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THE
SPANISH CONSCRIPT AND HIS FAMILY.
A TALE.

THE
SPANISH CONSCRIPT
AND HIS FAMILY.

A Tale
OF NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA.

BY
MISS JANE STRICKLAND.

“Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
No endless night, nor yet eternal day,
The saddest birds, a season find to sing,
The roughest storm, a calm may soon allay.
Thus with succeeding turns, God tempers all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.”

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INTRODUCTION.

The incidents upon which the following narrative is founded, are to be found in MR. JAMES'S travels in Russia, where they are thus related:—"We were interested extremely, by the appearance of two Spanish children among those we saw at the Foundling Hospital, at Moscow. Their father was supposed to be a chaplain, accompanying the Spanish forces employed in the French service, during the late invasion of Russia. He died at Moscow; and their mother, who had been delivered of an infant during their stay, fearing to hazard the vengeance of the inhabitants in their return to the city, endeavoured, with her little family, to accompany the retreating army. Her strength seems to have been very unequal to the attempt; and when they last saw her, she was lying on the road-side, unable to proceed—her body quite exhausted, and her mind, (as might be gathered from their description,) in a complete state of delirium. The daughter, though only eleven years of age, took charge of her brother, and also of her infant sister, whom she carried upon her back for many leagues. This little party followed the troops during all the severity of the weather, without any other provisions than the scraps of offal, or horse-flesh, which the half-starved soldiers could spare them from their meals. After many escapes, they at last reached Krasnoi; but during the action which took place there, they were frightened by the appearance of a squadron of Cossacks, and fled to conceal themselves in the forest; here they remained two days without food, till they were found by a Russian soldier, crawling as well as their little strength would permit, along the snow. Their feet were entirely bare, and being seized by the frost, had become useless; their language was not understood; and had they even been skilled in the Russian tongue, their voices feeble, and inarticulate, could have availed them nothing. Their appearance however, was sufficient in this country to proclaim their situation, and procure them commiseration. The Grand Duke Constantine happened to fall in with them soon after their discovery by the soldier, and ordered them to be well taken care of—finally, giving them a place in this asylum. Their countenances were intelligent, and they were said to possess some talent. We may hope that the singular story of the first part of their lives, will be followed by a more happy career in the land that has adopted them."

The reader will perceive that in some places, particularly in the early part of the narrative, I have deviated from the account given by MR. JAMES, because it is intended for the amusement and instruction of the young, to whom the parentage, real or supposed, of these children might present an unpleasant example of immorality. I have then given them a pastoral education in the Pyrenean mountains, and have represented them as the off-spring of virtuous wedded love. To make the tale more complete, I filled up the outline, by marrying one of the female orphans to her preserver. For the history of the disastrous campaign in Russia, I am indebted to various celebrated French authors; from Dumas, I have taken the description of the Grand Duke Constantine.

In selecting the history of these Spanish orphans, for this little work, I have been influenced by the wish of presenting to the eyes of the young,—the all-sufficient Providence of God. Nothing could be more dreadful than the situation of these children, yet; though thousands and tens of thousands, fell around them, they were wonderfully preserved, and had a home and new country provided for them. The unprincipled ambition of Napoleon and his final fall, presents its striking moral to those whose parents or relatives, remember these events of modern times, to which, indeed, ancient history offers no parallel. In the patriotism of Count Rostopchin, we see what a disinterested man may do for his country; while in the retreat of the

French army and its dreadful sufferings, we behold the consequences that arose from the desire of acquiring universal empire, at the expense of the lives of human beings. To make these truths more apparent to those whose minds are now forming for the future, is the object of these unassuming pages.

Reydon Hall,
1846.



THE SPANISH CONSCRIPT'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I. THE MOUNTAIN HOME.

“Domestic happiness thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall.”—COWPER.

The boundless ambition of Napoleon, unsatisfied by the success of his military career,—success that in modern times has no parallel,—still lured him forward with the hope of the conquest of Europe, and if that could be achieved with the subjugation of the world.

In 1812, England and Russia alone opposed a bulwark to his power. The naval superiority of England rendered a successful invasion impossible; therefore he planned his celebrated expedition against the northern empire, where his colossal power was destined to find a grave.

As France alone could not furnish troops for his armies, the conscription became general in all those countries into which his conquests had extended. These allies also furnished him with troops and equipments. The conscription resembles, in some respects, our own levies of the militia, with this essential difference; that the conscript becomes a soldier, and is engaged to serve in foreign wars, while the militia-man is only called upon to defend his own country, a duty that every citizen is bound to fulfil. We may readily imagine the general indignation this new conscription excited in those countries, where the inhabitants had struggled hard for liberty and had been but lately subdued. In Germany, Prussia, and the Tyrol, the new recruits murmured loudly at the moral wrong that forced them into an unholy warfare against a brave people struggling for their independence. In that part of Spain still occupied by the armies of Napoleon, the oppressive levy filled up the measure of the national hatred against the French, and was remembered with interest in the day of reckoning,—that fearful day of vengeance, then not distant, when the injured Spaniard would in his turn, cross the Pyrenees to rush down upon the fertile plains of France, carrying war and desolation with him.

Many Spaniards, who had shrunk from sharing the patriotic struggle, in which their gallant countrymen were then engaged, found themselves compelled to serve in the far northern war, without a motive that could justify, or a feeling that could console them. Among these victims, the Spanish shepherd, Pedro Alvez, found himself speedily enrolled.

Accustomed from childhood to tend a flock of merino sheep, upon the northern ridge of the Catalonian Pyrenees, Pedro's disposition seemed to combine the gentleness of his fleecy charge, with the courage and fidelity of the dog, who shared his toils and dangers. Never had his powerful arm been raised against a fellow-creature, though its prowess had often been exercised upon the bear and the wolf. The bold free spirit of the Catalan, from the time of the Romans to our own day, found no entrance in his placid bosom—patient under injury, and unaccustomed to return evil for evil, but rather good, even the invasion of his native country could not rouse him to fierce activity. Isolated by his pastoral habits from the stirring scenes of life, he refused to join the guerrilla bands of Catalonia, withstood the upbraidings, entreaties and scornful reproaches of his brothers and cousins, and contented himself with removing his family and flock to a higher ridge of the Pyrenees, where he hoped to remain unmolested by the horrors that devastated the plains and vallies below. So ably were his plans laid, that the French soldiers would sooner have sought among these wilds the eagle's nest, than the shepherd and his merinos. Surrounded by his flock, and dwelling with his beloved wife and children, Pedro thought little of the war at his feet, while love and peace were the companions of his rocky

home. In his affection for his wife and children, deep and devoted as it was, there was something of selfishness; for the sufferings of his countrymen could not wring his bosom while they were safe. Sometimes the sound of the destroying cannon would reach his mountain dwelling, and turning to his wife, he would calmly say, "They are fighting below, my Blanca, but thou art safe—yes, thou and our children are safe with me. The French will never find us among the fastnesses of these hills; we are well provided with provisions; my rifle will furnish us with game, as well as keep the wolf and bear away; the sheep are healthy; the dogs brave and faithful; God I trust is with us, and we are very happy." Then Pedro would draw his frightened children closer to the bosom into which they had stolen for shelter, and kissing Teresa and Carlos tenderly soothed their fears with fond caresses.

Thus while the domestic virtues filled the breast of Pedro, the love of country, that pure and ennobling principle, found no entrance there; and while the bold Catalonian peasantry were spending their richest blood in the defence of their native land, and even his pastoral brethren abandoned their flocks to repel the human inundation that poured down through the passes of the Pyrenees, he lent no arm to save his country. That arm was bold and strong that guided the mountain flock; the eye, keen as an eagle's, took an unerring aim, and sorely did the savage beast that menaced the fold, rue the sharp ringing of his rifle, that ever found a true and deadly mark. Having described the character and habits of the shepherd, let us now look at his flock.

The merino sheep, whose wool forms an extensive article in Spanish commerce, deserves a minute description, as its habits differ from those of other countries, nature having fitted it for a southern climate and elevated pastures. The breed takes its name from the Sierra Morena, because the fine-woolled sheep of the two Castiles pass the winter on that mountain where the climate is milder. The Pyrenean sheep of Catalonia is hardy, and merely takes a lower ridge of mountain pasture in winter, though, like the migrating merino, it is never folded at night. On the contrary, the coarse-woolled Spanish sheep is always sheltered and housed, generally in the vicinity of large manufacturing towns.

As Pedro was a Catalonian shepherd, I shall confine myself to the description of the particular race of which he had the charge, and the range of pasture upon which it feeds. "THE ANNALS OF AGRICULTURE," has given so minute and graphic an account of the Catalonian merino that I shall transcribe it at length:—

"On the northern ridge of the Catalonian Pyrenees, bearing to the west, are the pastures of the Spanish flocks. This ridge is not, however, the whole; there are two other mountains quite in a different situation, and the sheep travel from one to the other as the pasturage is short or plentiful. I examined the soil of these mountain pastures, and found it, in general, stony, what in the west of England would be called a stone-brash, with some mixture of loam, and in a few places a little peaty. The plants are many of them untouched by the sheep: many ferns, narcissus, and violets, but burnet (*Poterium Sanguisorba*) and the narrow-leaved plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*,) were eaten, as we may suppose, close. I looked for trefoils, but found scarcely any; it was very apparent, that soil and peculiarity of herbage had little to do in rendering these heights proper for sheep. Here the tops of the mountains, unlike those of England, were very dry. Now a great range of dry land, let the plants be what they may, will always suit sheep. The flock is brought every night to one spot, which is situated at the end of a valley, on a river, near the port or passage of Picada. It is a level spot sheltered from wind. The soil is eight or nine inches thick with old dung,^[A] the place is not enclosed, but, from the freedom from wood all around, it seems to be chosen partly for safety from bears and wolves. Near it, is a very large stone, or rather a rock, fallen from the mountain. This the shepherds have

taken for a shelter, and built a hut against it. Their beds are sheep skins, and then the door so low that they crawl in. I saw no place for fire, but they have it, since they dress here the flesh of their sheep, and in the night sometimes keep off the bears by whirling fire-brands, four of them belonging to the flock lie here. I viewed their flock very carefully, and by means of our guide and interpreter, made some enquiries of the shepherds, which they answered readily and civilly. A Spaniard of Vénasque, a city in the Pyrenees, gives six-hundred French livres (the livre is 11½*d.* English) per year for the pasturage of this flock of two thousand sheep. In the winter he sends them into the lower parts of Catalonia, a journey of twelve or thirteen days, and when the snow is melted in the spring, they are conducted back again. They are the whole year kept in motion, moving from place to place, having a great range of pasture. They are always in the open air, and never taste of any food but what they can find on the hills. Four shepherds, and from four to six Spanish dogs, have the care of this flock: the dogs in France are called the Pyrenees breed; they are black and white, of the size of a large wolf, and have a large head and neck: they wear large collars armed with iron spikes. No wolf can stand against them, but bears are more potent adversaries: if a bear can reach a tree, he is safe from them: he rises upon his hind legs with his back to the tree, and sets the dogs at defiance. In the night, the shepherds rely upon these canine guardians for the defence of the flocks; but if they hear them bark, they are ready with their fire-arms, as a dog rarely barks unless a bear is at hand. I am surprised to find that these dogs are only fed with bread and milk. The head shepherd is paid one hundred and twenty livres per year wages, and bread; the others eighty livres and bread. Their food is milk and bread, except the flesh of such sheep and lambs as accident gives them. The head shepherd keeps on the mountain top, or on an elevated spot, from whence he can better see around while the flock traverses the declivities. In doing this, the sheep are exposed to great danger in places that are stony; for by walking among the rocks, they move the stones, which rolling down the hills, often kill them. Yet we saw how alert they were to shun such stones, and how cautiously on their guard to avoid them.

“I examined the sheep attentively. They are in general polled, but some have horns, which in the rams twine backwards behind the ears and project half a circle forward; the ewes’ horns turn also behind the ears, but do not project; the legs white or reddish; speckled faces, some white some reddish; they would weigh from fifteen to eighteen pounds the quarter. A few black sheep among them, some with a very little tuft of wool on the forehead; some had long tails, some short. On the whole they resemble the Southdown breed; their shape is very good, round ribs and flat straight backs. One of the shepherds caught a ram, that I might examine the wool, which I found was very thick and good, of the carding sort. The fleece on his back weighed about eight English pounds, but the average quantity is about four or five. This ram had the wool of the back part of his neck tied close, and the upper tuft tied a second time by way of ornament; nor do they ever shear this part of the fleece for this reason.

“A circumstance that cannot be too much commended, is the extreme docility the shepherds accustom them to. When I desired the shepherd to catch one of his rams, I supposed he would do it with his crook, or probably not be able to do it at all, but he walked into the flock and singling out a ram and a goat, bade them follow him, which they did immediately, and he talked to them while they were obeying him, holding out his hand as if to give them something. By this method he brought me the ram, which I caught and held without difficulty. This description reminds us forcibly of the beautiful parable of the Good Shepherd in the New Testament. “He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, and when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.” The same

custom is observed by travellers in Palestine to this day. There is a curious historical circumstance relating to this breed, for it appears by contemporary historians that the Cotswold sheep is descended from some that were brought from Spain by Eleanor of Castile; and that the wool was so improved in quality by the climate, that in the time of Henry the Seventh, a flock of Cotswold sheep was given to Ferdinand the Seventh, to improve the native stock, and it is conjectured, that the present Spanish merino is descended from this breed. George the Third, like a truly patriot king, cultivated agriculture, and becoming sensible of the value of the merino in giving fineness to the British wools, obtained a flock, which were quickly dispersed through the kingdom. They have also been introduced into Australia with good effect.”

Having thus minutely described the habits and qualities of the flock, we will now proceed to observe those of the shepherd and his family.

[A] Agriculture is at a low ebb in Spain, or this valuable deposit of manure would be employed in top-dressings for pastures, and other uses, instead of remaining idle.



CHAPTER II.
THE CHILDREN'S PERIL.—THE CONSCRIPTION.

——“Strange that men
Creatures so frail, so soon, alas to die
Should have the power, the will to make this world
A burden and a curse
To him who never wronged them——”——ROGERS.

As Pedro Alvez was a master shepherd, he was in easy circumstances, and was also a better educated peasant than most of his countrymen. He could read and write, cast accounts sufficiently well to reckon with the monks of Lerida, who owned his flock, was well conversant with his business, and could play the guitar and dance the fandango exceedingly well.

Blanca, his wife, was sensible, amiable, and pretty; his daughter Teresa was a lively girl of eleven years, and Carlos was about seven. Teresa was capable of assisting her parents in many little domestic matters in the day-time, while in the evenings she learned to read and write of her father, or sew of her mother. Milking the goats, making cheeses, and churning butter, were arts she was acquiring of Blanca; but, truth to say, the little Catalan girl loved better to roam at large upon the mountains, than to pursue the more feminine employments I have enumerated; and once or twice her love of adventure had like to have cost her dear. The Pyrenean chain abounds in wonders, and though the young Teresa did not behold them like a naturalist, she was an artless unsophisticated child of nature, with a lively imagination, warm feelings, and an eye and heart equally alive to the beauties of the mountain scenery.

Then she was healthy, active, hardy, and fearless—inured alike to cold and heat, and almost masculine in her out-door habits, though feminine in a kind and compassionate bosom. Her's was a cheerful happy temperament, and even Blanca, who by no means approved of her disposition to wander about the hills, could not chide her long, for tears seemed such strange guests in her laughing eyes, and yet were so quickly excited, that the matter often ended in the fugitive remaining unpunished. Sometimes she had been led out of the way by the chase of the Pyrenean squirrel, or she had been searching for chesnuts, or the sight of a gay-plumed stranger bird had lured her lower down the mountain ridge or further up, as the matter might be. Pedro, who was a cautious man, often trembled for his daughter's safety, more particularly, as it was not impossible that she might fall in with some of those bodies of French troops that were continually crossing the Pyrenees, for though the Catalans were loyal to a man, and a great part of Catalonia was occupied by the British allies of Spain, still the human inundation poured into that province, which was the continual theatre of war. The rest of the shepherds became guerillas and Pedro was often left alone to manage his great flock as he could. Though no patriot, Pedro was a kind man, a faithful and tender husband, a fond father, and a good Christian. His flock willingly followed him from height to height, and every individual sheep came to him when called by name; the noble dogs guarded them from the attacks of the wolf and bear, but were never employed as in England,—in getting the flock together; they were black and white, about the size of a wolf, and were each armed with a collar studded with iron spikes. These creatures, gentle as the timid animals they guarded, were fed with bread and milk, all their ferocity being reserved for the wild beasts with whom they had nightly combats. Often were the young family of the shepherd safely conveyed from precipice to precipice, upon the backs of these dogs; Rollo, the finest of these animals, had formed the strongest attachment to

the little son of his master. Even before Carlos could walk, he was accustomed to cling to the coat of his canine friend for support, and the traveller who entered the Pyrenean vallies, wondered at the courage of the infant, and the docility and affection displayed by the powerful animal.

