THOMAS HARDY

THE TRUMPET-MAJOR

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Содержание

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PREFACE

The present tale is founded more largely on testimony – oral and written – than any other in this series. The external incidents which direct its course are mostly an unexaggerated reproduction of the recollections of old persons well known to the author in childhood, but now long dead, who were eye-witnesses of those scenes. If wholly transcribed their recollections would have filled a volume thrice the length of 'The Trumpet-Major.'

Down to the middle of this century, and later, there were not wanting, in the neighbourhood of the places more or less clearly indicated herein, casual relics of the circumstances amid which the action moves – our preparations for defence against the threatened invasion of England by Buonaparte. An outhouse door riddled with bullet-holes, which had been extemporized by a solitary man as a target for firelock practice when the landing was hourly expected, a heap of bricks and clods on a beacon-hill, which had formed the chimney and walls of the hut occupied by the beacon-keeper, worm-eaten shafts and iron heads of pikes for the use of those who had no better weapons, ridges on the down thrown up during the encampment, fragments

of volunteer uniform, and other such lingering remains, brought to my imagination in early childhood the state of affairs at the date of the war more vividly than volumes of history could have done.

Those who have attempted to construct a coherent narrative of past times from the fragmentary information furnished by survivors, are aware of the difficulty of ascertaining the true sequence of events indiscriminately recalled. For this purpose the newspapers of the date were indispensable. Of other documents consulted I may mention, for the satisfaction of those who love a true story, that the 'Address to all Ranks and Descriptions of Englishmen' was transcribed from an original copy in a local museum; that the hieroglyphic portrait of Napoleon existed as a print down to the present day in an old woman's cottage near 'Overcombe;' that the particulars of the King's doings at his favourite watering-place were augmented by details from records of the time. The drilling scene of the local militia received some additions from an account given in so grave a work as Gifford's 'History of the Wars of the French Revolution' (London, 1817). But on reference to the History I find I was mistaken in supposing the account to be advanced as authentic, or to refer to rural England. However, it does in a large degree accord with the local traditions of such scenes that I have heard recounted, times without number, and the system of drill was tested by reference to the Army Regulations of 1801, and other military handbooks. Almost the whole narrative of the

supposed landing of the French in the Bay is from oral relation as aforesaid. Other proofs of the veracity of this chronicle have escaped my recollection.

T. H.

October 1895.

I. WHAT WAS SEEN FROM THE WINDOW OVERLOOKING THE DOWN

In the days of high-waisted and muslin-gowned women, when the vast amount of soldiering going on in the country was a cause of much trembling to the sex, there lived in a village near the Wessex coast two ladies of good report, though unfortunately of limited means. The elder was a Mrs. Martha Garland, a landscape-painter's widow, and the other was her only daughter Anne.

Anne was fair, very fair, in a poetical sense; but in complexion she was of that particular tint between blonde and brunette which is inconveniently left without a name. Her eyes were honest and inquiring, her mouth cleanly cut and yet not classical, the middle point of her upper lip scarcely descending so far as it should have done by rights, so that at the merest pleasant thought, not to mention a smile, portions of two or three white teeth were uncovered whether she would or not. Some people said that this was very attractive. She was graceful and slender, and, though but little above five feet in height, could draw herself up to look tall. In her manner, in her comings and goings, in her 'I'll do this,' or 'I'll do that,' she combined dignity with sweetness as no other girl could do; and any impressionable stranger youths who passed by

were led to yearn for a windfall of speech from her, and to see at the same time that they would not get it. In short, beneath all that was charming and simple in this young woman there lurked a real firmness, unperceived at first, as the speck of colour lurks unperceived in the heart of the palest parsley flower.

She wore a white handkerchief to cover her white neck, and a cap on her head with a pink ribbon round it, tied in a bow at the front. She had a great variety of these cap-ribbons, the young men being fond of sending them to her as presents until they fell definitely in love with a special sweetheart elsewhere, when they left off doing so. Between the border of her cap and her forehead were ranged a row of round brown curls, like swallows' nests under eaves.

She lived with her widowed mother in a portion of an ancient building formerly a manor-house, but now a mill, which, being too large for his own requirements, the miller had found it convenient to divide and appropriate in part to these highly respectable tenants. In this dwelling Mrs. Garland's and Anne's ears were soothed morning, noon, and night by the music of the mill, the wheels and cogs of which, being of wood, produced notes that might have borne in their minds a remote resemblance to the wooden tones of the stopped diapason in an organ. Occasionally, when the miller was bolting, there was added to these continuous sounds the cheerful clicking of the hopper, which did not deprive them of rest except when it was kept going all night; and over and above all this they had the pleasure of

knowing that there crept in through every crevice, door, and window of their dwelling, however tightly closed, a subtle mist of superfine flour from the grinding room, quite invisible, but making its presence known in the course of time by giving a pallid and ghostly look to the best furniture. The miller frequently apologized to his tenants for the intrusion of this insidious dry fog; but the widow was of a friendly and thankful nature, and she said that she did not mind it at all, being as it was, not nasty dirt, but the blessed staff of life.

By good-humour of this sort, and in other ways, Mrs. Garland acknowledged her friendship for her neighbour, with whom Anne and herself associated to an extent which she never could have anticipated when, tempted by the lowness of the rent, they first removed thither after her husband's death from a larger house at the other end of the village. Those who have lived in remote places where there is what is called no society will comprehend the gradual levelling of distinctions that went on in this case at some sacrifice of gentility on the part of one household. The widow was sometimes sorry to find with what readiness Anne caught up some dialect-word or accent from the miller and his friends; but he was so good and true-hearted a man, and she so easy-minded, unambitious a woman, that she would not make life a solitude for fastidious reasons. More than all, she had good ground for thinking that the miller secretly admired her, and this added a piquancy to the situation.

* * * * *

On a fine summer morning, when the leaves were warm under the sun, and the more industrious bees abroad, diving into every blue and red cup that could possibly be considered a flower, Anne was sitting at the back window of her mother's portion of the house, measuring out lengths of worsted for a fringed rug that she was making, which lay, about three-quarters finished, beside her. The work, though chromatically brilliant, was tedious: a hearth-rug was a thing which nobody worked at from morning to night; it was taken up and put down; it was in the chair, on the floor, across the hand-rail, under the bed, kicked here, kicked there, rolled away in the closet, brought out again, and so on more capriciously perhaps than any other home-made article. Nobody was expected to finish a rug within a calculable period, and the wools of the beginning became faded and historical before the end was reached. A sense of this inherent nature of worsted-work rather than idleness led Anne to look rather frequently from the open casement.

Immediately before her was the large, smooth millpond, over-full, and intruding into the hedge and into the road. The water, with its flowing leaves and spots of froth, was stealing away, like Time, under the dark arch, to tumble over the great slimy wheel within. On the other side of the mill-pond was an open place called the Cross, because it was three-quarters of one,

two lanes and a cattle-drive meeting there. It was the general rendezvous and arena of the surrounding village. Behind this a steep slope rose high into the sky, merging in a wide and open down, now littered with sheep newly shorn. The upland by its height completely sheltered the mill and village from north winds, making summers of springs, reducing winters to autumn temperatures, and permitting myrtle to flourish in the open air.

