was no pulsation. He was dead—dead, but still warm.

At that moment the clock of the college tolled the half-hour *after* twelve!

Thus as he had so long foretold and foreseen, but by what mysterious intuition or presentiment, Heaven alone knows, he had actually passed away on the early morning of the sixteenth day of November.

* * * * *

The French cavalry were still pressing on, and the

jaded allies were still in full retreat; thus the Scottish fathers of the ancient college hurried the funeral by the next noon, that the Lieutenant of the Black Watch might lay his brother’s head in the grave; and accordingly the rector was lowered into the tomb which his own hands had formed before the shrine of St. Margaret, the Patroness of Scotland; and Dick Duff was a changed man, and a grave man too, during the remainder of that horrible retreat, on which so many of our brave soldiers perished of starvation and fatigue; and which Lord Wellington continued without delay, until the Ebro and the Dour were ~~in~~ in his rear; and his harassed army found winter quarters on the frontier of Portugal.

Father John Cameron lived to a good old age, and died Catholic Bishop of Edinburgh, where he now lies interred before the altar of St. Mary’s Chapel.