Breathing the pure air of the mountains, surrounded by the most magnificent scenery in nature, the mountain children grew bold, strong, and venturous. Attended by Rollo, bearing Carlos upon his back, Teresa would wander in search of wild flowers, from cliff to cliff, sometimes discovering one of those wondrous basins, encircled by walls of granite, within whose enclosures bloomed many lovely plants of brilliant blue and sweetest scents. There mid the shattered wreck of another world, the Spanish girl would sit weaving garlands for herself, her brother, and the faithful Rollo, wondering if other steps had ever trodden this fairy land of beauty. These enclosures are formed by the fall of vast blocks of granite, bringing with them in their descent, from the rocks above, the soil and herbage into the little valley; the shelter the lofty wall affords encourages the growth of Alpine flowers, the birds and winds bring other species, upon their wings as it were, and a choice garden soon springs up, which, watered by the springs and rivulets, blooms a little Eden in the wilds. How happy the discovery of one of these gardens made Teresa, no child could enjoy life more than she did, as she bounded along the rugged mountain path, trusting to Rollo's sagacity for finding her way home. The dog was never at fault on such occasions, and when Blanca came out of the hut to meet her children and give them the noon-meal, she set bread and milk before Rollo first, and kissed the faithful guardian of her young family. Then the little maiden would relate her morning adventure, display her floral treasures, and entreat her fond mother to visit the garden in the wilderness.

Blanca, pleased that her children were pleased, would promise to do so on some future day, and when she too beheld the lovely spot, her pious mind would glow with adoring love towards that mighty Creator, who bade the Pyrenean mountains arise and condescended to adorn their rugged dells with beauty. She named the spot the garden of Gethsemane, and seating herself by the children, related the touching history of their Saviour's passion, and bade them remember him. How sweet are the lessons of piety from maternal lips; how gently did they sink like dew into the hearts of these Spanish children, preparing them for the trials, the sorrows, the dangers of the unknown future. Oh! little did they think as they gambolled by that mother's side, in what inclement clime they were destined to leave her, or in what distant European capital they were to find a home. Crowned with flowers, and breathing now the summer wind of the sweet south, playful as lambs, and as unconscious too of evil these young and innocent victims of Napoleon's insatiable ambition, at present, enjoyed the gifts of that Providence, upon whose bounty they were daily pensioners.

Sometimes the wanderings of Teresa and her brother were attended with some peril, once she had nearly slipped from the height of a precipice, and once Carlos had rolled unhurt, down a steep hill into the deep green valley beneath, where he might have remained till now, if Rollo had not caught him by the collar of his gaberdine, and brought him with much toil, to the affrighted Teresa, who had made the adjacent rocks and vallies, ring with her cries; yielding to the feelings of the moment, the mountain children had kneeled down, to thank the Lord, who had made Rollo the instrument of Carlos' preservation.

Another adventure, still more perilous, befell them, and had the useful effect of restraining their wanderings within the bounds of prudence. One day they arose with the early dawn, and taking a basket of provisions with them, resolved to explore the new range of mountainous scenery to which the flocks had been lately shifted. They paid a passing visit to their father,

caressed his prettiest lambs, and promised him to bring home some partridges' eggs to mend the evening meal with an omelette, he bade them to be careful and not venture beyond the sound of the tinkle of the bells, that were suspended about the ram's necks. They promised, and light as the mountain goats, bounded along the heights till huge rocks shut out the sight of Diego and his flocks, and the sound of the bells grew fainter, till again brought back upon the ear, by one of the numerous mountain echoes. Among the vallies of green herbage, they found the partridges' nests, and having emptied the basket of provisions, filled it with the eggs. Rollo now warned them to return, by sundry barks and bounds, but the children disregarded his signs, till the appearance of clouds rolling down from above, made them wish they had attended to the suggestions of their four-footed friend. Accustomed to these tempests, the children knew it would be impossible at present, to return, so they looked about for a cleft in the rocks, into which they might creep for shelter from the coming storm. They soon discovered a sort of cave, which they fearlessly entered followed by Rollo, who began growling in a very formidable manner, elevating the curls of his neck till they formed a sort of savage ruff, his eyes sparkling at the same time with fury. Teresa heard a soft low breathing in a corner of the cave, and directing her eyes towards the spot whence the sound proceeded, saw two soft looking black creatures, lying on some moss fast asleep. Bones were strewn on the floor,—the children had taken shelter in the den of a she-bear. The fearlessness of her character, aided by some female curiosity, kept Teresa by the side of the cubs, wasting the precious time in caressing them, she ought to have spent in flight.

“How pretty are these little black bears, how I should like to bring them up with bread and milk; look, Carlos,” said she, restraining Rollo's approaches with difficulty “do you think between us, we can carry them home.”

“They are too heavy, Teresa, and if the bear should come home,—look at these bones,—ah, come away,—I am afraid, indeed I am,—that the mother will find us here, and eat us up.”

“She will not come yet, see, I can lift the heaviest, how the dear pretty thing growls,—come, take this, we will not mind the storm, but hasten home with our prize. Here Carlos, here is your's, quick, quick.”

Carlos drew back in terror, and Rollo darting forward, in spite of Teresa's efforts, decided the fate of both the cubs in a moment, by strangling them without mercy.

“Naughty, naughty Rollo,” cried Teresa, as the huge dog gambolled round her, “why have you killed my pretty bear-cubs. Well, we will go now, for it will be a bad job to stay for the bear. Come Carlos, come Rollo,”—but Rollo elevated his shaggy head, and displaying his formidable teeth, assumed an attitude of defence; a low deep muttering sound made Carlos draw nearer to his sister. “Silly boy, it is the thunder,” said Teresa, but the fierce angry bark of Rollo, instantly convinced her of her error, and her cheek grew pale, as she clasped her brother to her bosom, and with white lips exclaimed, “The bear, the bear,” as the enraged mother of the cubs appeared in the entrance of the cave.

The children gave themselves up for lost,—they did not scream, they did not attempt to fly. Poor Teresa lifted up her heart in agony to Him who alone could help her, casting from time to time, her affrighted eyes upon her champion. Well and valiantly did Rollo meet the furious attack of the bereaved mother of the cubs; who, raising herself upon her hind legs, clasped him tightly within her monstrous paws; Rollo's iron spiked collar, would not suffer the furious beast to retain her hold, and they rolled together on the rugged floor of the cavern, which was now dyed with blood. So terrible grew the combat, that Teresa no longer dared to look on, but shutting her eyes, clasped her young brother tighter to her bosom, with the sad conviction,

that she had brought him by her rashness, to a horrid death. Her feelings finally overpowered her, and she sunk down in a state of insensibility, in which condition she remained a considerable time. She was awakened from her long trance, by the awful roll of the thunder, the crashing of the rocks, and the wild roar of the mountain torrents, as they swept down the mountain ridge with resistless force. She opened her eyes, Rollo lay bleeding and panting near her; the bear covered with wounds, had dragged herself towards her cubs to die, and with maternal love, regardless of the agonies of death, was licking her slaughtered young. Teresa audibly blessed God for her preservation, and if a tear filled her eyes, as she looked upon the moving picture before her, it arose from the pure deep sources of feminine feeling.

Carlos was still within her arms, the child had actually sobbed himself to sleep; Teresa gently laid him down on the rugged floor of the cavern, while she bestowed a thousand caresses upon her brave defender. Rollo feebly returned her endearments, he was wounded in many places; Teresa feared he would never leave the cave alive, and then, she thought. "If the bear should recover, how dreadful still their fate might be." The poor bear had however, received a mortal wound, a dull film was over her eyes, her huge limbs fluttered, and she fell dead upon her cubs. Fain would Teresa have left the grim trio in possession of their rocky sepulchre, but the awful raging of the storm kept her prisoner, and she sat between Carlos and poor Rollo, audibly praying for help yet fearing that her trials would never have an end. Gradually the tempest subsided, the clouds rolled away, and the beams of the sun, again gilded the magnificent mountain scenery, and the distant barking of the dogs, told the Spanish girl, that her father was searching for his lost children among these wild solitudes. She knew the instinct of the animals would lead them to the cave, which she did not intend to leave for fear of losing the skins of the she-bear and her cubs. In a little while, her father, attended by his dogs, and another shepherd, entered the cavern and beheld with wonder, the scene its arena displayed. With hearts full of gratitude and love the whole party quitted the den. Teresa and Carlos bearing the dead cubs, Diego carrying the faithful Rollo on his shoulders, and the stranger dragging the bear. Thus loaded, their progress was extremely slow, and it was night before they reached the hut of Blanca, whom they found in an agony of doubt and anxiety. The tender mother clasped her children to her bosom, unconscious that any other peril had assailed them beside the storm, what were her feelings, when she learned their fearful jeopardy. "Ah my children, my children," said she, "never forget Him who hath delivered ye from the paw of the bear. He, who hath had mercy on you now, will preserve ye in all future dangers. Put your trust in Him."

The children never forgot the words of their pious mother, they often had occasion to remember them in days of deeper peril.

It was some weeks before Rollo could crawl about, but Blanca dressed his wounds with her own hands, and fed him on broth, made of his enemy the bear. The flesh of the ursine family proved delicious, and their skins made warm coverlids for the beds. Teresa gaining experience by her late adventure, discontinued her wanderings, and applied herself to domestic employments, till she was old enough to take care of her father's goats, which were his own property; the flocks he tended belonging to the superior of a neighbouring convent. She was now near twelve years of age, and possessed a fine healthy constitution, united to an excellent understanding. The strong mind of her mother was tempered with the patience and gentleness of her father. The Catalonian girl was tall of her age, and very comely; nor did the sun look upon a merrier lighter-hearted maiden.

The struggle for Spanish liberty continued, and still the boundless ambition of the French

Emperor, sent forth new armies to deluge the patriot land with human blood. Pedro and his family often watched the march of these foreign myrmidons, and when a prayer was uttered by Blanca, or sorrowful words that bespoke her sympathy with her countrymen, "Ah! woe, woe, to poor Spain," he would still embrace her, saying as he did so, "But thou art safe my beloved, safe with me, in the wild fastnesses of these impregnable hills."

Blanca sighed as she felt that Pedro's arm was wanted for Spain at this crisis; but she feared the mildness of his temper, would not suit the life of a guerrilla. She loved him, and she did not urge him to leave her, and the children.

The ambition of Napoleon as we have seen, had found a new object, he was about to attempt the conquest of Russia; and the conscription was raised in every province he had subjugated, to furnish troops for the expedition.

Pedro, who took care of the flocks belonging to the monastery of Lerida, ventured thither in search of hands, to assist him in shearing the sheep, as well as to obtain from his employers, some money to furnish his family with food and clothing. On his way he unfortunately fell in with a French detachment, by which he was immediately captured.

Pedro pleaded that he had never borne arms against the French, entreating the commander of the troop, to permit him to return to his wife and children, and peaceful occupations in the mountains.

"I cannot do so," replied the Captain, "because our great Emperor wants soldiers to serve in the army. Indeed I cannot be so much your enemy as to comply with your request, for your fortune is as good as made. You are a fine-looking fellow, and in the hot war, the imperial army will shortly be engaged in, you are just as likely to get a marshal's baton as a bullet."

The bitter tears that rolled down the cheek of the Catalonian shepherd, excited the indignation of the soldiers.—"Captain, you will never be able to make a soldier of this poor coward" cried the serjeant, contemptuously.

"I am no coward," retorted the Catalan, with more spirit than his captors supposed him capable of displaying. "I have fought with the bear and the wolf when gaunt with famine, and felt no fear, though the idea of serving against my countrymen, and leaving my wife and children, makes a woman of me;" and again the truant tears bedimmed his manly cheeks.

The serjeant had a wife and family in France, whom he loved, and he was touched with the grief of the captive.—"Perhaps the Captain will allow you to take your chance of the lot, and will not force you to be a conscript against your will. At Barcelona, whither we are going, you may try your luck, that is, if Monsieur le Capitaine consents."

"Yes, yes, the poor fellow shall have a fair trial, and if he is drawn, he can write to his wife to join him."

A ray of hope gladdened the dejected Catalan, but it lasted only for a moment, and then faded away into deeper darkness than before. Like a victim, he accompanied the detachment to Barcelona; and entering the town-hall, felt certain of his doom before the fatal lot was drawn. His forebodings were verified, and the only thing that softened the blow was, the assurance that he would not be compelled to serve against his country.

Pedro's unnerved and trembling hand could hardly perform the necessary task of writing to his wife. Among those young men, who had escaped a military life in the Emperor's service, he found a relation of his own, and Diego Garvos, promised to convey his last farewell to Blanca and his children.

"My Blanca," the blotted and irregular lines began, "will never see her poor spouse again; he has been drawn for a conscript, and will in a few days leave Spain for ever. Never,—never,

shall I see thee, or pretty Teresa, and playful Carlos again. The sheep must find another shepherd, the dogs another master,—Oh! that I had fought for my country, and died for her and thee, my beloved; God has punished my indifference to the sufferings of my native land, by permitting me to fall into the hands of the French. Yes, they have made me a soldier,—a slave. I am to be led into France, and from thence to Russia; never, never to return to Catalonia. May the saints take thee into their holy keeping—thee, and our children.—Farewell, my Blanca, farewell for ever!

“Thy miserable husband,

“PEDRO ALVEZ.”

“P. S. My kinsman, Diego Garvos, has promised to convey this safely to thee:—Alas! what is to become of thee I know not. My stipend is still due, for the robbers have not got that, so thou wilt not be utterly destitute.

“Could I but look on thy dear face, and the sweet faces of my children, once more, I should be willing to lie down and die the next moment; but it may not be.”



CHAPTER III.
THE MEETING ON THE MOUNTAIN ROAD.

——“Nearer we drew
And lo! a woman, young and delicate,
Wrapt in a russet cloak from head to foot,
Her eyes cast down, her cheek upon her hand,
In deepest thought——”——ROGERS.

The new conscript remained at Barcelona some days, scarcely eating or sleeping, wasted alike by grief and sickness. His altered appearance made the serjeant think that the recruit would hardly leave the frontier alive. The surgeon, however, pronounced his malady to be of the mind, not of the body; and said that new scenes, and the stirring incidents of a military life, would restore the poor home-sick shepherd, when once he should have quitted his native land. In that fine athletic form, those vigorous muscles, those nerves braced so tightly by the mountain air, he saw power to strive against suffering, to resist sickness; and strength, if not cut off by the accidents of life, to endure to old age. Jean Dubois, the serjeant, possessed a feeling heart; he, too, was a husband and father, and though the open manifestations of those tender affections these beloved objects inspired, appeared to him unmanly, he more than once entreated Captain Beauville to let the poor fellow go, with an earnestness and familiarity, unknown in any company in any other army. Beauville was his first cousin, and had risen from the ranks. Dubois expected to be an officer himself soon, and had a marshal's baton in perspective; thus neither birth nor education separated the commissioned from the non-commissioned officers, as in England. The history of the world shows us, that it is not good for uneducated men to attain to a height of power—power which is only obtained by brutal force and energy. The imperial crown of Rome was sold by her soldiery; Turkey received her sovereigns from the janizaries; Russia from the Strelitzs; and the destinies of France at that time were ruled by a military despotism,—the worst kind of government that can exist in any country.

To the compassionate entreaties of Dubois the captain replied,—

“That Spaniard is a fine handsome fellow, and will do us credit—I do not mean to part with him.”

“He is breaking his heart Captain, for his wife and children; yes, he is pining himself to death for them.”

“Nonsense; he will find another wife and children,—besides, he may take them with him if he likes.”

“He may send for them, then, *mon capitaine?*” continued the kind serjeant.

“Yes, if he can get one of his rascally countrymen to carry his message; but his wife will never be such a fool as to come.”

Serjeant Dubois thought otherwise; he had witnessed in the course of the Peninsula war much devotion on the part of the Spanish women for their husbands, and he ran with his good news to cheer the broken spirits of the husband and father.