The heaviness of noon pervaded the scene, and under its influence the sheep had ceased to feed. Nobody was standing at the Cross, the few inhabitants being indoors at their dinner. No human being was on the down, and no human eye or interest but Anne's seemed to be concerned with it. The bees still worked on, and the butterflies did not rest from roving, their smallness seeming to shield them from the stagnating effect that this turning moment of day had on larger creatures. Otherwise all was still.

The girl glanced at the down and the sheep for no particular reason; the steep margin of turf and daisies rising above the roofs, chimneys, apple-trees, and church tower of the hamlet around her, bounded the view from her position, and it was necessary to look somewhere when she raised her head. While thus engaged in working and stopping her attention was attracted by the sudden rising and running away of the sheep squatted on the down; and there succeeded sounds of a heavy tramping over the hard sod which the sheep had quitted, the tramp being accompanied by a metallic jingle. Turning her eyes further she beheld two

cavalry soldiers on bulky grey chargers, armed and accoutred throughout, ascending the down at a point to the left where the incline was comparatively easy. The burnished chains, buckles, and plates of their trappings shone like little looking-glasses, and the blue, red, and white about them was unsubdued by weather or wear.

The two troopers rode proudly on, as if nothing less than crowns and empires ever concerned their magnificent minds. They reached that part of the down which lay just in front of her, where they came to a halt. In another minute there appeared behind them a group containing some half-dozen more of the same sort. These came on, halted, and dismounted likewise.

Two of the soldiers then walked some distance onward together, when one stood still, the other advancing further, and stretching a white line of tape between them. Two more of the men marched to another outlying point, where they made marks in the ground. Thus they walked about and took distances, obviously according to some preconcerted scheme.

At the end of this systematic proceeding one solitary horseman – a commissioned officer, if his uniform could be judged rightly at that distance – rode up the down, went over the ground, looked at what the others had done, and seemed to think that it was good. And then the girl heard yet louder tramps and clankings, and she beheld rising from where the others had risen a whole column of cavalry in marching order. At a distance behind these came a cloud of dust enveloping more and more

troops, their arms and accoutrements reflecting the sun through the haze in faint flashes, stars, and streaks of light. The whole body approached slowly towards the plateau at the top of the down.

Anne threw down her work, and letting her eyes remain on the nearing masses of cavalry, the worsteds getting entangled as they would, said, 'Mother, mother; come here! Here's such a fine sight! What does it mean? What can they be going to do up there?'

The mother thus invoked ran upstairs and came forward to the window. She was a woman of sanguine mouth and eye, unheroic manner, and pleasant general appearance; a little more tarnished as to surface, but not much worse in contour than the girl herself.

Widow Garland's thoughts were those of the period. 'Can it be the French,' she said, arranging herself for the extremest form of consternation. 'Can that arch-enemy of mankind have landed at last?' It should be stated that at this time there were two arch-enemies of mankind – Satan as usual, and Buonaparte, who had sprung up and eclipsed his elder rival altogether. Mrs. Garland alluded, of course, to the junior gentleman.

'It cannot be he,' said Anne. 'Ah! there's Simon Burden, the man who watches at the beacon. He'll know!'

She waved her hand to an aged form of the same colour as the road, who had just appeared beyond the mill-pond, and who, though active, was bowed to that degree which almost reproaches a feeling observer for standing upright. The arrival of the soldiery

had drawn him out from his drop of drink at the 'Duke of York' as it had attracted Anne. At her call he crossed the mill-bridge, and came towards the window.

Anne inquired of him what it all meant; but Simon Burden, without answering, continued to move on with parted gums, staring at the cavalry on his own private account with a concern that people often show about temporal phenomena when such matters can affect them but a short time longer. 'You'll walk into the millpond!' said Anne. 'What are they doing? You were a soldier many years ago, and ought to know.'

'Don't ask me, Mis'ess Anne,' said the military relic, depositing his body against the wall one limb at a time. 'I were only in the foot, ye know, and never had a clear understanding of horses. Ay, I be a old man, and of no judgment now.' Some additional pressure, however, caused him to search further in his worm-eaten magazine of ideas, and he found that he did know in a dim irresponsible way. The soldiers must have come there to camp: those men they had seen first were the markers: they had come on before the rest to measure out the ground. He who had accompanied them was the quartermaster. 'And so you see they have got all the lines marked out by the time the regiment have come up,' he added. 'And then they will – well-a-deary! who'd ha' supposed that Overcombe would see such a day as this!'

'And then they will – '

'Then – Ah, it's gone from me again!' said Simon. 'O, and then they will raise their tents, you know, and picket their horses. That

was it; so it was.'

By this time the column of horse had ascended into full view, and they formed a lively spectacle as they rode along the high ground in marching order, backed by the pale blue sky, and lit by the southerly sun. Their uniform was bright and attractive; white buckskin pantaloons, three-quarter boots, scarlet shakos set off with lace, mustachios waxed to a needle point; and above all, those richly ornamented blue jackets mantled with the historic pelisse – that fascination to women, and encumbrance to the wearers themselves.

"Tis the York Hussars!' said Simon Burden, brightening like a dying ember fanned. 'Foreigners to a man, and enrolled long since my time. But as good hearty comrades, they say, as you'll find in the King's service.'

'Here are more and different ones,' said Mrs. Garland.

Other troops had, during the last few minutes, been ascending the down at a remoter point, and now drew near. These were of different weight and build from the others; lighter men, in helmet hats, with white plumes.

'I don't know which I like best,' said Anne. 'These, I think, after all.'

Simon, who had been looking hard at the latter, now said that they were the – th Dragoons.

'All Englishmen they,' said the old man. 'They lay at Budmouth barracks a few years ago.'

'They did. I remember it,' said Mrs. Garland.

‘And lots of the chaps about here ‘listed at the time,’ said Simon. ‘I can call to mind that there was – ah, ’tis gone from me again! However, all that’s of little account now.’

The dragoons passed in front of the lookers-on as the others had done, and their gay plumes, which had hung lazily during the ascent, swung to northward as they reached the top, showing that on the summit a fresh breeze blew. ‘But look across there,’ said Anne. There had entered upon the down from another direction several battalions of foot, in white kerseymere breeches and cloth gaiters. They seemed to be weary from a long march, the original black of their gaiters and boots being whity-brown with dust. Presently came regimental waggons, and the private canteen carts which followed at the end of a convoy.

The space in front of the mill-pond was now occupied by nearly all the inhabitants of the village, who had turned out in alarm, and remained for pleasure, their eyes lighted up with interest in what they saw; for trappings and regimentals, war horses and men, in towns an attraction, were here almost a sublimity.

The troops filed to their lines, dismounted, and in quick time took off their accoutrements, rolled up their sheep-skins, picketed and unbitted their horses, and made ready to erect the tents as soon as they could be taken from the waggons and brought forward. When this was done, at a given signal the canvases flew up from the sod; and thenceforth every man had a place in which to lay his head.

Though nobody seemed to be looking on but the few at the window and in the village street, there were, as a matter of fact, many eyes converging upon that military arrival in its high and conspicuous position, not to mention the glances of birds and other wild creatures. Men in distant gardens, women in orchards and at cottage-doors, shepherds on remote hills, turnip-hoers in blue-green enclosures miles away, captains with spy-glasses out at sea, were regarding the picture keenly. Those three or four thousand men of one machine-like movement, some of them swashbucklers by nature; others, doubtless, of a quiet shop-keeping disposition who had inadvertently got into uniform – all of them had arrived from nobody knew where, and hence were matter of great curiosity. They seemed to the mere eye to belong to a different order of beings from those who inhabited the valleys below. Apparently unconscious and careless of what all the world was doing elsewhere, they remained picturesquely engrossed in the business of making themselves a habitation on the isolated spot which they had chosen.

Mrs. Garland was of a festive and sanguine turn of mind, a woman soon set up and soon set down, and the coming of the regiments quite excited her. She thought there was reason for putting on her best cap, thought that perhaps there was not; that she would hurry on the dinner and go out in the afternoon; then that she would, after all, do nothing unusual, nor show any silly excitements whatever, since they were unbecoming in a mother and a widow. Thus circumscribing her intentions till she

was toned down to an ordinary person of forty, Mrs. Garland accompanied her daughter downstairs to dine, saying, ‘Presently we will call on Miller Loveday, and hear what he thinks of it all.’

II. SOMEBODY KNOCKS AND COMES IN

Miller Loveday was the representative of an ancient family of corn-grinders whose history is lost in the mists of antiquity. His ancestral line was contemporaneous with that of De Ros, Howard, and De La Zouche; but, owing to some trifling deficiency in the possessions of the house of Loveday, the individual names and intermarriages of its members were not recorded during the Middle Ages, and thus their private lives in any given century were uncertain. But it was known that the family had formed matrimonial alliances with farmers not so very small, and once with a gentleman-tanner, who had for many years purchased after their death the horses of the most aristocratic persons in the county – fiery steeds that earlier in their career had been valued at many hundred guineas.

It was also ascertained that Mr. Loveday's great-grandparents had been eight in number, and his great-great-grandparents sixteen, every one of whom reached to years of discretion: at every stage backwards his sires and gammers thus doubled and doubled till they became a vast body of Gothic ladies and gentlemen of the rank known as ceorls or villeins, full of importance to the country at large, and ramifying throughout the unwritten history of England. His immediate father had greatly

improved the value of their residence by building a new chimney, and setting up an additional pair of millstones.

Overcombe Mill presented at one end the appearance of a hard-worked house slipping into the river, and at the other of an idle, genteel place, half-cloaked with creepers at this time of the year, and having no visible connexion with flour. It had hips instead of gables, giving it a round-shouldered look, four chimneys with no smoke coming out of them, two zigzag cracks in the wall, several open windows, with a looking-glass here and there inside, showing its warped back to the passer-by; snowy dimity curtains waving in the draught; two mill doors, one above the other, the upper enabling a person to step out upon nothing at a height of ten feet from the ground; a gaping arch vomiting the river, and a lean, long-nosed fellow looking out from the mill doorway, who was the hired grinder, except when a bulging fifteen stone man occupied the same place, namely, the miller himself.

Behind the mill door, and invisible to the mere wayfarer who did not visit the family, were chalked addition and subtraction sums, many of them originally done wrong, and the figures half rubbed out and corrected, noughts being turned into nines, and ones into twos. These were the miller's private calculations. There were also chalked in the same place rows and rows of strokes like open palings, representing the calculations of the grinder, who in his youthful ciphering studies had not gone so far as Arabic figures.

In the court in front were two worn-out millstones, made useful again by being let in level with the ground. Here people stood to smoke and consider things in muddy weather; and cats slept on the clean surfaces when it was hot. In the large stubbard-tree at the corner of the garden was erected a pole of larch fir, which the miller had bought with others at a sale of small timber in Damer's Wood one Christmas week. It rose from the upper boughs of the tree to about the height of a fisherman's mast, and on the top was a vane in the form of a sailor with his arm stretched out. When the sun shone upon this figure it could be seen that the greater part of his countenance was gone, and the paint washed from his body so far as to reveal that he had been a soldier in red before he became a sailor in blue. The image had, in fact, been John, one of our coming characters, and was then turned into Robert, another of them. This revolving piece of statuary could not, however, be relied on as a vane, owing to the neighbouring hill, which formed variable currents in the wind.

The leafy and quieter wing of the mill-house was the part occupied by Mrs. Garland and her daughter, who made up in summer-time for the narrowness of their quarters by overflowing into the garden on stools and chairs. The parlour or dining-room had a stone floor – a fact which the widow sought to disguise by double carpeting, lest the standing of Anne and herself should be lowered in the public eye. Here now the mid-day meal went lightly and mincingly on, as it does where there is no greedy carnivorous man to keep the dishes about, and was hanging on

the close when somebody entered the passage as far as the chink of the parlour door, and tapped. This proceeding was probably adopted to kindly avoid giving trouble to Susan, the neighbour's pink daughter, who helped at Mrs. Garland's in the mornings, but was at that moment particularly occupied in standing on the water-butt and gazing at the soldiers, with an inhaling position of the mouth and circular eyes.

There was a flutter in the little dining-room – the sensitiveness of habitual solitude makes hearts beat for preternaturally small reasons – and a guessing as to who the visitor might be. It was some military gentleman from the camp perhaps? No; that was impossible. It was the parson? No; he would not come at dinner-time. It was the well-informed man who travelled with drapery and the best Birmingham earrings? Not at all; his time was not till Thursday at three. Before they could think further the visitor moved forward another step, and the diners got a glimpse of him through the same friendly chink that had afforded him a view of the Garland dinner-table.

'O! It is only Loveday.'

This approximation to nobody was the miller above mentioned, a hale man of fifty-five or sixty – hale all through, as many were in those days, and not merely veneered with purple by exhilarating victuals and drinks, though the latter were not at all despised by him. His face was indeed rather pale than otherwise, for he had just come from the mill. It was capable of immense changes of expression: mobility was its essence, a roll of flesh

forming a buttress to his nose on each side, and a deep ravine lying between his lower lip and the tumulus represented by his chin. These fleshy lumps moved stealthily, as if of their own accord, whenever his fancy was tickled.

His eyes having lighted on the table-cloth, plates, and viands, he found himself in a position which had a sensible awkwardness for a modest man who always liked to enter only at seasonable times the presence of a girl of such pleasantly soft ways as Anne Garland, she who could make apples seem like peaches, and throw over her shillings the glamour of guineas when she paid him for flour.