He found Pedro Alvez a lonely man in the midst of a crowd of French soldiers, from whom language, country, habits, and early associations, entirely separated him. Dubois, who spoke Spanish, and even the Basque, with fluency, (having acquired them during the campaigns of the Peninsula, though accompanied with the ringing accentuation of his own tongue,)

approached his captive saying, "Cheer up, old soldier, and do not break thy heart about thy wife and thy little ones, for Monsieur le Capitaine permits thee to send for them."

The bright colouring of hope returned to the sallow cheek of the Spanish conscript; his eye brightened; he stretched out his arms, as if to enfold these dear objects of his affections. He seemed for a moment another man; but the excitement was of momentary continuance, the gloom again overshadowed his features, and he became the statue of melancholy he was before.

"What ails thee, man," cried the serjeant, who now began to think that his new recruit was going mad in real earnest.

"Do you think I will drag my wife and children into the perils of war, or to perish, perhaps, more lingeringly among the snows of the far north?—Man, I will die first."

"To die there?—No, no, Signor don Spaniard, we shall all be captains, and our wives and daughters ladies, and perhaps duchesses; for we shall conquer, no doubt, as we always do, when the little corporal^[B] leads us in person. I shall take with me my wife, and my petite Nina, for with our grand armament, the affair with the Russians will be over in six months, and we shall be made men for life."

"There is a God who punishes lawless power, and He can arrest the arm of your tyrant, Napoleon," replied the shepherd, "let the robber beware,—he may yet lose his prey. What to him are the tears of widows and bereaved wives; what to him, the drops wrung from the eye of a Catalonian shepherd, bitterer though they be, than if they were his heart's best blood."

"Silence, Catalan," replied the serjeant sternly, "or if you must rail, rail upon me. The Emperor must be named with respect. Yes, yes,—the little corporal, the idol of the army, is not to be spoken of thus;—You know me to be a good-natured man—my comrades would report you now, and you would be shot."

"I am a desperate man," replied the shepherd, "and when I have looked my last at my native hills, I shall get my discharge, though it be with a volley of bullets."

"Wilt thou not write to thy wife, then? I promise thee, on the word of a soldier, that the letter shall be forwarded to her."

The conscript shook his head impatiently, and the kind-hearted serjeant left him to himself.

The march over the Pyrenees was fixed for the morrow, and Pedro Alvez exchanged with a bitter sigh his shepherd's dress for a new and splendid uniform, that set off his fine athletic form to great advantage. The corps of infantry to which he was attached were got into marching order at an early hour in the morning, and the poor conscript began to ascend those stupendous heights that nature has placed as a bulwark between the kingdoms of France and Spain. Every crag, every wild mountain path, was familiar to his eye, and dear to his heart. Far above the road he marked a rock, scarcely seen in the blue distance, or if seen, so blended with the clouds, that only the experienced glance of the mountaineer could detect its existence. Behind that rock was his home; his eyes grew dim with tears, and softer feelings stole to his heart, replacing those fierce and deadly ones: the sense of injury was nurturing there.—His wife and children.—Oh! while following the course of the rapid and romantic Bidassoa, how his thoughts clung to them. Owing to the inequality of the ground, the march was slow and tedious; and as he still kept his eyes turned towards the lessening speck he called his home, he was not aware for a few minutes of a circumstance that excited great curiosity among his comrades. By the side of the hill round which the file must pass, sat a female, wrapt in her basquina and mantilla, supporting on her arm a young girl; a boy was at her feet playing with a huge dog, while sundry packages lay round her. It was not till the serjeant asked him "if these

wayfarers were not gipsies," that Pedro became aware of the group; then he strained his eyes, scarcely daring to trust the evidence of his senses; was it illusion, or was it indeed Blanca and his children that he saw? His name was then shrilly uttered, so shrilly, that the rushing stream could not stifle its sounds—Yes, she was there! yes, though uncalled, his wife was there with her family—He shouted in reply, and stretching his arms forward, exclaimed "My wife, my children, are ye there?—let me speak to them; let me bid them a last farewell—if ye are men and not granite, like these rocks," added he, in an imploring tone, "permit me to take leave of these dear objects, from whom I am parting for ever,"—The serjeant spoke to the commander and the word "halt," was reiterated along the line. Blanca and her children descended to meet her husband, and in an instant was in his arms.

"Now blessings upon thee, Blanca, for coming thus to meet me," said the grateful husband, "to see thee again, to hear thy voice, and to embrace my children, was what I dared not even hope for. Yes, dearest, best of wives, this parting, bitter though it be, will cheer me to my last hour. It was kind thus to come to say farewell."

"Not to say farewell, my Pedro, am I come," replied Blanca, "but to share your exile and perils; nothing but death shall part us; our children, too, are here; even poor Rollo is not wanting."

Pedro folded his children to his heart, patted Rollo, then shook his head. "This must not be, dear Blanca; go leave me, bring up our family virtuously, and let the babe thou bearest be born a Catalan. I cannot expose thee to the perils that surround the soldier's wife; return, my beloved, to thy home and to thy country, and leave me to my fate."

"My home is here," cried Blanca, throwing herself into her husband's arms, "I now know no other." Pedro then yielded, and with a heart lightened of all care, placed his family and his goods upon the baggage waggon, bade Rollo guard them, and resumed his march with a light springing step, and bounding bosom. Home, country, what were they now to him? his home, his world, were with him.

With the self-devotion that marked her character, Blanca, as soon as she received her husband's letter, resolved to share his dangers. She gave the flock into the charge of the under-shepherd, hastened to the Prior of Lerida, to whom they appertained, acquainted him with the misfortune that had befallen her husband, rendered up the stewardship, and received the wages due to her husband, asked of him the rites of the church; then fortified with prayers and blessings, hurried back to her mountain home, to prepare herself and her children for their new mode of life. She had purchased warm clothing for them at Lerida; for though she knew not in what part of the world to look for Russia, the good prior had told her, that it was a far northern country, where the winters were long and cold. She then converted her simple household moveables into money, and having heard that the new raised troops would pass the frontier upon such a day, was upon the watch from early dawn, to meet her husband, as we have seen. Pious, self-devoted, and faithful, Blanca did not feel that she had made any sacrifice, yet as they descended the heights towards St. Jean de Luz, and quitted every familiar feature in the mountain landscape, tears filled her eyes, and wrapping her arms about her children, she wept while quitting her dear country for ever. They shed tears because her eyes were wet; but they were too young to share the deep feelings that agitated her heart.—A new land was before them; another language was ringing in their ears; strange customs excited their curiosity and awoke their mirth, and they were laughing with the tears still undried upon their cheeks: for at that time of life, no impressions last very long, and then the stamp of care had not marked their young happy faces, nor darkened upon their brows.—No cruel hand unrolled the dim and

shadowy future; all was bright, glowing, and cheerful in the present day, without dangers and without clouds.

At St. Jean de Luz, the Spanish language was no longer spoken, and Teresa would have been sadly puzzled, if she had not been introduced there to the Serjeant Dubois' wife and daughter, who fortunately spoke a little Spanish. Nina was a smart girl, about fifteen, dressed in the Parisian fashion, with a short waist and immense bonnet. She was very good-natured, and undertook to instruct her in two important matters—the reformation of her dress, and the acquirement of the French language. Teresa was not old enough to understand and duly appreciate the condescension of Mademoiselle Nina in taking so much pains with her personal appearance, but she profited greatly by her companion's lessons in the Gallic tongue, for the acquirement of which her youth afforded great facilities.

[B] The soldier's pet name for Napoleon.



CHAPTER IV. THE INVASION.

“And oh! that night was stormy still with lightning and with thunder,
As if the very vault of heaven would split itself asunder;
And there we lay all cold, and thought, if not in fear in sorrow,
Of those whom we had left at home, and of the dread to-morrow.”—CORPORAL
UNDERWOOD.

The re-union of Pedro Alvez with his family entirely restored him to health and tranquillity, and he applied himself to the acquirement of his military duties, with the most patient perseverance. Captain Beauville prided himself upon his penetration in discovering the latent talents of the ci-devant Spanish shepherd, while serjeant Dubois talked encouragingly to the conscript of decorations, commissions, and titles.

Pedro was not dazzled, no, not even by the knowledge that Junot and many others had risen from the ranks, who now carried the batons of marshals, or the coronets of dukes, or princes. He only wished to earn a right to return to his mountain-home, and to die among his own people. It was Blanca, whose stronger mind had inspired this idea, and had thus learned her husband to hope. Sensible, pious, and modest, Blanca was as domesticated, as devoted, and as virtuous in a camp, as in her own mountain solitude, though exposed to many temptations, to which she had hitherto been a stranger.

To form the conduct of her daughter by the model of her own, was her daily care—for it is only the virtuous and prudent female that can guide the inexperienced and thoughtless girl in the slippery paths of life. Encamped in the environs of Paris, and beholding for the first time a great and splendid city, Teresa would have been never weary of the gay scenes the streets presented.

Blanca checked this disposition, to run about, in the bud; and civilly declining Nina's services as friend and conductress unless she herself was of the party, kept her daughter too well employed to leave much time for dissipation. As it was, Teresa heard so much of Napoleon that insensibly the terror of his name began to wear off. The sight of the columns and arches that perpetuated his victories dazzled her, and she pictured to herself a magnificent person, whose appearance would correspond with the vastness of his conquests, and the grandeur of his palaces.

“There, Teresa, is the little corporal himself,” said Nina to the young Spaniard, who was walking with her mother towards the Champ de Mars. “Look hard at him, that you may know him again.”

“Who is the little corporal,” asked Teresa, greatly puzzled.

“The Emperor, to be sure; do you not see him riding in front, talking to Brethier?”

“He is not half so grandly dressed as the others, nor does he seem so tall,” replied Teresa, who felt disappointed.

Blanca was near enough to see the destroyer of her country, and the arbiter of her destiny. She, looking beyond the adventitious circumstances of dress or stature, saw the look of determination, the eye of thought, the gloomy brow, the mighty energy of countenance, and felt that because he was Emperor she was in exile here.

While these reflections were passing in her mind, she heard Teresa ask the reason of his being called the little corporal.

“Do not you know, Teresa? why I thought every body knew about that. When Napoleon made the first campaign of Italy, some old soldiers of the Republic thought him too much of a boy to be their general. They grumbled at his advancement, and among themselves gave him no rank till after the battle of Marengo, when they made him, among themselves, a corporal, and as he is not tall, they called him ‘le petit corporal,’ which appellation, has stuck by him ever since.”

“I wonder they did not make him a serjeant, and then an officer, till they got him up to a marshal.”

“Oh, that would have been too ridiculous,” replied the French girl, laughing, “for as it was, the story got abroad, and their comrades teased them about their discernment of Napoleon’s merits, till they owned themselves to be old fools, and so they certainly were.”

Teresa thought it strange that a gentleman in a grey coat and cocked hat, should have been the unconscious means of keeping fractious children quiet in Spain. Carlos was afraid of him still, but she had seen him, and her dread was gone. Simple girl! she knew not that the terrible influence of his power was then leading forth more than half a million to perish in the frozen fields of Russia. She and all she loved were about to form a part of the northern expedition, but when would they return? In a few days the conscript regiment was on its march to join the army of Italy, under the command of the Viceroy, Eugene Beauharnois; and Pedro Alvez found himself, with many strangers of various creeds and nations, ranged under the banners of the step-son of Napoleon.

Teresa and her brother were both surprised and amused on their march through Germany; and as they were at an age in which it is easy to acquire a smattering of the various strange tongues they heard in the regiment, they were soon enabled to speak a little German, a little Italian, a word or two of Polish, and a good deal of French. Pedro and his family were all favorites in the regiment; his quiet sedateness, Blanca’s mildness, and Teresa’s vivacity, tempered with modesty, pleased every body; nor were Carlos and Rollo less appreciated. Then the Catalonians played the guitar with tolerable skill, and sang with sweetness and expression, so that as yet none of the dreary forebodings of the Catalan father had been realized. He found a great many Spaniards in the brigade to which his regiment was attached, and as he could read and write well he was made a corporal.

This circumstance greatly pleased his daughter, and some of Dubois’ prognostics and encouragements came into her head, as she ran, half wild with joy, to congratulate her father—

“Dear child, it is a step nearer home,” was his grave reply.

At Dresden was the general rendezvous of the greatest army that had ever entered the field since the time of Xerxes. Six hundred and ten thousand men prepared to invade Russia: and never perhaps, was any war undertaken with less cause. This vast armament was ill-provided with provision; for it was a favorite maxim of Napoleon’s, “that war should maintain war,” and though he was certain that the Russians, with whom he had formerly fought at Friedland, Eylau, and Austerlitz, would make a formidable resistance, he was very far from imagining the nature of the defence they would adopt.

Upon the banks of the Niemen an accident occurred that made some impression on the mind of Napoleon. In reconnoitring the river, his horse stumbled, and threw him with violence to the earth. “A Roman,” cried he, “would have gone back.” It would have been well if he had yielded to the presage; but another, equally appalling, greeted him upon the Russian side of the river. The enemy, far from contesting the passage of the mighty boundary stream, allowed the invading armies to enter their territory, retreating in good order, as if to make way for their

march. Napoleon had not expected this, and when he heard a mighty sound in the distance, he thought it was the Russian artillery, opening upon his multitudes. It was the voice of the tempest, whose dark heavy clouds hung over the waters of the Niemen, like a pall enveloping in its dense shadow the strangers who were crossing its banks. For seventy miles of their march the French troops strove with the elements; and never had the oldest veteran in those battalions witnessed so fearful a storm. The heavens seemed to warn these devoted men back, and many drew a melancholy omen from the circumstance.

It was on the twenty third of June that Napoleon entered the Russian territory. It took three days for this important movement, and the grand army, still harrassed by the tempest that hung over their line of march, followed their imperial leader and his fortunes, for the first time, with some anxiety for the future.

Upon the mind of the Spanish conscript, Pedro Alvez, these circumstances left a strong impression; and when, after the terrible march, the evening bivouac brought him wet and weary to his frightened children and anxious wife, he clasped her to his bosom and whispered to her,—“Blanca, all is lost! the voice of God has warned us back, and warned us in vain: we shall see Spain no more! we shall perish in this northern land. Never, never shall our children behold the Catalonian Pyrenees, for the hand of the Lord has gone out against us.” Blanca could not reassure him; a stifling sensation at her heart seemed to forbid her to give utterance to her feelings; they were in fact the same as his own; she could only hang upon his neck and weep. From that hour the Catalan shepherd was never seen to smile. The sight of Blanca, who in a few months would again become a mother, and the caresses of his children only increased his melancholy. The faithful wife, seeing that she could not soothe him by her feigned cheerfulness, took a different course. She was pious, and she taught her husband to look beyond the world to pure and holy sources of consolation; nor was she less urgent with her young children, that they, too, “might look for help in the time of trouble to Him who is able to save them to the uttermost who call upon Him.”

The prospect of the campaign was dreary enough, for the Russians, adopting the wise measures of their great regenerator, Peter the Great, continually retreated before the invading armies of Napoleon, burning towns and villages upon their march, abandoning to the French a desert and inhospitable country. It was the same line of policy that had wrecked the fortunes of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden a century before.

The French became anxious, they believed in the omnipotence of Napoleon’s star; they were confident that could they once bring the Russians to meet them upon a fair field, the contest would terminate in their favour; but the rulers of the invaded people knew better than to do this. They delayed fighting till the murmurs of the patriotic and devoted peasantry obliged the government to hazard a battle before Witpesk. Whilst still in Poland and Lithuania the want of provisions was severely felt, and as armed men seldom starve quietly, the French troops committed great ravages in obtaining food for themselves and their horses. As they entered these countries under the character of deliverers, the system of pillage their great necessities made them adopt terrified the astonished people, hitherto so friendly to them. When complaints of these lawless forages were brought to Napoleon, he was both annoyed and displeased—the practice was forbidden, but how could it be avoided. The general officers themselves were obliged to wink at it, as necessity knows no law.

At length the system of retreat adopted by Barclay de Tolly, the Russian commander-in-chief, became odious to the invaded people, although it was founded in wisdom. For three days a fierce and continued battle was fought in the environs of Witpesk, in which the French could

hardly be called victorious; but they remained masters of the ground, and as Witpesk was abandoned to them by the Russian general, the invaders pressed onwards, flushed with the hope of conquest. In these battles, which were fought by Murat, king of Naples, and the Viceroy of Italy, Eugene, under the eye of Napoleon, the Spanish conscript first became an actor in the terrible game of war. Calm, courageous, and collected, as when in his happier days he defended his flock from the bear and wolf, Pedro Alvez realized the opinion Captain Beauville formerly entertained of his courage. Yet it was not for glory or for reward that Pedro exerted his energies of mind and body; it was for his wife and children; it was for her who had followed him into a foreign land, that his strong right hand had taken its bold part in these awful combats. Yet his conduct seemed to spring from the common motives that influenced the soldiers of Napoleon, and the rank of serjeant and a decoration were the rewards of his bravery.

The army entered the deserted streets of Witpesk, from which Barclay de Tolly had just retreated. Its inhabitants, its provisions, were gone. Then Napoleon appeared for a few hours determined to remain encamped during the winter in this city, which nature herself has fortified so well, and where musters of Lithuanian supplies could reach him from Dantzic, and the spring would see him at Moscow or St. Petersburg; but this wise resolution, unhappily for him, but happily for the tranquillity of the world, did not last. Controlled, perhaps, by that Almighty Being, in whose hand he had hitherto been an instrument of wrath, he changed his design and gave orders for the march upon Smolensko.

Blanca and her children, during these dreadful days of battle, had remained in a state of the most terrible uncertainty respecting the fate of Pedro. The noise of the cannonade, the sight of the wounded, the clouds of smoke and dust, that enveloped the scenes of contest, seemed to shroud the destiny of the poor conscript from the weeping eyes that were watching for him. Sometimes the fond wife found consolation in fervent prayer, in which she was joined by her children. Then she sought a sad, yet compassionate solace in assisting the surgeons in preparing bandages for the wounded, or slaking the death-thirst of the dying, by bringing the cold waters of the Lucital to their burning lips. Her Pedro was not among these hapless groups, and that seemed indeed a mercy. Ah! better could she have borne to have seen him dead at her feet, than torn with the grape shot like some of these. Encouraged by her mother's example, Teresa ventured to give her assistance, and still she enquired of every wounded person belonging to his division whether he was safe. He had been seen marching upon Witpesk, but as the battle was raging there, that was not much to hear.

What then was the joy of the mother, when upon entering Witpesk, seated with her family on a baggage waggon, she recognized her husband unhurt, and decorated with the ribbon of the legion of honor. Deep heartfelt thanksgiving sprang from her grateful lips, and shrouding her face in her daughter's bosom, she swooned from the very excess of her joy. Ah! glory, dazzling as thou art at a distance, what is the near view of these scenes, where the blood-dyed laurels are won. Hundreds of women and children had suffered like Blanca and her family; but to many the evening's bivouac at Witpesk had brought terrible certainty in exchange for the doubts and fears of three days. Nightfall saw Pedro Alvez surrounded by the dear familiar faces of his family; but many a gallant comrade had gone forth with him, whose remains were left to the wolf and the raven.

“It was for thee, my Blanca—for thee and for my children, not for this, I fought,” cried the conscript, touching the tri-coloured ribbon with contempt. “Oh! had I striven thus for my native land, I should not have been acting against my conscience, and I should have been in Spain with thee.”

“God disposes of all things, my beloved,” replied Blanca; but she shared the same feeling of regret that never was long absent from the conscript’s heart.



CHAPTER V. THE BATTLE OF BORODINO.

“Of unrecorded fame that soldier died;
Yet was there one who never said a prayer
Of him forgetful.”—SOUTHEY.

Disease made its formidable appearance in the French army, and several thousand men and a great many horses fell victims to the dysentery. Among these victims were numbered the wife and daughter of Serjeant Dubois. Poor Nina survived her mother only a few hours, and during her short but painful illness, had the consolation of receiving the tenderest attentions from her Spanish friend. How sad it seemed to Teresa to hear the dying sufferer rave in her delirium, of France; and speak with hurried rapidity of gay and joyous scenes, while entering upon the unknown ones of eternity. Dubois knew that his dearly-loved Nina was passing through the valley and shadow of death. He had seen her drooping head reclining on the lap of Teresa before the morning march began, and would have given his life to have closed the eyes of her, whom he had seen a few days before bounding to meet him in the bloom of her youth and beauty,—but military duty tore him from her; and having lifted her fainting form upon a baggage waggon, he quitted her, muttering to himself,—“What, both my wife and child! Nina, my poor Nina, I shall see thee no more!” He knew not then how soon this untimely death would be envied by myriads, who were now marching forward full of life and hope.

The feeble lamp of existence fluttered for some hours in the breast of poor Nina, but consciousness never returned, and by the evening’s close, Felix Dubois had no longer a daughter.

War, unholy war, knows none of those dear charities that link the dead to the sacred affections of the living; and the remains of poor Nina were left with others who had died upon the march, unsepulchred by the way side—unhallowed to the weather.

Teresa lost her childish vivacity; her mind was forming itself upon the model of her mother’s strength and firmness. She was still a girl in years, but the trying scenes through which she was passing, were making her a woman before her time. She began to feel great anxiety for her mother’s situation, who would be confined with a third child some time in September. All her spare hours were spent in making preparations for the expected stranger, or in converting the stout woollen cloths and linen into garments, which the foresight of Blanca had provided against the winter of a rigorous climate. The hardy family, used to vicissitudes of climate, resisted the attacks of disease, and were as strong and healthy as when they were breathing the sharp air of the Catalonian Pyrenees. They were not, indeed, so straitened for the necessaries of life, for the army of Italy, to which they belonged, was commanded by (the Viceroy Prince Eugene,) a good and great man, who had seen to its appointments with the tender care of a father.

At Krasnoi another terrible battle was fought, in which, though victory still followed the eagles of Napoleon, the Russian army made good its retreat to Smolensko. Upon the eighteenth of August, after a sharp contest, the Russians abandoned the city, but not before they had fired it in many places. Driven out by the flames, the grand army marched for Moscow, where Napoleon hoped to winter. Some of the veteran troops divined at once the result of these tremendous sacrifices made by a patriotic people to free their native land from invasion. They no longer saw the star of Napoleon’s fortunes gilding the future; they beheld the ravages of

want and weather, and openly avowed their determination of escaping the horrors that they felt awaited them. Children of that era of atheistical night, that had covered for a time the throne and the altar, many of these destroyed themselves during the march upon Borodino, rashly entering the presence of Him, whose fiat they had presumptuously anticipated.

Hitherto, Pedro Alvez had not received a scratch, his career had been singularly fortunate; and Major Beauville, (for he had been lately promoted to that rank,) and Serjeant Dubois both predicted, that he would soon change his worsted epaulettes for silver ones, so well did he fulfil his duties as a soldier. Upon the night of the third of September, the French came up with Kutusoff, the commander-in-chief of the Russian army. It was evident to all that the purpose of this General was to defend the capital: every soldier who shared that eventful night's bivouac, knew he was on the eve of the great battle, whose issue would in all probability decide the fate of the empire. If the day were won, the victory would open the gates of the ancient capital, and the way-worn soldiers of Napoleon would enter their winter quarters triumphantly: towards Moscow and plenty, the hopes of this vast armament were turned as to a second sun.

Pedro Alvez did not share the general animation; a shadow was over his spirit; he felt he was a doomed man.—“I shall fall, my Blanca,” he whispered to his faithful partner, “and thou wilt be left with our orphan family alone in this foreign land, with no protector but the Lord. For the sake of these dear children, and for thy unborn babe, give not way to grief—live, dearest, for their sakes, and take with thee the love, the gratitude of a husband, though he should find a soldier's grave at Borodino! Teresa, my daughter, let not thy mothers example of piety, modesty, and charity, be lost upon thee; she has ever been to me, that priceless jewel—a fond and faithful wife. Thou, too, my son, must hold her in reverence, and by thy dutiful obedience recompense her for her maternal care for thee. Perhaps, the Lord will permit you to return to Spain and Catalonia; but forget not him who sleeps on the distant plains of Russia, in thy prayers ever remember him.”

The children threw themselves weeping into his arms. Blanca checked her tears, and tried to remove the dreary presentiment from her husband's soul—

“The God of battles has hitherto covered thy head, my Pedro,” she replied, “and success never deserts the Emperor's banners. At Moscow we shall find a home and provisions. The Russian Emperor will purchase peace upon any terms, and we shall see Spain again.”

“Thinkest thou, Blanca, that the Lord will permit a brave and patriot people to become a prey to a tyrant thus. No, here the fortunes of Napoleon sink; perhaps he has come hither, like me, to die!”

Serjeant Dubois at this moment joined the Spanish conscript, whose last words alone reached his ear.

“To die,” said he, “why that we all must do, but not at Borodino; death has come close to me, and has cut off the two I loved the best, and yet I dwell not upon the dangers of to-morrow:—be a man, Pedro; thou canst be a brave man when thou likest to be so—now thou weepest like a woman.”

“I weep for these,” replied the Spaniard, “for who will be a father to my children when I am gone?”

“I will, if I be spared, and Beauville, I am sure, will never lose sight of them.” The Serjeant wrung his comrade's hand, who warmly returned the pressure. The promise Dubois gave him seemed to re-assure him, and wiping away the evidences of his bitter feeling, he ate his rations with some appearance of appetite, and became calm and even cheerful.

At early dawn every man in that vast host was under arms, and Pedro, hastily embracing his

wife and children, bade them a solemn farewell; Blanca spoke not—in silence she pressed him to her bosom, she dared not trust her voice, lest his anguish should return—He was calm—his agony had passed away.

It is not my intention to describe that dreadful and obstinate battle, in which the Russians fought for their country, and the French for their winter quarters.—The Russians for freedom, the Invaders for firing and food. Night alone closed the combat, but the French remained masters of the ground, the only fruit this tremendous day yielded; not a colour, not a prisoner, not a gun belonging to the enemy, remained in their hands, but sixty thousand men lay upon that sanguinary field, and among them the Spanish conscript—Pedro Alvez.

What pen can describe the feelings of those women, who throughout the day had remained in doubt and dread, to be changed at night for the agonies of certainty. Blanca endured it with the firmness of one who leans upon the strong arm of Omnipotence for support. Teresa often wept, Carlos wept too, but Blanca's eyes were tearless. At ten at night the shattered remnants of the brigade returned, and Blanca, with desperate courage, asked for her husband. Dubois answered her enquiries in these few words,—“He has filled a soldier's grave at Borodino.”

Blanca fell to the earth as if stricken with a thunderbolt.

It was some time before the new-made widow recovered from her swoon, but the cries of those women who were fellow sufferers in a like calamity, roused her from her state of unconsciousness. She looked upon her orphan children and struggled with her grief; he was gone, but they should meet again, for though Blanca mourned as a wife, she hoped as a Christian. The strong feelings of maternity urged her to make every exertion for her young and helpless children. The ensuing day saw the whole army on the march for Moscow; and upon the fourteenth of September, 1812, Napoleon and his people beheld from the elevation of Mount Salvation the ancient capital of the Czars.



CHAPTER VI. THE CONFLAGRATION.

“With light step stole he on his evil way,
And light of tread hath vengeance stole on after him,
Unseen, she stands already dark behind him,
But one step more, he shudders in her grasp.”—WALLENSTEIN.

The distant view of Moscow was strikingly beautiful, and as her gilded cupolas glittered in the sunbeams—she shone like a city of beaten gold. “Moscow! Moscow!” burst from every voice; even Napoleon himself joined in the triumphant cry. The poor Spanish widow and her orphan children stretched their arms towards it, for there they hoped to find a home. The soldiers did not expect to enter this splendid capital without another battle, and perhaps a siege; no enemy, however, appeared to contest it with them, for the streets were deserted, and the inhabitants were gone. The deep silence, the strange abandonment, filled the armed multitudes who traversed the city, with awe. They were afraid—yes, bold and desperate as those warriors were, they followed their officers with faltering steps, as if fearful of some hidden foe. The daring courage of Murat, who dashed at full speed through every avenue of the capital, re-assured the troops Napoleon proudly bivouacked in the Kremlin, surrounded by the general officers who composed his staff. Then the common soldiers took possession of the stately marble palaces, that had been abandoned in haste by their owners, and marvelled, as they stretched their weary limbs on splendid carpets, how the Russians could yield up their central capital without striking a blow.

That day Blanca gave birth to her orphan babe, and this child of sorrow was born in the state room of a deserted palace, under a canopied bed, and promised to live and thrive. Teresa pressed her little sister in her arms with all the warmth of feminine tenderness, but Blanca only wept, for the sight of the infant re-opened her grief, by recalling the features of her lost husband. Night explained the mystery of the desertion of the capital—Moscow was in flames, and the awful cry that rang its midnight knell in the ears of Napoleon and his legions, aroused the new-made mother from her sleep. Dubois carried her to a distant street and humbler quarters; Teresa followed with the infant, and Carlos clung to the skirts of the soldier’s coat.—When the frightened family looked back, the palace was in a blaze.

So well had the patriotic governor, Count Rostopchin, taken his measures—so devoted were the instruments he employed, that no quarter of the city, no street, was left to shelter the invaders of the country. Moscow was become one vast heap of burning ruins.

Blanca’s fine constitution, and energy of character, sustained her through this new trial; driven by the fury of the flames without the walls, she joined with her children the hasty encampment the grand army had formed without the gates of the devoted city. Here the strangest scenes were presented to the observer that human eye ever looked upon. The wide plain far and near was covered with men and horses, and costly furniture snatched from the flames. For these valuable moveables the plunderers contended even to blood, regardless of the utter worthlessness of money, or money’s worth, when all the necessaries of life were wanting. Famine indeed sat brooding over the burning ruins of the city, and the very men who were so eager for plunder were glad to dredge the waters of the Moskwa (the river from whence the city takes its name,) for the corn Count Rostopchin had caused his people to throw in, to prevent its sustaining the invading force. Dubois and his commander were men of shrewd

sense who at once saw the uselessness of loading themselves with anything that would impede their homeward march, since to remain in this desert place during the winter would be impossible. They were indefatigable in foraging for corn which they laid in heaps to dry, and ground in the hand-mills belonging to the regiment.

In the meanwhile, Napoleon, driven out from the Kremlin, and escaping at the risk of his life, took possession of the royal palace of Petroskoi, about half a league from Moscow; but near enough to feel the heat of the vast conflagration that had annihilated at one blow his ambitious hopes of conquest. Before his departure he ordered the patriotic incendiaries to be sought for and shot. These unjust commands were obeyed, and twenty Russian serfs were put to death. In answer to the stern interrogatories put to them, the prisoners avowed that they had devoted themselves to this work, in order to save their country, and that they belonged to a corps of nine hundred, amongst whom the streets and quarters of the city had been divided by Count Rostopchin and Prince Trubetskoi, who, with their own hands, had fired their sumptuous palaces, that they might not shelter the enemy. Obedient to their leader's orders, these men had hidden themselves in cellars, from whence they had issued, as the avengers and deliverers of their native land. These self-devoted patriots met death with courage—almost with joy. It was evident, by the firmness of their demeanour, that before engaging in this warfare, they had counted the cost.

A fatal obstinacy, or, perhaps, the restraining hand of God, retained Napoleon within the view of his fatal conquest. In vain his marshals, generals, and most confidential friends, entreated, nay, implored him to commence his retreat before the winter set in; that, as a distinguished French writer remarks, "Counsels not, but commands." He remained in the environs of Moscow nearly five weeks in a state of indecision, as to his future plans. The sudden fall of the thermometer, on the 12th of October, aroused him at last, and upon the thirteenth, the troops began to evacuate the central capital of Russia. Upon the twenty-second of the same month, Napoleon himself quitted Petroskoi and commenced his march towards France.

Blanca and her children marched on foot with their division, but the hardships the poor mother had already undergone, both of body and mind, had enfeebled her frame. She had an infant to nourish at her bosom, and the scanty rations doled out to each person, though sufficient as yet to support existence, furnished no strength.

Teresa watched her mother's pallid countenance with alarm and apprehension: even poor little Carlos noticed the change with fear and grief. There was something almost sublime in the patience of the Spanish widow. No murmur passed her lips; her trust in God was unshaken; and though she felt that her strength was rapidly sinking, her heroic maternity carried her forward, though her wearied frame urged her to fall behind and die. Teresa bore the infant, sometimes assisted by Carlos, who in his turn frequently mounted Rollo, who had followed the fortunes of his master's family from the Catalonian Pyrenees to the distant northern plains. The faithful creature aided their march by day, and at night helped to keep them warm, for the cold increased continually, and the nightly bivouac was marked by a circle of dead horses, and frequently of men, many of whom had been recently wounded, and could not endure the fatigue of the march.

Blanca became every hour more feeble, but it was not till they crossed the plains of Borodino that her strong mind began to fail, and her lips to utter unconnected words. The scene of the late contest, at a point of the route, presented itself with its slaughtered thousands to the eyes of the retreating army, and thrilled every heart with awe. No false halo of glory

shone over this field of death and decay; war stood revealed in all its horrors! To each appalled beholder truth seemed to speak these words,—“Man was not created to mar the image of his fellow men.” Then from the blanched lips of thousands passed along the line the general cry —“It is the field of the great battle.”