'Dinner is over, neighbour Loveday; please come in,' said the widow, seeing his case. The miller said something about coming in presently; but Anne pressed him to stay, with a tender motion of her lip as it played on the verge of a solicitous smile without quite lapsing into one – her habitual manner when speaking.

Loveday took off his low-crowned hat and advanced. He had not come about pigs or fowls this time. 'You have been looking out, like the rest o' us, no doubt, Mrs. Garland, at the mampus of soldiers that have come upon the down? Well, one of the horse regiments is the – th Dragoons, my son John's regiment, you know.'

The announcement, though it interested them, did not create such an effect as the father of John had seemed to anticipate; but Anne, who liked to say pleasant things, replied, 'The dragoons looked nicer than the foot, or the German cavalry either.'

'They are a handsome body of men,' said the miller in a disinterested voice. 'Faith! I didn't know they were coming, though it may be in the newspaper all the time. But old Derriman keeps it so long that we never know things till they be in everybody's mouth.'

This Derriman was a squireen living near, who was chiefly distinguished in the present warlike time by having a nephew in the yeomanry.

'We were told that the yeomanry went along the turnpike road yesterday,' said Anne; 'and they say that they were a pretty sight, and quite soldierly.'

'Ah! well – they be not regulars,' said Miller Loveday, keeping back harsher criticism as uncalled for. But inflamed by the arrival of the dragoons, which had been the exciting cause of his call, his mind would not go to yeomanry. 'John has not been home these five years,' he said.

'And what rank does he hold now?' said the widow.

'He's trumpet-major, ma'am; and a good musician.' The miller, who was a good father, went on to explain that John had seen some service, too. He had enlisted when the regiment was lying in this neighbourhood, more than eleven years before, which put his father out of temper with him, as he had wished him to follow on at the mill. But as the lad had enlisted seriously, and as he had often said that he would be a soldier, the miller had thought that he would let Jack take his chance in the profession of his choice.

Loveday had two sons, and the second was now brought into the conversation by a remark of Anne's that neither of them seemed to care for the miller's business.

'No,' said Loveday in a less buoyant tone. 'Robert, you see, must needs go to sea.'

'He is much younger than his brother?' said Mrs. Garland.

About four years, the miller told her. His soldier son was two-and-thirty, and Bob was twenty-eight. When Bob returned from his present voyage, he was to be persuaded to stay and assist as grinder in the mill, and go to sea no more.

'A sailor-miller!' said Anne.

'O, he knows as much about mill business as I do,' said Loveday; 'he was intended for it, you know, like John. But, bless me!' he continued, 'I am before my story. I'm come more particularly to ask you, ma'am, and you, Anne my honey, if you will join me and a few friends at a leetle homely supper that I shall gi'e to please the chap now he's come? I can do no less than have a bit of a randy, as the saying is, now that he's here safe and sound.'

Mrs. Garland wanted to catch her daughter's eye; she was in some doubt about her answer. But Anne's eye was not to be caught, for she hated hints, nods, and calculations of any kind in matters which should be regulated by impulse; and the matron replied, 'If so be 'tis possible, we'll be there. You will tell us the day?'

He would, as soon as he had seen son John. "Twill be rather

untidy, you know, owing to my having no womenfolks in the house; and my man David is a poor dunder-headed feller for getting up a feast. Poor chap! his sight is bad, that's true, and he's very good at making the beds, and oiling the legs of the chairs and other furniture, or I should have got rid of him years ago.'

'You should have a woman to attend to the house, Loveday,' said the widow.

'Yes, I should, but – . Well, 'tis a fine day, neighbours. Hark! I fancy I hear the noise of pots and pans up at the camp, or my ears deceive me. Poor fellows, they must be hungry! Good day t'ye, ma'am.' And the miller went away.

All that afternoon Overcombe continued in a ferment of interest in the military investment, which brought the excitement of an invasion without the strife. There were great discussions on the merits and appearance of the soldiery. The event opened up, to the girls unbounded possibilities of adoring and being adored, and to the young men an embarrassment of dashing acquaintances which quite superseded falling in love. Thirteen of these lads incontinently stated within the space of a quarter of an hour that there was nothing in the world like going for a soldier. The young women stated little, but perhaps thought the more; though, in justice, they glanced round towards the encampment from the corners of their blue and brown eyes in the most demure and modest manner that could be desired.

In the evening the village was lively with soldiers' wives; a tree full of starlings would not have rivalled the chatter that was going

on. These ladies were very brilliantly dressed, with more regard for colour than for material. Purple, red, and blue bonnets were numerous, with bunches of cocks' feathers; and one had on an Arcadian hat of green sarcenet, turned up in front to show her cap underneath. It had once belonged to an officer's lady, and was not so much stained, except where the occasional storms of rain, incidental to a military life, had caused the green to run and stagnate in curious watermarks like peninsulas and islands. Some of the prettiest of these butterfly wives had been fortunate enough to get lodgings in the cottages, and were thus spared the necessity of living in huts and tents on the down. Those who had not been so fortunate were not rendered more amiable by the success of their sisters-in-arms, and called them names which brought forth retorts and rejoinders; till the end of these alternative remarks seemed dependent upon the close of the day.

One of these new arrivals, who had a rosy nose and a slight thickness of voice, which, as Anne said, she couldn't help, poor thing, seemed to have seen so much of the world, and to have been in so many campaigns, that Anne would have liked to take her into their own house, so as to acquire some of that practical knowledge of the history of England which the lady possessed, and which could not be got from books. But the narrowness of Mrs. Garland's rooms absolutely forbade this, and the houseless treasury of experience was obliged to look for quarters elsewhere.

That night Anne retired early to bed. The events of the day,

cheerful as they were in themselves, had been unusual enough to give her a slight headache. Before getting into bed she went to the window, and lifted the white curtains that hung across it. The moon was shining, though not as yet into the valley, but just peeping above the ridge of the down, where the white cones of the encampment were softly touched by its light. The quarter-guard and foremost tents showed themselves prominently; but the body of the camp, the officers' tents, kitchens, canteen, and appurtenances in the rear were blotted out by the ground, because of its height above her. She could discern the forms of one or two sentries moving to and fro across the disc of the moon at intervals. She could hear the frequent shuffling and tossing of the horses tied to the pickets; and in the other direction the miles-long voice of the sea, whispering a louder note at those points of its length where hampered in its ebb and flow by some jutting promontory or group of boulders. Louder sounds suddenly broke this approach to silence; they came from the camp of dragoons, were taken up further to the right by the camp of the Hanoverians, and further on still by the body of infantry. It was tattoo. Feeling no desire to sleep, she listened yet longer, looked at Charles's Wain swinging over the church tower, and the moon ascending higher and higher over the right-hand streets of tents, where, instead of parade and bustle, there was nothing going on but snores and dreams, the tired soldiers lying by this time under their proper canvases, radiating like spokes from the pole of each tent.