There lay the unsepulchred remains of sixty thousand men—there lay the husband of Blanca, the father of her children! With a tighter clasp she held her posthumous infant to her breast, leaned heavily upon her young daughter’s arm, and with a faltering step and averted eye, passed through that fatal plain.

None wept among that armed host, though all had lost some beloved tie; fathers, brothers, husbands, or friends dearer still, were there. The feeling was too deep, too nearly allied to horror, to find vent in tears. Then men, who had shared in many a dreadful scene with unshaken nerves, trembled as they gazed upon the fruits of their recent victory. A great English poet has well described in his powerful language their thoughts:—

“Alp turned him from the sickening sight,
Never had shaken his nerves in fight,
But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorched with the death-thirst and writhing in vain,
Than the perishing dead, who are past all pain.
There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate’er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour’s eye on daring deeds.
But when all is past it is humbling to tread
O’er the weltering field of the tombless dead,
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there,
All regarding man as their prey—
All rejoicing in his decay.”

Alas! few of those thronging thousands who lamented them would die in the red field of battle, for they were doomed to the fiercer pangs of hunger, thirst, and cold. The time was coming fast when they would envy the unconscious clay that now encumbered the plains, and would court death with desperate valour from the bayonets of the enemy, rather than from the vicissitudes of want and weather.

For ten days the army marched on without encountering many perils: occasionally the Russians skirmished with the rear-guard, or a party of those wild predatory cavalry, the cossacks of the Don, made an unexpected attack and took several prisoners inspiring some dread, by the daringness of their appearance; but it was not till the seventh of November that the winter suddenly set in with its artillery of frost and snow. The thermometer suddenly fell eighteen degrees below freezing point, and the line of march was broken into a disastrous route.

Blanca had struggled on till now, when nature yielded up its exhausted energies, and the poor Spanish conscript’s widow lay down by the way-side to die!

Teresa took the hapless baby from the dying mother’s bosom, sustained her head upon her

lap, and tried to chafe the cold hands, chill with the damps of death. Blanca's thoughts in this sad hour reverted to her native land; she rambled as if the summer season were come. In her delirium she fancied herself in the Catalonian Pyrenees by her husband's side, and raved of summer skies and warmth; yet she was reclining on the frozen snow. Then her eyes became fixed and rayless, and utterance failed her; Teresa and Carlos hung over her in bitter grief and terror, and would have remained there to perish with her, if they had not been suddenly seized in the strong grasp of a soldier, who hurried them forward, without listening to their supplications, or heeding their struggles. It was Dubois, who missing the unfortunate family, had gone to seek them, and seeing the condition of Blanca was hopeless, saved her poor children from sharing the same fate. As long as they could trace the outline of her beloved form the Spanish orphans kept their eyes upon it, but the blinding snow and the distance veiled it from their sight, and then in desolation and despair, wept they till they could weep no more.

That woeful night Teresa, by the bivouac fire, began to think what must become of the infant Blanca, and how she should provide for its wants. It was sleeping placidly under her cloak, unconscious of its wants and woes. The serjeant suggested that a little flour boiled into gruel, with snow-water, might preserve its fragile existence, and when the babe awoke with the cry that demanded its natural nourishment, Teresa gave it some of this food, and had the pleasure of seeing it sink once more to sleep upon her bosom. Carlos wrapt his arms about his sister, and Rollo lay upon her feet, and the kind serjeant had placed them near the fire. Overpowered with fatigue and sorrow, the exiles slept soundly till the morning broke in upon them, when they ate their scanty rations, and again commenced their march.



CHAPTER VII. THE ROUTE.

“War, is that the name?
War is as frightful as Heaven’s pestilence.”—WALLENSTEIN.

The grand army, disorganized and broken up, no longer preserved the regular line of march. To give the young reader some idea of the actual state of things, it will be necessary to transcribe the narrative of an eye-witness. The *Sieur René Bourgeois*, gives the following description of the terrible retreat from Moscow.

“Generals, officers, and soldiers, marched together; excess of misery confounded all distinction of rank, and abolished all military order. Cavalry, artillery, infantry all was pell-mell. The greater part had a bag of flour on their shoulders, and had a pot attached by a cord to their side. Others led by the bridle shadows of horses, who carried the cooking implements and their miserable stock of provisions.

“These horses were themselves more valuable food than that they carried, and when they fell, their masters dispatched them—carefully preserving the fleshy parts to serve them for food. As most of the corps of the army were dissolved, a great many little communities were formed out of the wreck of these companies, composed of eight or ten individuals, who united themselves together upon the march, and had all things in common. Most of these coteries had a horse to carry their baggage, and each member was provided with a sack for provisions. These little communities were detached entirely from the general mass, and maintained an isolated existence, driving away all those who did not belong to them. Every individual of the family marched side by side, taking the greatest care not to be separated among the crowd. Woe to him who lost his coteries! he found nowhere any person who took the slightest interest in him, or would afford him the smallest assistance. Above all, he was ill-treated and persecuted, and was driven without mercy from fires to which he had no right; nor did he find any peace till he regained his own party. Napoleon witnessed these strange scenes which passed continually under his eyes; for the whole mass were fugitives, or dis-organized men.

“We marched heavily,” continues the narrator, “over those untracked snows, through vast forests of pines, and across immense plains.

“Here those unfortunate persons, whose health was undermined, sunk under the weight of their misfortunes, and expired in torments, a prey to the most violent despair. There some threw themselves upon any solitary individual, whom they suspected possessed provisions, which they tore from him, notwithstanding his terrible oaths and frantic resistance.

“On every side were seen sinister figures, persons mutilated by the frost or horror-stricken! In one word, fear, grief, famine, cold, and death, were in every place.

“To endure these frightful calamities that hung over us, required a soul full of energy and an immoveable courage. In the midst of surrounding horrors we saw some who calmly and intrepidly supported every vicissitude and braved every danger—who, compelled to behold death in the most hideous shapes, accustomed themselves to look him in the face without dread. Deaf to the cries of pain or grief that resounded on every side, if any poor creature sunk upon the snow under their eyes, they turned them away coldly, and without betraying any emotion, continued their march. We marched constantly with hasty strides in silence and with drooping head, and we only stopped when the night closed in.

“However fatigued or hungry we might be, it was necessary to bestir ourselves, to procure

some lodging, or at least some shelter from the bitter north wind. We ran to houses, farms, outbuildings, and granaries, till these were so full, that no one could either come in or go out. Those who could not get in established themselves under the walls as close as they could. Their first care was to get wood and straw for the bivouac; to obtain these necessaries, they climbed the houses, (which were all of wood,) and tore down the roofs, the posts, and often finished by pulling them to pieces over the heads of those who had established themselves within, in spite of their resistance. If the besieged made good their defence, the besiegers often set fire to the building, and thus compelled them to leave the asylum they had chosen. This always happened when general officers had driven out the first possessors.

“It soon became the custom to pull down the villages, and construct temporary huts with the materials, in the midst of the fields where they kindled their fires, and commenced their preparations for supper.

“Some began to make soup, while others threw upon the embers slices of horse-flesh which they had the good luck to obtain. Soup was the most common food, and this was the recipe. As it was impossible to procure water, the soldiers melted a quantity of snow in an iron pot, then they stirred in flour to thicken it to the consistence of boullie, which they seasoned with salt or gunpowder. The repast finished, every one slept soundly, overpowered alike by fatigue and the weight of his misfortunes, to re-commence the same life the next day.

“At dawn the whole mass arose from the bivouac and resumed the march. Twenty days passed thus, and during those days the army left two hundred thousand men along the line of march. The shattered remnant of this mighty host then rushed upon destruction at Beresina, as the torrent rushes into the gulph.

“In addition to these miseries, the Russian army followed upon the heels of the flying enemy, and every day was a day of battle, which those troops who still remained united had to sustain. As for the great body of stragglers, they were attacked and speared by the Cossacks, or destroyed by the peasantry who had been compelled to leave their homes, and were infuriated against the invaders of their native soil. Such as sought an asylum in the woods vainly tried to kindle the pines, which being green would not ignite, and it was only the deal benches that would take fire at all. The snow did not fall in soft flakes as in temperate climates, but in small star-shaped figures, that cut the faces of those who faced the storm. Then these unhappy men had not the moral support that the sense of suffering in a good cause seldom fails to bring with it. They knew that they had been engaged in an unholy and unjust war with a distant empire: the Russian sufferers, for they must have endured much suffering, were patriots to a man, and the ennobling feeling, called love of country, supported them through want and privation.”

Thus the French found no sympathy or mercy from the natives; and every day as it passed gloomily along brought an increase of misery and a decrease of men. The retreat of Xerxes was nothing to this flight of Napoleon; then the Persian king bravely marched on foot, sharing the hardships his rash ambition had occasioned. The French emperor, wrapt in his furs, felt little of the miseries he had caused, and fled from the army he had led forth, to perish in the wintry deserts of Russia. It is to be hoped, that the progress of the world in Christianity and civilization, will check, in some measure, the horrors of territorial warfare, which is as impolitic as it is unjustifiable.



CHAPTER VIII. THE SUPPLICANTS.

“He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need,
If thou sorrow He will weep,
If thou wake He will not sleep.”

The hardy lives that poor Teresa and her brother had led among the Catalonian Pyrenees, which I have described in the early part of this story, enabled them to endure cold and privation uninjured, where the stronger frames of men sunk continually. The mercy of the Lord preserved these children, for He is not limited to means. They put their trust in Him, and lifted up their young voices night and morning, to the God who had guided them through the snowy wilds in the march by day, and given them rest in the hours of darkness. Their simple blessing upon their scanty and disagreeable meal was deep, devout, and heartfelt; this meal consisted of the soup already mentioned, and sometimes a slice of horse-flesh broiled on the coals; snow-water composed their only drink. Rollo subsisted upon bones and offal; but the children shared their scanty rations with him; for without his help in carrying Carlos, they could not have kept up with their party. The infant, Blanca, actually thrived, and never was a mother tenderer to her first-born than Teresa was to this orphan baby. For many miles, upon each weary day, she carried it strapped upon her back, bundled up in every spare article of her scanty wardrobe. At times, the serjeant would relieve her of her burden, though heavily laden with his provisions and accoutrements. He had not abandoned his arms, and more than once had shot birds or squirrels, circumstances that greatly enspirited his party. He had lived hitherto, a reckless life, without a thought of futurity; but the loss of his wife and daughter, had brought him to reflection—then to penitence. The cheerful piety of his adopted daughter, Teresa, her faith, her trust in God, led Dubois to seek support from Heaven, and he became a better and a happier man. His iron constitution did not yield to cold, fatigue, or famine; bravely he bore up against the combat, he sustained with the bitter north wind, and blinding snow. Faithful to his promise, he generously protected the young Spaniards, fed them from his own share when the common stock of his coterie grew low; placed them by the warmest nook of the bivouac fire, and spoke with hope of their safe arrival in Lithuania, where they might find friends and shelter from the weather. Often Teresa's eyes filled with tears of gratitude, and she would say,—“How good, how kind,—and we are strangers too, born in another country, and speaking a different language.”

Then Dubois would reply, “Did not my lost Nina die in your arms? did not you close her eyes? Never, never shall I forget the sad hour in which I saw her last; her head reclining on your knees, and your tears rolling down her dear face. I vowed then to watch over you and your's, and, Teresa, I have only kept my word; I have, however, ceased to lament my wife and only child, these hardships and horrors would have driven them mad.”

Teresa sighed deeply; dearly as she loved her parents she did not lament them now. She felt happy that they were not struggling with the miseries of this dreadful march. No, their souls were with God, “they had been taken away from the evil to come,” and she dared not repine at the merciful fiat.

The serjeant often wondered if his relative, Major Beauville, were living for since the day when he turned back to seek for the Spanish children, he had never seen him. He feared he had

either been killed in some skirmish with the Russians, or had fallen a victim to the inclemency of the weather. The frost daily increased in its intensity, till it fell twenty-seven degrees below freezing point. Then the nightly bivouac was marked by its ring of dead; and three of the veterans who composed Dubois' coterie, were frozen near the fire! The little Blanca sunk beneath the withering effects of the cold. It was strange she had lasted so long. Teresa wept, and yet she felt that the babe was happier than the miserable survivors of what was once called the grand army of Napoleon.

Then these scattered and warring communities, who often preyed upon each other, were forced to combine to defend themselves from the Russians, who appeared suddenly among them, and with whom they now fought every day. Then the French had to fight before they could retreat and on such occasions the poor children concealed themselves under the bushes, or in the hollows of trees, and awaited the return of their only earthly friend with terror that almost deprived them of their senses. Brave as the French troops always were, their courage now became desperation, and sometimes, though not often, the Russians were worsted. But it was the Cossacks that inspired these scattered thousands with the greatest alarm, for mounted on their fleet horses they speared the French soldiers with their long lances, uttering their wild and tremendous hurrahs. Once, Napoleon himself nearly fell into their hands, and the night attack upon his encampment was long known by the name of "the Emperor's hurrah."

Teresa and Carlos had often seen these savage horsemen rush out with their long hair and beards streaming in the wind, and their terrible lances in their hands; and their hearts died within them at the sound of their war-cry. Hitherto, Providence had left them a protector in serjeant Dubois, but this kind friend was suddenly taken away from them by one of the disasters so common in war. The cry, "to arms, to arms," united for defence the scattered thousands who still preserved the line of march. Dubois hastily obeyed the summons. It was a dreadful combat, but at last the firing ceased, and the orphans looked out from their hiding place; the Russians were gone and the brave serjeant was coming towards them. His step was faltering, his face was pale; Teresa and Carlos ran to support him, but he dropped before they could reach him, dyeing with his life-blood the cold white snow. Teresa knelt beside him, and the gallant soldier wrung her hand and died. For some time the children hung over their poor friend in the bitterest grief. What was to become of them now he was gone?—they dared not even think.—To endeavour to regain their coterie was impossible; but Teresa, whose intelligence surpassed her years, waited by the way-side till some fugitives should come by, in whose company she and her brother could pursue the homeward march. Towards noon, several hundred fugitive Frenchmen appeared in sight, and with weeping eyes and sad hearts the unfortunate pair left the cold remains of their best friend, and joined themselves to these strangers, hoping to find some persons among them who would compassionate their forlorn condition. Misery had, however, choked the better feelings of these men, who scarcely gave the poor girl a civil answer, and hurried forward at a pace she found it difficult to keep. The mysterious instinct of self-preservation, so curiously engrafted in the nature of all created beings, joined to the dread of being left alone in this solitude; made the children struggle on, and when night came, and the company stopped for the bivouac among the ruins of a Russian village, they came up and endeavoured to approach the bivouac fires, but they were repulsed on every side, and seemed doomed to perish with cold and hunger. Poor children, they had not anticipated such treatment. Even the foreign accent in which they made their supplications, told against them. Some persons glared with hungry eyes upon Rollo,—and Teresa alarmed, lest her faithful four-footed companion should be torn from her to make a boullie, or roti, retreated from

the companies she had fallen in with, to ask compassion of others, who seemed to have established themselves before their arrival.

These were as unkind as those she had lately quitted, and no other choice remained for her and Carlos, but to lie down and die! "Come, Carlos, let us go hence, there is no one to take pity upon us—but God—let us pray him to kill us quickly, and to have mercy upon our souls!"

Teresa spoke these words in her own language, and with all the energy of despair. They caught the ear of an officer who was sleeping near the fire. He started up, and apparently comprehending the meaning of them, endeavoured to open a passage for the poor supplicants to the fire. He was rudely driven back with oaths and brutal language. "For shame," cried he, "are you soldiers, are you men, to drive back children into cold and darkness?"

Teresa screamed with joy—it was the voice of Major Beauville.

"I tell you, Major, that we shall have nothing else to do if we once take in people who do not belong to us. In the name of the whole of us, I tell you that they shall not come here. They are Spaniards—let them go back to Spain."

"Fellow! as your commanding officer, I insist upon your making way for these unhappy children."

"Commanding officer, indeed!" retorted the man, "where is your regiment? We are as good as you, and are our own commanding officers; and if you want to have your own way, you must fight for it with us all!" Ten or twelve men drew their swords. Beauville saw his own coterie in arms against him. What chance had the man of feeling against these selfish savages?

Teresa saw the weapons bared with feminine feelings of terror—"Dear Major Beauville, do not be killed for us?" cried she; "we will go away."