At last Anne gave up thinking, and retired like the rest. The night wore on, and, except the occasional ‘All’s well’ of the sentries, no voice was heard in the camp or in the village below.

III. THE MILL BECOMES AN IMPORTANT CENTRE OF OPERATIONS

The next morning Miss Garland awoke with an impression that something more than usual was going on, and she recognized as soon as she could clearly reason that the proceedings, whatever they might be, lay not far away from her bedroom window. The sounds were chiefly those of pickaxes and shovels. Anne got up, and, lifting the corner of the curtain about an inch, peeped out.

A number of soldiers were busily engaged in making a zigzag path down the incline from the camp to the river-head at the back of the house, and judging from the quantity of work already got through they must have begun very early. Squads of men were working at several equidistant points in the proposed pathway, and by the time that Anne had dressed herself each section of the length had been connected with those above and below it, so that a continuous and easy track was formed from the crest of the down to the bottom of the steep.

The down rested on a bed of solid chalk, and the surface exposed by the roadmakers formed a white ribbon, serpenting from top to bottom.

Then the relays of working soldiers all disappeared, and, not long after, a troop of dragoons in watering order rode forward at

the top and began to wind down the new path. They came lower and closer, and at last were immediately beneath her window, gathering themselves up on the space by the mill-pond. A number of the horses entered it at the shallow part, drinking and splashing and tossing about. Perhaps as many as thirty, half of them with riders on their backs, were in the water at one time; the thirsty animals drank, stamped, flounced, and drank again, letting the clear, cool water dribble luxuriously from their mouths. Miller Loveday was looking on from over his garden hedge, and many admiring villagers were gathered around.

Gazing up higher, Anne saw other troops descending by the new road from the camp, those which had already been to the pond making room for these by withdrawing along the village lane and returning to the top by a circuitous route.

Suddenly the miller exclaimed, as in fulfilment of expectation, 'Ah, John, my boy; good morning!' And the reply of 'Morning, father,' came from a well-mounted soldier near him, who did not, however, form one of the watering party. Anne could not see his face very clearly, but she had no doubt that this was John Loveday.

There were tones in the voice which reminded her of old times, those of her very infancy, when Johnny Loveday had been top boy in the village school, and had wanted to learn painting of her father. The deeps and shallows of the mill-pond being better known to him than to any other man in the camp, he had apparently come down on that account, and was cautioning some

of the horsemen against riding too far in towards the mill-head.

Since her childhood and his enlistment Anne had seen him only once, and then but casually, when he was home on a short furlough. His figure was not much changed from what it had been; but the many sunrises and sunsets which had passed since that day, developing her from a comparative child to womanhood, had abstracted some of his angularities, reddened his skin, and given him a foreign look. It was interesting to see what years of training and service had done for this man. Few would have supposed that the white and the blue coats of miller and soldier covered the forms of father and son.

Before the last troop of dragoons rode off they were welcomed in a body by Miller Loveday, who still stood in his outer garden, this being a plot lying below the mill-tail, and stretching to the water-side. It was just the time of year when cherries are ripe, and hang in clusters under their dark leaves. While the troopers loitered on their horses, and chatted to the miller across the stream, he gathered bunches of the fruit, and held them up over the garden hedge for the acceptance of anybody who would have them; whereupon the soldiers rode into the water to where it had washed holes in the garden bank, and, reining their horses there, caught the cherries in their forage-caps, or received bunches of them on the ends of their switches, with the dignified laugh that became martial men when stooping to slightly boyish amusement. It was a cheerful, careless, unpremeditated half-hour, which returned like the scent of a flower to the memories

of some of those who enjoyed it, even at a distance of many years after, when they lay wounded and weak in foreign lands.

Then dragoons and horses wheeled off as the others had done; and troops of the German Legion next came down and entered in panoramic procession the space below Anne's eyes, as if on purpose to gratify her. These were notable by their mustachios, and queues wound tightly with brown ribbon to the level of their broad shoulder-blades. They were charmed, as the others had been, by the head and neck of Miss Garland in the little square window overlooking the scene of operations, and saluted her with devoted foreign civility, and in such overwhelming numbers that the modest girl suddenly withdrew herself into the room, and had a private blush between the chest of drawers and the washing-stand.

When she came downstairs her mother said, 'I have been thinking what I ought to wear to Miller Loveday's to-night.'

'To Miller Loveday's?' said Anne.

'Yes. The party is to-night. He has been in here this morning to tell me that he has seen his son, and they have fixed this evening.'

'Do you think we ought to go, mother?' said Anne slowly, and looking at the smaller features of the window-flowers.

'Why not?' said Mrs. Garland.

'He will only have men there except ourselves, will he? And shall we be right to go alone among 'em?'

Anne had not recovered from the ardent gaze of the gallant York Hussars, whose voices reached her even now in converse

with Loveday.

'La, Anne, how proud you are!' said Widow Garland. 'Why, isn't he our nearest neighbour and our landlord? and don't he always fetch our faggots from the wood, and keep us in vegetables for next to nothing?'

'That's true,' said Anne.

'Well, we can't be distant with the man. And if the enemy land next autumn, as everybody says they will, we shall have quite to depend upon the miller's waggon and horses. He's our only friend.'

'Yes, so he is,' said Anne. 'And you had better go, mother; and I'll stay at home. They will be all men; and I don't like going.'

Mrs. Garland reflected. 'Well, if you don't want to go, I don't,' she said. 'Perhaps, as you are growing up, it would be better to stay at home this time. Your father was a professional man, certainly.' Having spoken as a mother, she sighed as a woman.

'Why do you sigh, mother?'

'You are so prim and stiff about everything.'

'Very well – we'll go.'

'O no – I am not sure that we ought. I did not promise, and there will be no trouble in keeping away.'

Anne apparently did not feel certain of her own opinion, and, instead of supporting or contradicting, looked thoughtfully down, and abstractedly brought her hands together on her bosom, till her fingers met tip to tip.

As the day advanced the young woman and her mother

became aware that great preparations were in progress in the miller's wing of the house. The partitioning between the Lovedays and the Garlands was not very thorough, consisting in many cases of a simple screwing up of the doors in the dividing walls; and thus when the mill began any new performances they proclaimed themselves at once in the more private dwelling. The smell of Miller Loveday's pipe came down Mrs. Garland's chimney of an evening with the greatest regularity. Every time that he poked his fire they knew from the vehemence or deliberateness of the blows the precise state of his mind; and when he wound his clock on Sunday nights the whirr of that monitor reminded the widow to wind hers. This transit of noises was most perfect where Loveday's lobby adjoined Mrs. Garland's pantry; and Anne, who was occupied for some time in the latter apartment, enjoyed the privilege of hearing the visitors arrive and of catching stray sounds and words without the connecting phrases that made them entertaining, to judge from the laughter they evoked. The arrivals passed through the house and went into the garden, where they had tea in a large summer-house, an occasional blink of bright colour, through the foliage, being all that was visible of the assembly from Mrs. Garland's windows. When it grew dusk they all could be heard coming indoors to finish the evening in the parlour.

Then there was an intensified continuation of the above-mentioned signs of enjoyment, talkings and haw-haws, runnings upstairs and runnings down, a slamming of doors and a clinking

of cups and glasses; till the proudest adjoining tenant without friends on his own side of the partition might have been tempted to wish for entrance to that merry dwelling, if only to know the cause of these fluctuations of hilarity, and to see if the guests were really so numerous, and the observations so very amusing as they seemed.

The stagnation of life on the Garland side of the party-wall began to have a very gloomy effect by the contrast. When, about half-past nine o'clock, one of these tantalizing bursts of gaiety had resounded for a longer time than usual, Anne said, 'I believe, mother, that you are wishing you had gone.'

'I own to feeling that it would have been very cheerful if we had joined in,' said Mrs. Garland, in a hankering tone. 'I was rather too nice in listening to you and not going. The parson never calls upon us except in his spiritual capacity. Old Derriman is hardly genteel; and there's nobody left to speak to. Lonely people must accept what company they can get.'

'Or do without it altogether.'

'That's not natural, Anne; and I am surprised to hear a young woman like you say such a thing. Nature will not be stifled in that way..' (Song and powerful chorus heard through partition.) 'I declare the room on the other side of the wall seems quite a paradise compared with this.'

'Mother, you are quite a girl,' said Anne in slightly superior accents. 'Go in and join them by all means.'

'O no – not now,' said her mother, resignedly shaking her

head. 'It is too late now. We ought to have taken advantage of the invitation. They would look hard at me as a poor mortal who had no real business there, and the miller would say, with his broad smile, "Ah, you be obliged to come round."'

While the sociable and unaspiring Mrs. Garland continued thus to pass the evening in two places, her body in her own house and her mind in the miller's, somebody knocked at the door, and directly after the elder Loveday himself was admitted to the room. He was dressed in a suit between grand and gay, which he used for such occasions as the present, and his blue coat, yellow and red waistcoat with the three lower buttons unfastened, steel-buckled shoes and speckled stockings, became him very well in Mrs. Martha Garland's eyes.

'Your servant, ma'am,' said the miller, adopting as a matter of propriety the raised standard of politeness required by his higher costume. 'Now, begging your pardon, I can't hae this. 'Tis unnatural that you two ladies should be biding here and we under the same roof making merry without ye. Your husband, poor man – lovely picters that a' would make to be sure – would have been in with us long ago if he had been in your place. I can take no nay from ye, upon my honour. You and maidy Anne must come in, if it be only for half-an-hour. John and his friends have got passes till twelve o'clock to-night, and, saving a few of our own village folk, the lowest visitor present is a very genteel German corporal. If you should hae any misgivings on the score of respectability, ma'am, we'll pack off the underbred ones into

the back kitchen.'

Widow Garland and Anne looked yes at each other after this appeal.

'We'll follow you in a few minutes,' said the elder, smiling; and she rose with Anne to go upstairs.

'No, I'll wait for ye,' said the miller doggedly; 'or perhaps you'll alter your mind again.'

While the mother and daughter were upstairs dressing, and saying laughingly to each other, 'Well, we must go now,' as if they hadn't wished to go all the evening, other steps were heard in the passage; and the miller cried from below, 'Your pardon, Mrs. Garland; but my son John has come to help fetch ye. Shall I ask him in till ye be ready?'

'Certainly; I shall be down in a minute,' screamed Anne's mother in a slanting voice towards the staircase.

When she descended, the outline of the trumpet-major appeared half-way down the passage. 'This is John,' said the miller simply. 'John, you can mind Mrs. Martha Garland very well?'

'Very well, indeed,' said the dragoon, coming in a little further. 'I should have called to see her last time, but I was only home a week. How is your little girl, ma'am?'

Mrs. Garland said Anne was quite well. 'She is grown-up now. She will be down in a moment.'

There was a slight noise of military heels without the door, at which the trumpet-major went and put his head outside, and

said, 'All right – coming in a minute,' when voices in the darkness replied, 'No hurry.'

'More friends?' said Mrs. Garland.

'O, it is only Buck and Jones come to fetch me,' said the soldier. 'Shall I ask 'em in a minute, Mrs Garland, ma'am?'

'O yes,' said the lady; and the two interesting forms of Trumpeter Buck and Saddler-sergeant Jones then came forward in the most friendly manner; whereupon other steps were heard without, and it was discovered that Sergeant-master-tailor Brett and Farrier-extraordinary Johnson were outside, having come to fetch Messrs. Buck and Jones, as Buck and Jones had come to fetch the trumpet-major.

As there seemed a possibility of Mrs. Garland's small passage being choked up with human figures personally unknown to her, she was relieved to hear Anne coming downstairs.

'Here's my little girl,' said Mrs. Garland, and the trumpet-major looked with a sort of awe upon the muslin apparition who came forward, and stood quite dumb before her. Anne recognized him as the trooper she had seen from her window, and welcomed him kindly. There was something in his honest face which made her feel instantly at home with him.

At this frankness of manner Loveday – who was not a ladies' man – blushed, and made some alteration in his bodily posture, began a sentence which had no end, and showed quite a boy's embarrassment. Recovering himself, he politely offered his arm, which Anne took with a very pretty grace. He conducted her

through his comrades, who glued themselves perpendicularly to the wall to let her pass, and then they went out of the door, her mother following with the miller, and supported by the body of troopers, the latter walking with the usual cavalry gait, as if their thighs were rather too long for them. Thus they crossed the threshold of the mill-house and up the passage, the paving of which was worn into a gutter by the ebb and flow of feet that had been going on there ever since Tudor times.

IV. WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE MILLER'S LITTLE ENTERTAINMENT

When the group entered the presence of the company a lull in the conversation was caused by the sight of new visitors, and (of course) by the charm of Anne's appearance; until the old men, who had daughters of their own, perceiving that she was only a half-formed girl, resumed their tales and toss-potting with unconcern.

Miller Loveday had fraternized with half the soldiers in the camp since their arrival, and the effect of this upon his party was striking – both chromatically and otherwise. Those among the guests who first attracted the eye were the sergeants and sergeant-majors of Loveday's regiment, fine hearty men, who sat facing the candles, entirely resigned to physical comfort. Then there were other non-commissioned officers, a German, two Hungarians, and a Swede, from the foreign hussars – young men with a look of sadness on their faces, as if they did not much like serving so far from home. All of them spoke English fairly well. Old age was represented by Simon Burden the pensioner, and the shady side of fifty by Corporal Tullidge, his friend and neighbour, who was hard of hearing, and sat with his hat on over a red cotton handkerchief that was wound several times round

his head. These two veterans were employed as watchers at the neighbouring beacon, which had lately been erected by the Lord-Lieutenant for firing whenever the descent on the coast should be made. They lived in a little hut on the hill, close by the heap of faggots; but to-night they had found deputies to watch in their stead.