"Teresa Alvez!" replied he. "Comrades let me go,—it is the voice of a friend." He cleared the inhospitable circle with a bound, and greeted affectionately the trembling pair.

Their sad story was soon told. Beauville shed many tears for the loss of his cousin Dubois. Teresa and Carlos sobbed audibly.

Beauville then turned towards his own party. "Gentlemen, these unfortunate children belong to the Spanish conscript, whom we stole from his native land. I liked his figure, and thought that he would do us credit. Indeed, we ordered it so, that the lot must fall upon him.

"It is I who have been the means of making these children orphans!—it is I who have made them exiles and mendicants in this dreadful land! Henceforth my fate is linked with theirs. Comrades, some of you have children in France. If ye wish to see their dear faces again, have pity upon these unfortunate Spaniards."

There was a general movement—but not of anger—among the armed ring who guarded the fire.

Then the man who had been the ringleader in the scuffle, cried out "These are not children of France, but strangers; why should we encumber ourselves with them? I vote for putting them out of their pain. A bullet kills, but it does not hurt. Their dog will make us an excellent rôti."

"Comrades, it is to you I speak, for you believe in God; and you have children—children whom you love. Think what you would feel if they were wet, cold, wayworn, and hungry like these. Be merciful to these, as you hope God will be good to your own darlings."

"Bring them in, Major," was the general answer; "as for Roche, he has no children, and does not believe in God: but we, who have young ones at home, and a God everywhere, are men—not iron!" Then these men placed the poor orphans by the fire, cooked for them, and even fed their dog. This revulsion of feeling is not uncommon in our Gallic neighbours; and it is

but justice to these men to state, that they acted imprudently in adding additional mouths to their party. Their previous hard-heartedness arose from the desperation of their circumstances.

Teresa and Carlos blessed and praised their Almighty Deliverer, and then lay down upon some straw in the most sheltered corner of the fire, and with their faithful dog slept soundly till the dawn. For some minutes their generous protector watched their tearful countenances, with the exquisite pleasure gratified benevolence always affords: and when the rough soldier fell asleep, he dreamed that he was surrounded by his own beloved family. The night was fearfully cold, and that wide-spread village was strewn with dead. The destroying angel had smitten with his avenging sword one among the party with whom the Spanish orphans had found refuge—that one was the atheist Roche. They were now not far from Krasnoi, and in this direction they fell in with several thousand Frenchmen, to whom the fugitives gladly united themselves. The Spanish children were placed upon a baggage waggon with Rollo, and found the comfort of being with a regularly appointed army. The relief was great to their poor feet, as their shoes were worn out, and their stockings were in rags. Then some women and children were with these regiments, and the fugitives were near the confines of Poland, and hope once more gilded the distant future with its deceitful promise of safe return to France.



CHAPTER IX. CAPTIVITY.

“No noise is heard—
Save when the rugged bear and the gaunt wolf
Howl in the upper region.”

ROGERS.

Teresa and Carlos wondered at their strange preservation. From every peril they had been wonderfully and providentially delivered. They were not so unmindful of the lessons they had received from their pious mother, as to ascribe these things to chance. No, young as they were, they lifted up their hearts to Him, in whose strength their weakness had found refuge. Major Beauville was like a father to them; and many a manly heart sympathized in their sorrows and deprivation. The prospect of the return to France became hourly brighter; but, alas! between their hopes the Russian armies interposed their swords and their just revenge. Beyond the ruins of Smolensko, near Krasnoi, a bloody action took place between the retreating French and the pursuing Moscovites. Again the horrid thunder of the artillery rang its deep knell in the ears of the Spanish orphans. Their friend hurried to his post, and they saw his face no more; he was wounded, and taken prisoner during the action, but lived to see his own country again.

The slaughter was tremendous, and came so near the spot where the children were, that the bullets whistled past, threatening their lives, yet sparing their innocence. Poor Rollo was not so fortunate; the faithful creature, who had shared their perils, and guarded them from their early childhood, dropped dead at their feet,—slain by a random shot! They were yet bemoaning the animal, who seemed to form the last link in the chain that bound them to their own loved land, when a troop of Cossacks came riding towards them at full speed. Winged by terror, they fled into the wood that bordered the fatal field; and concealing themselves in a thicket, shut their eyes, lest they should see again these objects of their dread. The firing at length ceased—the stillness of death succeeded to the shouts of victory; and in the evening they heard the howling of the wolves hastening to the feast spread out for them at Krasnoi!

Night found them cold, hungry, weary, and alone. They crept into each other's arms for warmth. Neither had spoken for some hours.

Carlos was the first to break silence:—“Teresa we must die now,—but pray speak to me,—tell me what you are thinking about, or I shall fancy that you are dead?”—

“I was thinking about Spain, dear Carlos, and all the perils we were in among our own mountains, and about our adventures in the cave, with the bear and her cubs. You know God delivered us then, for poor dear Rollo killed the she-bear.”

“Yes, I do remember it,” replied Carlos.

“Then He delivered us from the flames at Moscow,—from dying with our poor mother on the road,—from cold and starvation the other night,—and from the bullets and Cossacks' lances to-day.”

“So He has,” replied the boy, “but I think we must die of cold and hunger now.”

“Well, I think not—for I am certain that if we were intended to die now, we should not have been preserved when thousands upon thousands have been killed by the weather and the enemy. So let us pray to Him to keep us alive, for I am sure He will hear us.”

The children prayed and were comforted. Soon afterwards they were sound asleep.

Morning awoke them, but their tender limbs were cramped and numbed with cold. They

knelt down and prayed, then, faint with hunger, slowly wandered deeper into the wood. Their strength was soon exhausted—before them lay deep untracked snows, and over their heads dark dismal looking pines. The wind moaned among the branches, and the little sky they could see through the wood was dark and cheerless. The frost assailed their naked feet, yet still they feebly crawled on. This state of things could not have lasted much longer, the fatal feeling of drowsiness was stealing over the unhappy twain, when a turning of the wood brought them upon a party of Russian soldiers.

Feeble and weary as they were, Teresa and Carlos tried to turn back, but their feet suddenly became useless, and they dropped upon the snow.

A young Russian soldier, named Ivan, saw them first, and darting forward, came to them with the speed with which kind-hearted persons hasten to succour the unfortunate. Instantly divining the nature of the misfortune that had befallen them, he began to rub their frost-bitten feet with snow, beckoning to his comrades to give him some help. Then he took a bottle from his knapsack and poured some of its contents down both of his prisoners' throats. Now, though this measure was not quite in accordance with the rules of the Temperance Society, it had a good effect as a medicine at least,—the strong stimulant revived the fainting children, and for fear they should think Ivan intended to poison them, the soldier took a draught himself. In about half an hour the soldiers resumed their march; Ivan and another soldier carrying Teresa wrapt up in a fur cloak between them, while a comrade took Carlos upon his back, and thus they marched on till they struck off towards a village where their head-quarters lay. Here comfortable barracks had been hastily erected, and food and fire awaited the party.

Ivan deposited Teresa on a cloak quite away from the fire, and Carlos was placed by her side. A nearer approach to the cheerful blaze would have been followed by the loss of their frost-bitten feet. Some soldiers' wives now made their appearance, and appeared to commiserate the Spanish orphans exceedingly. They brought them a hot mess of oatmeal pottage and black bread, which they swallowed with far greater appetite than English children would have done. Then the kind women rubbed their feet with snow and brandy, and earned them to a comfortable bed.

Now, whether the brandy Ivan had so liberally administered to the captives had really done them hurt, or the severe cold had injured their lungs cannot be ascertained, but certain it is that they could not utter a word for many hours. When they could speak, the good women who nursed them so tenderly neither understood Spanish nor French, but they could comprehend that the objects of their care were grateful, for thankfulness shone from the large dark eyes of Teresa, which were often raised to Heaven to invoke blessings upon the heads of her preservers.

Yes, she was saved,—she and Carlos in these dreadful avengers of their country had found friends and benefactors; for God, who had heard their prayers, had not forsaken them. The following day the women put the children into warm baths and clothed them after the Russian fashion, in sheep-skin pelisses, woollen stockings, and shoes made of the bark of the linden tree. This being the costume generally worn in the winter by the peasants of that country. The inner garments were of hemp, and these were not the least comfortable part of their singular attire. Then they disentangled their matted hair and gave them a plentiful though homely meal. The captives looked upon each other with surprise; they seemed to lose their own identity, so much had the national dress altered their appearance. At present they could not speak, and could hardly stand; yet they were soon objects of great curiosity to the whole camp. Several officers in uniform came to visit them, and the surgeon of the regiment prescribed for them

some medicine, and ordered fomentations to be applied to their feet.

The next day, Teresa and Carlos were able to converse with one another, and could use their feet a very little. The colonel came to see them, and speaking to them in French, soon acquired their eventful history. Kind as the Russians had been to the captives while they took them to be French, they were certainly pleased to find them Spaniards. The officers in the meanwhile did not know what to do with them, they were only waiting for the arrival of the Grand Duke Constantine, (the next brother of the Emperor Alexander,) and his regiment, to follow the wreck of the French army, with whom they very erroneously supposed Napoleon to be. He, however, had left the French at Smorgonie, and returned alone to Paris, like a comet shorn of its beams.

The greater part of his immense host lay mouldering on the icy plains of Russia.

The officers were loth to expose again the orphans, whom Providence had thrown into their hands to the mis-chances and vicissitudes of war.

The Colonel resolved to make the Grand Duke acquainted with their touching history, and to abide by his decision respecting their future destiny.



CHAPTER X.
THE GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE.

“The lofty feeling of a generous foe,
Rose in his altered soul, the tender glow
Of gracious pity to his bosom crept,
And the imperial Claudius turned and wept.”

AGNES STRICKLAND.

Ivan, the young soldier, who had discovered the young Spaniards, came frequently to see them. He laughed at the appearance they made in the dress of his own country, which did not set at all easily upon them. Teresa smiled in return, for no dandy in Paris boasted a smaller waist than her Russian preserver. Indeed, the tight belts of these regiments gave them all a sly resemblance to that very warlike insect, the wasp. This appearance forms a part of Russian military etiquette, and as Ivan belonged to the Grand Duke Constantine's own regiment, he was not at all answerable for the slenderness that excited the wonder of Carlos and his young sister. Still, as he stood before them, his tall fine figure glittering in green and gold, with his fair curling hair, blooming face, laughing blue eyes, and ivory teeth, he certainly looked a very handsome young chasseur indeed.

The intercourse between the lovely Catalonian girl and her deliverer was limited to signs; but he liked to see her because he had saved her from perishing in the snow, and she was deeply grateful to him for his preservation of her and Carlos. Without the aid of language she discovered that Ivan was the son of the Russian serjeant belonging to the company, and that one of the kind old women who waited upon her, was his mother.

The parents of Ivan had been born (as all the peasantry in Russia are) serfs, a condition that once prevailed throughout Europe, but which, happily, only now exists in this mighty empire. We must not, however, confound their state with negro slavery, for the serf, if sold to a new lord, is sold with the estate, and is never parted from his wife and children unless with his own choice. He is clothed, fed, and lodged comfortably at his master's expense, and is often attached to the noble family to whom he belongs. But, disguise it how we will, slavery is still a bitter draught, and that system which places a great many individuals at the mercy of one, must be bad, even if that individual be generally humane and amiable, since he holds an absolute power only short of life and death over a multitude, and that of necessity he must often delegate this power to others, whose characters may not resemble his own. The sovereigns of Russia, who find themselves exposed to the machinations of the aristocracy, have long endeavoured to put down the feudal system, which makes the autocrat himself amenable to his subjects, by whom he is sometimes dethroned and assassinated, as in the instances of the emperors Peter the Third and Paul the First. The liberation of the serfs, will form by degrees the middle class of society, which is at present totally wanting in this vast empire.

The only way a Russian serf can obtain his freedom, is by entering the army. This mighty inducement fills the ranks, and makes the severest military discipline seem light; for when the soldier has served out his time, he is a slave no longer, but enjoys as much or as little freedom as his master. Happy England knows nothing of the system I am describing—and he is the true patriot, and only he, who endeavours to preserve her admirable constitution—in the same state in which he finds it.

Ivan and his parents then were freed from the feudal tenure, and you might almost have

guessed their happy condition by their erect carriage and look. They had been born serfs on the estate of their colonel's father, Prince S——, but Petrosk's term of service was out; he only remained with the regiment to drive the French over the borders, to retire from the army to cultivate a farm under his ancient lord.

In a few days a burst of military music proclaimed the arrival of the Grand Duke. He came from St. Petersburg, with several divisions to assist in the patriotic duty of driving the enemy from his native land. Then all was bustle and excitement, for the camp was expected to break up, and the soldiers were eager to go in search of Napoleon, of whose desertion of his army they were not yet aware. That evening, the colonel himself came to visit Teresa and her brother. He spoke to them in French, and telling them that the Emperor's brother wished to see them, conducted them to the head-quarters of his Imperial Highness. Now, though he told them kindly they need not be afraid, they both drew back in some alarm, for the thought occurred to both, that as they had no business to be in Russia, this Prince might think fit perhaps to kill them.

The colonel, half smiling, drew them forward, and the Spanish orphans hardly dared look at the Grand Duke, even when ushered into his presence. Fortunately the object of their unfeigned terror was seated, and apparently did not notice their entrance. He was a stern-looking man, of indifferent figure, and irregular features, wearing the rich uniform of a Russian general. Upon his head he carried a large cocked hat, one end of which rested on his shoulder, the other was raised in an opposite direction, surmounted with its stiff plume. His shaggy head and large dark bushy eyebrows gave a wild appearance to his piercing blue eyes, whose glance, restless as it was, denoted authority. His short turned-up nose, and long upper lip, were Tartar-like in formation, and his complexion was swarthy. The sound of his voice (for he was speaking to his secretary,) was harsh, deep, and guttural in its intonation. Yet, upon the whole, he had, notwithstanding his personal defects, an air of independence, that denoted a man of exalted rank in this land of servitude. The sight of his Imperial Highness by no means calmed the fears of his lowly visitors. But he suddenly ceased speaking, and perceiving the captives, smiled so good-humouredly, that no trace of his sternness remained. Advancing towards them, he looked kindly upon these innocent invaders of his country, as they both threw themselves upon their knees, clasping their hands as if to ask his mercy. There was something very gracious, almost paternal, in his manner of raising them from their supplicating attitude, his eyes filled with tears and his voice softened as he addressed these consoling words to them in French.—“Fear not, my children, you are in the presence of a friend.” Then in his own language he remarked upon the beauty and intelligence of their countenances, and noticed also that they appeared healthy, considering the hardships and perils they had lately undergone.

Then he asked Teresa “If she wished to return to her own country, for as the British General, Lord Wellington, had nearly driven out the French, there was nothing to prevent her going back to Spain. He himself would be at the expense of her journey, nor would he send her home without a suitable remembrance of Russia.”

Strange to say, Teresa had no yearnings after her native land, and did not express a wish to return to it again. She had led with her parents a life of such seclusion in the Pyrenees, that in losing them she felt that she had lost all for which Spain was dear. Then the distant journey, with its unknown fatigues and disasters, arose before her mind, and curtsying very low, she replied—“That if his Highness had no objection, she would rather remain where she was.”

“But this is no place for pretty young maidens,” replied the Prince; then turning to the colonel, and still speaking French, he said—“When the orphan house is re-built at Moscow we

can place these unfortunate Spaniards there, but in the meanwhile what can we do with them? for we march to-morrow on Wilna, and it will be cruel to expose them again to the perils of war.”

The colonel bowed very low, and stated—“that he had a plan to propose for the benefit of these children, which might answer, if it met with his Imperial Highness’s approbation.”—The wife of an old servant of his was about to leave the camp, for an estate belonging to his father, in the environs of Tula, and that they could accompany her thither on the morrow, till his Highness should choose to dispose of them otherwise.

The Grand Duke then was pleased to express his approbation of the colonel’s proposition, gave the children his hand to kiss, and bestowed some gold upon them. Teresa thanked him in her pretty broken French, and retired from his presence bathed in grateful tears.

Early in the morning, the orphans quitted the camp, in company with the mother of Ivan, for Tula, in a government sledge, warmly wrapt in furs, and provided with every comfort they could possibly require. They travelled quickly over the frozen snow, and in two days reached the place of their destination, which was the farm Alexis Petrosk was to cultivate for his young master, at a handsome yearly stipend.