On a lower plane of experience and qualifications came neighbour James Comfort, of the Volunteers, a soldier by courtesy, but a blacksmith by rights; also William Tremlett and Anthony Cripplestraw, of the local forces. The two latter men of war were dressed merely as villagers, and looked upon the regulars from a humble position in the background. The remainder of the party was made up of a neighbouring dairyman or two, and their wives, invited by the miller, as Anne was glad to see, that she and her mother should not be the only women there.

The elder Loveday apologized in a whisper to Mrs. Garland for the presence of the inferior villagers. 'But as they are learning to be brave defenders of their home and country, ma'am, as fast as they can master the drill, and have worked for me off and on these many years, I've asked 'em in, and thought you'd excuse it.'

'Certainly, Miller Loveday,' said the widow.

'And the same of old Burden and Tullidge. They have served well and long in the Foot, and even now have a hard time of it up at the beacon in wet weather. So after giving them a meal in the kitchen I just asked 'em in to hear the singing. They faithfully promise that as soon as ever the gunboats appear in view, and

they have fired the beacon, to run down here first, in case we shouldn't see it. 'Tis worth while to be friendly with 'em, you see, though their tempers be queer.'

'Quite worth while, miller,' said she.

Anne was rather embarrassed by the presence of the regular military in such force, and at first confined her words to the dairymen's wives she was acquainted with, and to the two old soldiers of the parish.

'Why didn't ye speak to me afore, chiel?' said one of these, Corporal Tullidge, the elderly man with the hat, while she was talking to old Simon Burden. 'I met ye in the lane yesterday,' he added reproachfully, 'but ye didn't notice me at all.'

'I am very sorry for it,' she said; but, being afraid to shout in such a company, the effect of her remark upon the corporal was as if she had not spoken at all.

'You was coming along with yer head full of some high notions or other no doubt,' continued the uncompromising corporal in the same loud voice. 'Ah, 'tis the young bucks that get all the notice nowadays, and old folks are quite forgot! I can mind well enough how young Bob Loveday used to lie in wait for ye.'

Anne blushed deeply, and stopped his too excursive discourse by hastily saying that she always respected old folks like him. The corporal thought she inquired why he always kept his hat on, and answered that it was because his head was injured at Valenciennes, in July, Ninety-three. 'We were trying to bomb down the tower, and a piece of the shell struck me. I was no more

nor less than a dead man for two days. If it hadn't a been for that and my smashed arm I should have come home none the worse for my five-and-twenty years' service.'

'You have got a silver plate let into yer head, haven't ye, corpel?' said Anthony Cripplestraw, who had drawn near. 'I have heard that the way they morticed yer skull was a beautiful piece of workmanship. Perhaps the young woman would like to see the place? 'Tis a curious sight, Mis'ess Anne; you don't see such a wownd every day.'

'No, thank you,' said Anne hurriedly, dreading, as did all the young people of Overcombe, the spectacle of the corporal uncovered. He had never been seen in public without the hat and the handkerchief since his return in Ninety-four; and strange stories were told of the ghastliness of his appearance bare-headed, a little boy who had accidentally beheld him going to bed in that state having been frightened into fits.

'Well, if the young woman don't want to see yer head, maybe she'd like to hear yer arm?' continued Cripplestraw, earnest to please her.

'Hey?' said the corporal.

'Your arm hurt too?' cried Anne.

'Knocked to a pummy at the same time as my head,' said Tullidge dispassionately.

'Rattle yer arm, corpel, and show her,' said Cripplestraw.

'Yes, sure,' said the corporal, raising the limb slowly, as if the glory of exhibition had lost some of its novelty, though he

was willing to oblige. Twisting it mercilessly about with his right hand he produced a crunching among the bones at every motion, Cripplestraw seeming to derive great satisfaction from the ghastly sound.

'How very shocking!' said Anne, painfully anxious for him to leave off.

'O, it don't hurt him, bless ye. Do it, corpel?' said Cripplestraw.

'Not a bit,' said the corporal, still working his arm with great energy.

'There's no life in the bones at all. No life in 'em, I tell her, corpel!'

'None at all.'

'They be as loose as a bag of ninepins,' explained Cripplestraw in continuation. 'You can feel 'em quite plain, Mis'ess Anne. If ye would like to, he'll undo his sleeve in a minute to oblege ye?'

'O no, no, please not! I quite understand,' said the young woman.

'Do she want to hear or see any more, or don't she?' the corporal inquired, with a sense that his time was getting wasted.

Anne explained that she did not on any account; and managed to escape from the corner.

V. THE SONG AND THE STRANGER

The trumpet-major now contrived to place himself near her, Anne's presence having evidently been a great pleasure to him since the moment of his first seeing her. She was quite at her ease with him, and asked him if he thought that Buonaparte would really come during the summer, and many other questions which the gallant dragoon could not answer, but which he nevertheless liked to be asked. William Tremlett, who had not enjoyed a sound night's rest since the First Consul's menace had become known, pricked up his ears at sound of this subject, and inquired if anybody had seen the terrible flat-bottomed boats that the enemy were to cross in.

'My brother Robert saw several of them paddling about the shore the last time he passed the Straits of Dover,' said the trumpet-major; and he further startled the company by informing them that there were supposed to be more than fifteen hundred of these boats, and that they would carry a hundred men apiece. So that a descent of one hundred and fifty thousand men might be expected any day as soon as Boney had brought his plans to bear.

'Lord ha' mercy upon us!' said William Tremlett.

'The night-time is when they will try it, if they try it at all,' said

old Tullidge, in the tone of one whose watch at the beacon must, in the nature of things, have given him comprehensive views of the situation. 'It is my belief that the point they will choose for making the shore is just over there,' and he nodded with indifference towards a section of the coast at a hideous nearness to the house in which they were assembled, whereupon Fencible Tremlett, and Cripplestraw of the Locals, tried to show no signs of trepidation.

'When d'ye think 'twill be?' said Volunteer Comfort, the blacksmith.

'I can't answer to a day,' said the corporal, 'but it will certainly be in a down-channel tide; and instead of pulling hard against it, he'll let his boats drift, and that will bring 'em right into Budmouth Bay. 'Twill be a beautiful stroke of war, if so be 'tis quietly done!'

'Beautiful,' said Cripplestraw, moving inside his clothes. 'But how if we should be all abed, corpel? You can't expect a man to be brave in his shirt, especially we Locals, that have only got so far as shoulder fire-locks.'

'He's not coming this summer. He'll never come at all,' said a tall sergeant-major decisively.

Loveday the soldier was too much engaged in attending upon Anne and her mother to join in these surmises, bestirring himself to get the ladies some of the best liquor the house afforded, which had, as a matter of fact, crossed the Channel as privately as Buonaparte wished his army to do, and had been landed on a

dark night over the cliff. After this he asked Anne to sing, but though she had a very pretty voice in private performances of that nature, she declined to oblige him; turning the subject by making a hesitating inquiry about his brother Robert, whom he had mentioned just before.