The house was low, and entirely made of wood; the rooms were all warmed with stoves, and the walls decorated with a great many pictures of saints. Most of the household utensils were of turned wood; and the baskets were of birch bark, curiously wrought with coloured quills. The beds were covered with bear-skins; but there were neither lamps nor candlesticks, torches split from the resinous wood of the pine set in frames, supplied the places of both. Several relations were waiting to welcome Elizavetta Petrosk; and birch wine, rye bread, excellent bacon salted, fish, and plenty of honey, were placed upon the table. The kindred of Elizavetta seemed very fond of her, and much did the Spaniards wish to understand their animated conversation with her. But they were young and quick, and persons of their age soon catch the sound of foreign languages. Necessity too, makes linguists; and before many months were over, the guests of the kind Elizavetta spoke like native Russians.

Nothing could be more maternal than the behaviour of the good woman who had taken charge of Teresa and Carlos; and as she had no other child but Ivan, she permitted them to call her by the endearing name of mother. They were so happy, that they would fain have spent their lives with her; and frequently hoped that the Grand Duke Constantine would forget his promise of sending them to the orphan house. The long, long winter passed away, the snow melted, and the summer set in; the birch and lime put on their livery of green, and the sun shone with warmth and splendour. The old veteran, Alexis Petrosk returned from the victorious army, to turn his sword into a pruning-hook for the rest of his days. Ivan came with him for a few weeks; and Teresa was so happy to thank him in Russian, for the humane manner in which he had behaved to her and Carlos, when he first found them. Then she had related her own perils, and listened in return to his adventures. As for the old serjeant, who had served for years in Turkey, his campaigns formed a never-ending narrative. Teresa saw that Elizavetta and Ivan believed them all, but she thought half might be true, which was a proof certainly of the warm regard she had for the old soldier.

One day, Teresa and her brother were weeding the little border for their new mother, when they were hastily called in to speak to the government messenger, who had travelled from St. Petersburg, with the order for their admission into the Foundling Hospital, at Moscow. The Grand Duke had not forgotten his promise,—poor Teresa wished he had.

The orphans shed many bitter tears at parting with these kind friends. Ivan was much beloved by them. He used to call Teresa his little wife, and he now told her “to dry her tears, for

that she should be his little wife yet.”

The journey to Moscow again brought back with it the painful remembrance of the past. How different had been the entrance of the French army into the gilded city, to its flight from burning ruins. Yet here, where so many had found a grave, she was to have a home.

Notwithstanding her sorrow for quitting Ivan and his kind parents, she acknowledged the mercy of that God, who still provided for her and her young brother.

The fields she had traversed last autumn with the army were now covered with oats and rye.

The bloody plains of Borodino, where death had then reaped an ample harvest, were now waving with ripening corn. From the heights of Mount Salvation, as before, she could see the towers of the Kremlin,—but where were the thousands and ten thousands from whose lips had burst spontaneously, the cry of—“Moscow! Moscow?” They were in the dust—only a small remnant had escaped the vengeance of the Lord of Hosts. She and her brother remained living monuments of His mercy and His power. Such were the reflections of Teresa, as she entered Moscow.



CHAPTER XI. THE RETURN TO MOSCOW.

“Another town in time’s due course shall rise,
And prouder structures greet the morning skies,
The smiling bridegroom and the flower-crowned bride,
Shall tread new streets adorned in nuptial pride.”

AGNES STRICKLAND.

Moscow was beginning to arise from its ashes. Its inhabitants were flocking back to this ancient capital,—the poor peasant had already raised his wooden tenement—the artizan his shop. The celebrated Foundling Hospital, the finest establishment of the kind in Europe, was re-opened to receive those whom the late events of the war had rendered fatherless, and among them—Teresa and Carlos Alvez. As this asylum is conducted upon an admirable plan, it will be as well to give a particular description of it in this place.

“Among the most remarkable public institutions of the reign of Catherine the Second, may be reckoned this Hospital, which she founded shortly after her accession to the throne, in 1776; it is now supported by legacies, voluntary contributions, and charitable gifts. It is an immense quadrangular building, situated in a very airy part of the town, upon a gentle ascent, near the river Moskwa. It contained, (when Mr. Coxe saw it,) three thousand foundlings, and will, when finished, contain eight thousand.

“The children are brought to the porter’s lodge, and are admitted without any recommendation. The rooms are lofty and large, the dormitories, which are separate from the workrooms, are very airy, and the beds are not crowded; each foundling, even each infant, has a separate bed—the bedsteads are of iron. The sheets are changed once a week; the linen three times a week. Through the whole of the rooms the greatest neatness prevails, even the nurseries are remarkably clean. No cradles are allowed, and rocking is absolutely forbidden.

“The infants are not swaddled, though that is the custom of the country, but loosely and comfortably dressed. The children remain two years in the nurseries, when they are admitted into the lowest classes; the boys and girls continue together till they are seven years of age, at which time they are separated. They are all taught to read, write, and cast accounts. The boys are taught to knit, card hemp, flax, and wool, and are taught to work in the different manufactories. The girls learn to knit, net, and in short, every branch of needle-work; they also spin and weave lace, and are employed in cooking, baking, and house-work of all kinds. At the age of fourteen, the foundlings enter into the first class, when they have the liberty of choosing any particular branch of trade, and for this purpose there are different species of manufactures established in the Hospital, of which the principal are, silk stockings, ribbands, lace, gloves, buttons, and cabinet-making. Most of the young females learn to embroider. A separate room is slotted to each trade.

“Some girls and boys are instructed in the French and German languages, and a few boys in the Latin tongue, others learn music, drawing, and dancing. About the age of twenty, the foundlings receive a sum of money and other advantages. They are also allowed the privilege of setting up their trade in any part of the empire, a very considerable one indeed, in Russia, where the peasants are slaves, and cannot leave their village without the permission of their master. The boys and girls eat separately; the dining-rooms, which are upon the ground-floor, are large and vaulted, and distinct from the workrooms. The first class sit at table, the rest

stand; the children are waited upon by servants, but those of the first and second class alternately wait upon one another. Their food is of the most wholesome and nourishing kind. Each foundling has a napkin, pewter plate, a knife, fork, and spoon. The napkin and table-cloth are cleaned thrice a week. They rise at six, breakfast early, dine at eleven, and sup at six. The little children have bread at seven and four. When they are not employed in their necessary occupations, the utmost freedom is allowed, and they are encouraged to be in the open air as much as possible.”

It was this charitable and highly beneficent institution, that in the autumn of 1813, received the Spanish orphans, and became their home for several years.

It was here, our countryman, Mr. James, saw them in 1814, and was much interested in their touching history.^[C]

Although Carlos was more than seven years of age, the benevolent governors of the establishment did not separate him from his sister for some months, till he had become reconciled to his change of life. Then he gradually forgot the sorrows and trials that had befallen him in the dawn of his earlier days, and became joyous, vivacious, and thoughtless, like other boys of his age. Not so, Teresa, for memory still brought back those sad scenes in her sleep. Moscow, with its painful associations, was not the place where she could find forgetfulness of the past. Her mother often returned to her mental eye as she looked when her children had been hurried from her by Dubois, and she had been left to die alone. Then the kind serjeant's fatherly care of her when she had lost her dear parent, at Borodino, his disastrous death, the disappearance of Major Beauville, the loss of the infant Blanca, even the fate of poor Rollo, each event had left its shadow upon her mind. Not that the young Teresa was either moping or melancholy, but a sweet pensiveness sat on her lovely countenance that attracted the attention of the stranger, and distinguished her from her companions. She was very lovely, and few could look at that large lustrous dark eye, without feeling interested in the intellectual countenance to which it gave so much grace. Docile, mild, and apt to learn, she became a general favourite in the establishment, and was as modest and pious as she was sensible.

While these young orphans are receiving the benefits that imperial munificence bestowed upon the deserted children of the invaders of Russia, for many French infants had been admitted into this establishment, Europe had leagued together to tame the warlike pride of France. Napoleon, in his turn, was invaded upon every side, and was compelled to abdicate the throne of France, and to retire to the small island of Elba; and the wearied nations received the blessings of peace. The Emperor of Russia, who had followed the invader of his own country step by step into France, brought back with him the keys of Paris, as the proud trophy of his just revenge. Spain, freed by England, had also called upon her children to unite in the great work. They also crossed the Pyrenees, to aid the allies in their conquest of France. But the ambition of Napoleon did not slumber; he quitted the lonely island he had chosen, and again the astonished nations were banded against France. The battle of Waterloo once more gave peace to Europe—and the warlike genius of Napoleon perished for ever at St. Helena. The dynasties he had founded sank with him.

“He left that name at which the world grew pale,
To paint a moral, or adorn a tale.”

During her abode in the Foundling Hospital, Teresa saw the city arise out of its ashes more magnificent than ever. All the public institutions were restored, the churches were re-built, the

domes of the Kremlin glittered again like gold, the nobles returned to re-build their palaces, and the city that sat in her ruins so desolate, in 1812, was now the mother of joyous thousands, who came to this great Asiatic mart with their goods and merchandise as before.

It is to be lamented, that the patriotic act of Count Rostopchin, the noble-minded Governor of Moscow, which turned the tide of Napoleon's career, should have excited the displeasure of the country it saved. The national feeling was so strong, that the Emperor was compelled to exile the best and truest subject that the Russian Empire could boast. A little firmness upon the part of the sovereign, might doubtless have prevented the necessity. However, in every climate whither he sojourned in his exile, he was received with the distinction due to his character. Even the French admired the man, whose wisdom and disinterestedness had planned the burning of the capital. The Russians in general, however threw the blame upon the French; and none but those who know the fact, will acknowledge that the "Holy City" was destroyed by her own sons.



See Introduction to this Work.



CHAPTER XII. THE BRIDAL OF TERESA.

“At the gate
They join, and slowly up the bannered aisle,
Led by the choir with due solemnity,
Range round the altar.”—ROGERS.

When the time arrived, that the orphan Teresa should choose her trade, she preferred that of an embroideress, because the brilliant flowers she designed with her needle reminded her of the Pyrenean natural gardens in her native Spain. Carlos excelled in turning, and wished to become a cabinet-maker, for which every facility was afforded him. Teresa had occasionally heard from Elizavetta, to whom she sometimes wrote, and once, the old serjeant had been all the way to Moscow purposely to see the young Spaniards, whom his wife loved as if they had been her own children. Teresa's time was nearly out, when she was told that a Russian soldier wished to speak to her: she hurried to the reception room, and discovered that her visitor was no other than Ivan, wearing the dress that denoted his rank to be that of a non-commissioned officer, and looking handsomer and more good-humoured than ever.

He brought a kind message and a present of honey from his mother, and seemed much pleased that Teresa was grown up. He told her, Elizavetta had never forgotten her adopted daughter, and that she hoped she would set up her trade at Tula, in preference to St. Petersburg, or Moscow, as she could then see her as often as she pleased.

Now, Tula is a great town, whose staple commodity is iron; and our fair embroidress was not likely to find much to do there in the way of fancy-work, for which she would find a ready sale at Moscow, or St. Petersburg. However, as she loved Elizavetta, she said “she would consider of it.”

In a few days, Ivan came again, but not this time upon his mother's business; he had a few words to say on an important matter—of his own. He was promised his discharge, by the Grand Duke; and he thought of taking his father's farm—but a farm required female superintendence, and his mother was old. He had never seen but one woman who was likely to please Elizavetta and himself—and that woman was the Spanish girl he had found in the forest of Krasnoi.

Teresa blushed; but she did not utter a denial of his suit. Homeless—friendless as she was, it would have been imprudent to refuse such an eligible offer, even if she had not always at the bottom of her heart, cherished a warmer feeling than gratitude for her preserver. Ivan quitted her full of joy; and our lowly heroine hastened to communicate to those kind friends belonging to the establishment who had watched over her youth with maternal care, the change that was about to take place in her destiny. They approved of it, and arranged that she should be married from the Hospital, as soon as Ivan had obtained his discharge.

In three months from that day, Ivan, accompanied by his parents, came to claim his beautiful and virtuous bride. They were married according to the rites of the Greek church; and Teresa, who was much beloved by her companions, received an immense number of pretty presents, the fruits of their own ingenuity. It was arranged that the bridal feast should be held at the Foundling House, and the largest eating-room was decorated for the occasion, and as Carlos and all the companions of Teresa were invited: it was a very large and happy party indeed. The handsome young couple were placed side by side, and the company were in the very act of drinking their health, when a government courier was suddenly announced.

In Russia, such a circumstance does not always increase the pleasure of a merry-making. In England, such a circumstance excites curiosity; under a despotic government, it creates alarm. The official appeared not to notice the sensation his presence occasioned; he bowed to Teresa, and placed a small sealed packet before her; then withdrew as speedily as he came. With a frightened glance, the bride noticed that it bore the imperial arms; with trembling hands she broke the seal; it contained a second enclosure, addressed to Ivan Petrosk, late a serjeant of chasseurs—within it was his discharge from the army, and a handsome watch; that directed to Teresa, contained a purse full of golden roubles—and was entitled a bridal gift from the Grand Duke Constantine, to Teresa Alvez, the foundling of Krasnoi. This incident certainly did not damp the joy of that happy day.

The sum allowed by government to set up the young *élève* in business was given her as a marriage portion, so that Ivan's bride was a great match for him after all.

Teresa and Carlos are now naturalized Russians, surrounded by their own families, and encompassed round by blessings. Dim and distant seem the years they passed in their native land; even their sorrows and sufferings during the campaign in Russia, appear like a vision of the night; yet the benefit of those chastisements has not faded away, "for sweet are the uses of adversity" to those who profit by them. The sight of a distressed foreigner always brings back to them the remembrance that they too were once strangers in a strange land.

They have never forgotten that, unless God himself had watched over them, vain would have been the help of man. To Him they devoutly ascribe their marvellous preservation in time past,—and to Him they look up with holy confidence for their support in future years.

In conclusion, we may observe, that those are always well kept, whom the Lord keeps Himself.



NOTES.

It is not very easy to discover the occasion of Napoleon's celebrated expedition to Russia; the ostensible pretext made by the French Emperor, was the determination of the Russian Sovereign not to unite with him in any hostile measures against England. The peace of Tilsit had broken the commercial intercourse between England and Russia, from which the latter country derived a great part of her revenues. The great northern state had lost the market for her staple commodities of tallow, hemp, wax, honey, deal, flax, furs, rags, sail-cloths, oil, linseed, hides, and corn, for Poland, which she had annexed to her vast territorial possessions, is the granary of Europe. The natives of the north of Europe export all their wheat, as the bread eaten by the peasantry of Russia, Poland, and Finland, is composed of rye-flour, fish-bones, and the bark of trees. It resembles gingerbread in colour, must be cut with a hatchet, and is usually soaked or boiled in water or milk before it is eaten. The ship biscuit, known by the name of Riga bread, has been brought to England, as a matter of curiosity, by the crews of vessels, who have been frozen in the Sound, by the setting in of winter prematurely, and has occasioned much surprise to the more favoured peasantry of England. Animal food, however, is cheap and plentiful, and milk always forms a part of Russian diet.

The dreadful defeat of the Russians, at Friedland, had forced the Emperor Alexander to solicit peace from Napoleon. This pacification was called the peace of Tilsit, and was signed the ninth of July, 1807. It annihilated by one stroke of the pen the commercial relation between Russia and England, which, with the exception of a few months' interruption in the beginning of this century, had lasted more than three hundred years. The forced peace was hurtful to the Russian people, and fatal to their interests.

They saw in the English ancient friends and allies; and considered the French as recent enemies, who had first beaten them in the field, and then imposed hard conditions upon them. The interruptions between the commerce of England and Russia could not continue long. The Russian people found their trade annihilated and themselves starving. This state of things could not last, and the Emperor, yielding to the complaints of his distressed subjects, renewed his alliance with England. Although the renewal of the commercial relations between Russia and England was the cause assigned by Napoleon for the war, it has been conjectured with a great appearance of probability, that if he had effected the conquest of this vast empire, he would have reduced Turkey, and attempted the conquest of Asia, of which, our East India possessions formed the fairest part. He hoped to induce Mahmoud, the Sultan of Turkey, to assist him against the Emperor of Russia, with whom that potentate was then at war. But Mahmoud, who was a Prince of considerable talent, saw through his designs, and immediately made peace with Russia. The Turks were like the Russians, old allies of England, and an extensive commerce is carried on between the two countries. Napoleon had never chosen to acknowledge this Prince before, as Selim the Third, (who was in the French interest,) had been dethroned and strangled by the Janizaries, to make way for Mahmoud, who was his nephew. The Sultan, besides the sagacity that led him to discover the views of Napoleon, had his own private resentment to gratify, in rejecting an alliance offensive and defensive with the Emperor of France.

The Emperor of the French relied upon his own great resources, as well as upon his hitherto unrivalled fortune. His military talents were transcendant, and he had never been vanquished in any battle, where he had commanded in person. He resolved to organize such an army as he thought must crush any state, though powerful and determined as Russia. The conscription

was raised in every country that had either been conquered by France, or were in alliance with her. Austria furnished thirty thousand men. Prussia, twenty thousand. Italy and the Confederation of the Rhine one hundred and five thousand, while the French Empire, with its vast resources, when combined with the armies already specified, brought into the field five hundred thousand men. Modern times had never seen war upon such a gigantic scale. Xerxes' celebrated expedition against Greece had scarcely exceeded it, and he had been unsuccessful. Indeed, the experience afforded by history had always been against vast armies being brought into the field, for bravery and skill are generally an overmatch for numbers. A patriotic people have their homes and families to fight for, and, even if conquered, know whither to fly; but the invaders, if vanquished, must of necessity be destroyed if dispersed, for the invaded who have suffered the horrors of war at their hands, are not likely to shew pity to them.

He undertook this unfortunate expedition without that forecast which gives any undertaking its best chance of success. Russia was unlike the fair fruitful plains of southern Europe, or the countries bordered by the Rhine; and the plan of defence organized for her had never once entered the mind of her invader. Yet it had been successfully adopted by Peter the Great, in the beginning of the last century, when Russia was invaded by Charles the Twelfth of Sweden. The towns that lay in the march of the enemy had been destroyed, and the inhabitants carried away; nothing, in fact, had been left, that could sustain the life of man or beast. Charles found himself surrounded by a desert, in which his army of twenty thousand men could not subsist; and Napoleon, with an army, that, according to Dumas, the celebrated French author, amounted to six hundred and seventy two thousand men, never contemplated that a vast number of persons are easier starved than a few; or that Russia would adopt the policy of her great regenerator, Peter the Great.

He arrived upon the banks of the river Niemen, where he expected to meet either a Russian embassy to implore his clemency, in the shape of an unconditional peace, or a Russian army to oppose his crossing the boundary of the Empire. Neither of these things realized his expectations, or perhaps his hopes.

At night, some sappers crossed the river in a small boat, and made good their landing in the sight of Napoleon, who watched them with intense interest from the opposite shore; at that instant, a cossack officer appeared in sight, he was alone, and seemed astonished at meeting foreigners on that side of the river,—“Who are you?” demanded he, very unceremoniously.

“Frenchmen,” replied the sappers, with equal brevity.

“What do you want?”

“To cross the Niemen.”

“What do you come to Russia for?”

“To make war,” retorted the sappers boldly, who were very far from imagining the fate that hung upon the words by which they had constituted themselves Napoleon's heralds.

The Cossack replied, by running his long lance through the bodies of the two unfortunate sappers, who were the first victims of the Russian war. Three volleys were fired upon the Cossack, but he rode off uninjured in the direction of Wilna. Napoleon trembled from strong emotion, when he heard the first sound of the musketry, for the campaign was begun.

The Cossack officer communicated to the Russian Emperor the important fact, that the enemy were about to cross the Niemen. These tidings were brought to Alexander at midnight. He was at a ball, at Wilna, and was dancing with Mademoiselle Barclay de Tolly, the daughter of the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies. His employment might be supposed an evidence of want of feeling, but it was no doubt the result of deep policy to calm the agitation of the

public mind, by his apparent insensibility to the coming dangers.

From Wilna, the French marched to Witpesk; they found everything laid waste. The harvest—the villages in flames. Napoleon was fatigued in body and mind upon his arrival at Witpesk. He threw himself into an arm-chair, and having commanded the attendance of Count Du'rn, expressed his determination of remaining where he was, in these words—"I remain here, I want to rest and re-organize my army, and arrange the affairs of Poland. The campaign of 1812 is finished, (it was the last day of July,) that of 1813 will complete the business. Consider, Monsieur, whether we can subsist here, for we will not imitate the madness of Charles the Twelfth." Then turning to Murat, he said,—“Let us plant our eagles here, 1813 will see us at Moscow, 1814 at St. Petersburg, the war of Russia is a war of three years.”

The season being so far advanced made this plan the only prudent one that Napoleon could have adopted. Master of Poland, and having the granaries of Dantzic at command, supplies could have reached him at Witpesk; and though the imperial army must have endured even then some hardships and privations before the long winter was over, still it would not have been annihilated. Napoleon did not adhere to his intention, for he found that the Emperor intended to risk a battle, and as he relied upon his military superiority in the field, he abandoned his idea of wintering at Witpesk, and proceeded on his march. A battle took place at Krasnoi, between the French and Russians, in which the latter were beaten. Barclay de Tolly abandoned Smolensko, which Napoleon entered, but was obliged to leave it immediately, as it was in flames.

The line of policy adopted by the commander-in-chief, though sound and wise, was highly displeasing to the Russians; and Alexander, yielding to the general outcry of his people, obliged Barclay de Tolly to give up the supreme command to a native Russian, General Kutusoff, who had greatly distinguished himself in the campaign against the Turks.

Hitherto, the continued system of retreat and ravage pursued by the Russian soldiers, had depressed the spirits of the French soldiers, many of whom committed suicide, to avoid the fate which they thought awaited them in the present campaign.

The dysentery attacked its thousands, and before the grand army of Napoleon had reached the confines of Russia proper, the general officers themselves, felt anything but sanguine upon the success of the northern campaign.

Napoleon had determined upon wintering at Moscow. The bad roads and inclement weather of St. Petersburg had made him resolve upon the road to Moscow in preference. He felt certain that the Russian army would defend the ancient capital of the Czars, and every soldier not only expected a great battle, but was eager for it. They were aware that they must earn their winter quarters at Moscow by a victory, or perish with cold and hunger in central Russia.

The battle of Borodino, or Moskwa, as it is called by the French, was obstinately fought on each side. The invaders remained masters of the ensanguined ground, upon which sixty thousand men had lost their lives. Dumas, from whom this abstract of the Russian campaign is drawn, describes this field of war as the most horrible that had ever been seen. The French gained nothing by their victory but the road to the ancient capital,—not a gun, not an ensign, not a prisoner, fell into their hands. It has been said, that the obstinate selfishness of Napoleon, in refusing to part with his guards, who comprised the flower of his army, prevented the result of the battle being more decidedly in the favour of the French.

The battle of Borodino was fought upon the sixth of September, 1812; and upon the fourteenth of the same month the French army discovered, from the heights of Mount Salvation, the “Holy City,” for by that venerated name the Russians distinguished their ancient

capital.

The simultaneous cry, of—"Moscow! Moscow!" broke from the lips of a hundred and twenty thousand men. The Emperor joined in the general burst of feeling; he also clapped his hands, and for a moment, fully participated in the general feeling of joy. Then the smile, always so fascinating, that lighted up his features, faded away, a cloud passed over his brow, as he re-seated himself in his saddle.—"It was time," said he, and the words betrayed the mental anxiety he had so long concealed.

The sight of the vast and magnificent city, with its gilded cupolas glittering in the sun, engrossed the minds of his armed myriads. Moscow, the beacon-star of hope, that at a distance shone through the long and toilsome march, was now near. Yet they could not expect to enter her walls without another battle. As the army drew nearer they perceived that the city appeared solitary and deserted. They saw no smoke issuing from the chimnies, they heard no noise, no sound that gave any indication of population. A great flight of crows perched on the cupolas of the Kremlin, seemed the only living things resident in Moscow. Upon the other side of the city, opposite to that gate by which the French army were about to enter, they thought they perceived some motion, but the distance did not allow them to be certain of the fact. It was afterwards known to be the Russian army, who were retreating from Moscow towards the east.

The army and their generals were astonished, the silence and solitude chilled their newborn hopes. Napoleon himself knew not what to think—his marshals surrounded him, and his suspicions and inquietude were reflected on their countenances. "Patience," said he, "these people are so savage, that they do not even know how to surrender." For he was actually waiting in the suburbs for a deputation from the citizens, whom he expected to bring him the keys of the city.

Murat, a bold and determined character, whose courage was often rash, entered the city with his staff at full gallop, determined to ascertain the real state of its affairs. Napoleon did not wish to remain in uncertainty till the return of his adventurous brother-in-law; he despatched General Gourgaud, who found him holding a conference with a Russian officer, sent to him by General Milarodowich, and surrounded by a party of Cossacks, who were admiring his fine figure, and examining his rich dress and floating white plumes. The aide-de-camp of Milarodowich demanded that his rear-guard should be allowed to leave the city unmolested, threatening to set fire to Moscow unless his request was complied with.

Murat, seeing that the Cossacks were taken with his finery, distributed the jewels with which his person was adorned, to his savage admirers. His watch he bestowed on the officer, and when he had nothing more to give, borrowed the watches and rings worn by his staff for these Cossacks.

Napoleon permitted the rear-guard to evacuate the city.—"Go, tell them," said he, "that they may depart, for I require the whole of Moscow, from the meanest cottage to the grandest palace." He expected the inhabitants would appear, as soon as the Russians had made good their retreat, but he was mistaken, Moscow remained as deserted as before. He dared not enter till the city had been surrounded by the Viceroy of Italy, Prince Eugene, and Prince Poniatowski, and examined without the walls, while the Duke of Dantzic and the young guard entered it, and reconnoitred the streets. Their report seemed to preclude the possibility of ambush, for they found the houses empty, and the inhabitants gone.

Napoleon was dispirited by this strange abandonment. He took up his head-quarters in the Kremlin; that object of his ambition was realized, and yet he felt disturbed and uneasy.

Murat introduced some Frenchmen to him, whom he had found in the city, and brought to

solicit the clemency and favour of the Emperor. Napoleon asked them some questions relative to the abandonment of the city, and heard that a vague report had reached them, that Count Rostopchin intended to burn Moscow. Napoleon was irritated by the communication, and would not believe it. Such a thing had never occurred in the experience of his long military life. That the Russians could resolve to burn their own city was perfectly incredible.

At two o'clock in the morning Napoleon was informed that the merchant's quarter of the city was in flames, and his informants reminded him of the report given by the French, of Moscow. He, however, ascribed it to his own soldiers, being well aware of the outrages committed by troops quartered in a wealthy city. The fire continued to rage unchecked, for the pumps had been destroyed, and no water could be obtained. Napoleon blamed Marshal Mortier, to whose want of discipline he imputed this misfortune; but the Marshal pointed out to his attention an empty house which had burst into flames, apparently self-kindled.

The alarm this communication had occasioned him quickly subsided, for the fire was got under.

The following night Napoleon was again aroused from sleep by the fearful cry of fire. The wind was to the north, and the flames followed the direction of the wind, and approached the Kremlin.

The appearance of fire, likewise, from the west, no longer left Napoleon in doubt of the truth; he had resisted against the evidence of his senses and the testimony of the Frenchmen. Conviction struck him to the heart.

Those who witnessed the scene and survived to describe it, declare, that at first the flames resembled a serpent creeping in a circle till they suddenly met and expanded into an ocean of fire, and approached the walls of the Kremlin, roaring in dreadful and irrepressible fury.

Then Napoleon knew that those flames, though kindled by many hands, were the fruits of united determination,—the will of a patriotic people.—“See,” cried he, “how they make war. The civilization of St. Petersburg has deceived us, the modern Russians are still Scythians.” He then gave orders that the incendiaries should be sought for and shot, cruel orders that were only too soon obeyed. Then the cry,—“The Kremlin is on fire!—the Kremlin is on fire!” reached the ears of the Emperor and his suite. He remained mute and irresolute, as if he heard it not, even the report that this palace of the Czars was mined, seemed to make no impression on his mind. The grenadiers demanded the Emperor, they feared to lose him by a moment's delay. Gourgaud and Berthier had ascended the gallery of the Kremlin, to see if they could discover a passage free from the devouring element, but they were nearly stifled with the heat and smoke, and could behold nothing but an ocean of fire, every avenue to the palace was blocked up with the flames.

At this fearful crisis an officer rushed into the presence of Napoleon, and told him that a postern door, at present closed, opened upon the river. The bearer of this intelligence had his hair singed by the fire; he had risked his life to communicate this fact to the Emperor. Four sappers broke the door, but the officer was mistaken, it opened not upon the river, but into a burning street. To go back was impossible. The Emperor and his suite must advance or perish. Without a guide, deafened with the roaring of the flames, the crashing of houses, and impeded by the fall of some fugitives, who were suffocated by the way, Napoleon resolutely marched on, and was soon met by the soldiers of the first corps, who came to seek him among that wilderness of fire. They surrounded him, crying out,—“This way, this way.” Touched with their devotedness, he suffered them to lead him whither they would. In five minutes he was in safety in a square that had been burned down that morning. He withdrew with his suite, to Petroskoi, a

palace built by Peter the Great, about half a league from Moscow. It is said, that even at that distance, the heat of the conflagration was felt, and that the glass was affected by it. Here Napoleon fixed his head quarters, and meditated on the great national sacrifice, that had deprived his army of their winter quarters.

During three days the ancient capital of Russia appeared enveloped in flames; then the fire went out of itself, for want of fuel, and a blackened skeleton remained, where Moscow once had been.

Napoleon, confounded with the calamity that had befallen him, lingered near the spot, irresolute and undecided respecting the plans to be adopted for the future. In the meanwhile, twelve Russian peasants had been taken in the act of kindling the conflagration, which was likely to involve such disastrous consequences. They had concealed themselves in the cellars to effect their purpose, and boldly avowed that they had devoted themselves to perform this patriotic service, and that they were a part of a body of five hundred persons, who had voluntarily undertaken it, instigated by the Governor, Count Rostopchin, who had fired his palace with his own hand, before leaving the city, in which act he had been imitated by Prince Trubetskoi. These lowly patriots gloried in the destruction of the capital, they asked no mercy, and received the fatal volley with indomitable firmness. The Emperor lingered near the ruins of Moscow till the twenty-third of October, when the sudden fall of the thermometer warned him "that winter, that gives no advice, but issues its commands," was at hand, and he commenced his disastrous retreat, the miseries of which have no parallel in modern times.

Those young readers, who wish to be acquainted with the terrible consequences of that retreat, will find them related, with horrible fidelity, in Count Segur's "*History of the Campaign in Russia*." The account of the conflagration just quoted is a free translation from the works of the celebrated Alexandre Dumas. In the course of the work I have depicted a small part of the sufferings of the invading army, for the whole truth is too harrowing to be stated here, it can only be glanced at. Every misery that cold, famine, disease, or war, could inflict, were endured by the grand army of Napoleon. Even the veneration felt for their great military chief was forgotten by his guards, and, displeased at seeing him reclining in his carriage, wrapped up in furs, compelled him to take off his pelisse and quit his carriage.

The most frightful scenes passed under the eyes of the Emperor, and more than once he narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the Cossacks. At Smorgonie, near Wilna, he quitted the army upon the fifth of December, by the advice of his staff, and arrived in a shabby caleche at Paris, upon the night of the eighteenth of the same month, bringing himself the first news of the destruction of the grand army to the capital. In twenty days two hundred thousand men were left upon the line of march, victims of famine and cold. The sword of the Russians, and the dreadful catastrophe at the passage of the Berezina, finished the work of destruction. The Prussians and Austrians saved their battalions by submission to the Russians, against whom they had been brought unwillingly; these foreigners, and about thirty thousand French and Italian soldiers, were all that survived the dreadful campaign. Napoleon had lost his grand army, but not his ambition; and the spring found him in the field at Germany, at the head of new levies. The loss of the battle of Leipsic decided his fate; France was invaded from every side. Paris capitulated to the Russians, and Napoleon was forced to abdicate that throne which he was unable to retain. The sovereignty of the island of Elba was bestowed upon him, whither he was conveyed by an English frigate, "The Undaunted," and was landed the third of May, 1814. Here he remained till the twenty-sixth of February, 1815, when he embarked on board the brig, "Inconstant," for France. His return was hailed with enthusiasm, and the Bourbon family retired

to Brussels, during the hundred days, by which the second reign of Napoleon is known in history. The battle of Waterloo terminated his political and military career, and he ended his life at St. Helena, in the custody of the British nation.

“And left that name at which the world grew pale,
To paint a moral, or adorn a tale.”

THE END.

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Transcriber's Notes

Obvious printing errors have been silently corrected.

Inconsistencies in hyphenation, spelling and punctuation have been preserved.

Removed extraneous "[to](#)" in "Blanca fell to to the earth...."

[The end of *The Spanish conscript and his family* by Jane Margaret Strickland]