'Robert is as well as ever, thank you, Miss Garland,' he said. 'He is now mate of the brig Pewit – rather young for such a command; but the owner puts great trust in him.' The trumpet-major added, deepening his thoughts to a profounder view of the person discussed, 'Bob is in love.'

Anne looked conscious, and listened attentively; but Loveday did not go on.

'Much?' she asked.

'I can't exactly say. And the strange part of it is that he never tells us who the woman is. Nobody knows at all.'

'He will tell, of course?' said Anne, in the remote tone of a person with whose sex such matters had no connexion whatever.

Loveday shook his head, and the tete-a-tete was put an end to by a burst of singing from one of the sergeants, who was followed at the end of his song by others, each giving a ditty in his turn; the singer standing up in front of the table, stretching his chin well into the air, as though to abstract every possible wrinkle from his throat, and then plunging into the melody. When this was over one of the foreign hussars – the genteel German of Miller Loveday's description, who called himself a Hungarian, and in reality belonged to no definite country – performed at

Trumpet-major Loveday's request the series of wild motions that he denominated his national dance, that Anne might see what it was like. Miss Garland was the flower of the whole company; the soldiers one and all, foreign and English, seemed to be quite charmed by her presence, as indeed they well might be, considering how seldom they came into the society of such as she.

Anne and her mother were just thinking of retiring to their own dwelling when Sergeant Stanner of the – th Foot, who was recruiting at Budmouth, began a satirical song: —

When law'-yers strive' to heal' a breach',
And par-sons prac'-tise what' they preach';
Then lit'-tle Bo-ney he'll pounce down',
And march' his men' on Lon'-don town'!

Chorus. – Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lo'-rum,
Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lay.

When jus'-ti-ces' hold e'qual scales',
And rogues' are on'-ly found' in jails';
Then lit'tle Bo'-ney he'll pounce down',
And march' his men' on Lon'-don town'!

Chorus. – Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lo'-rum,
Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lay.

When rich' men find' their wealth' a curse',

And fill' there-with' the poor' man's purse';
Then lit'-tle Bo'-ney he'll pounce down',
And march' his men' on Lon'-don town'!

Chorus. – Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lo'-rum,
Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lay.

Poor Stanner! In spite of his satire, he fell at the bloody battle of Albuera a few years after this pleasantly spent summer at the Georgian watering-place, being mortally wounded and trampled down by a French hussar when the brigade was deploying into line under Beresford.

While Miller Loveday was saying 'Well done, Mr. Stanner!' at the close of the thirteenth stanza, which seemed to be the last, and Mr. Stanner was modestly expressing his regret that he could do no better, a stentorian voice was heard outside the window shutter repeating,

Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lo'-rum,
Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lay.

The company was silent in a moment at this reinforcement, and only the military tried not to look surprised. While all wondered who the singer could be somebody entered the porch; the door opened, and in came a young man, about the size and weight of the Farnese Hercules, in the uniform of the yeomanry cavalry.

"Tis young Squire Derriman, old Mr. Derriman's nephew,' murmured voices in the background.

Without waiting to address anybody, or apparently seeing who were gathered there, the colossal man waved his cap above his head and went on in tones that shook the window-panes: —

When hus'-bands with' their wives' agree'.
And maids' won't wed' from mod'-es-ty',
Then lit'-tle Bo'-ney he'll pounce down',
And march' his men' on Lon'-don town'!

Chorus. – Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lo'-rum,
Rol'-li-cum ro'-rum, tol'-lol-lay.

It was a verse which had been omitted by the gallant Stanner, out of respect to the ladies.

The new-comer was red-haired and of florid complexion, and seemed full of a conviction that his whim of entering must be their pleasure, which for the moment it was.

'No ceremony, good men all,' he said; 'I was passing by, and my ear was caught by the singing. I like singing; 'tis warming and cheering, and shall not be put down. I should like to hear anybody say otherwise.'

'Welcome, Master Derriman,' said the miller, filling a glass and handing it to the yeoman. 'Come all the way from quarters, then? I hardly knowed ye in your soldier's clothes. You'd look more natural with a spud in your hand, sir. I shouldn't ha' known

ye at all if I hadn't heard that you were called out.'

'More natural with a spud! – have a care, miller,' said the young giant, the fire of his complexion increasing to scarlet. 'I don't mean anger, but – but – a soldier's honour, you know!'

The military in the background laughed a little, and the yeoman then for the first time discovered that there were more regulars present than one. He looked momentarily disconcerted, but expanded again to full assurance.

'Right, right, Master Derriman, no offence – 'twas only my joke,' said the genial miller. 'Everybody's a soldier nowadays. Drink a drap o' this cordial, and don't mind words.'

The young man drank without the least reluctance, and said, 'Yes, miller, I am called out. 'Tis ticklish times for us soldiers now; we hold our lives in our hands – What are those fellows grinning at behind the table? – I say, we do!'

'Staying with your uncle at the farm for a day or two, Mr. Derriman?'

'No, no; as I told you, six mile off. Billeted at Casterbridge. But I have to call and see the old, old – '

'Gentleman?'

'Gentleman! – no, skinflint. He lives upon the sweepings of the barton; ha, ha!' And the speaker's regular white teeth showed themselves like snow in a Dutch cabbage. 'Well, well, the profession of arms makes a man proof against all that. I take things as I find 'em.'

'Quite right, Master Derriman. Another drop?'

'No, no. I'll take no more than is good for me – no man should; so don't tempt me.'

The yeoman then saw Anne, and by an unconscious gravitation went towards her and the other women, flinging a remark to John Loveday in passing. 'Ah, Loveday! I heard you were come; in short, I come o' purpose to see you. Glad to see you enjoying yourself at home again.'

The trumpet-major replied civilly, though not without grimness, for he seemed hardly to like Derriman's motion towards Anne.

'Widow Garland's daughter! – yes, 'tis! surely. You remember me? I have been here before. Festus Derriman, Yeomanry Cavalry.'

Anne gave a little curtsey. 'I know your name is Festus – that's all.'

'Yes, 'tis well known – especially latterly.' He dropped his voice to confidence pitch. 'I suppose your friends here are disturbed by my coming in, as they don't seem to talk much? I don't mean to interrupt the party; but I often find that people are put out by my coming among 'em, especially when I've got my regimentals on.'

'La! and are they?'

'Yes; 'tis the way I have.' He further lowered his tone, as if they had been old friends, though in reality he had only seen her three or four times. 'And how did you come to be here? Dash my wig, I don't like to see a nice young lady like you in this company. You

should come to some of our yeomanry sprees in Casterbridge or Shottsford-Forum. O, but the girls do come! The yeomanry are respected men, men of good substantial families, many farming their own land; and every one among us rides his own charger, which is more than these cussed fellows do.' He nodded towards the dragoons.

'Hush, hush! Why, these are friends and neighbours of Miller Loveday, and he is a great friend of ours – our best friend,' said Anne with great emphasis, and reddening at the sense of injustice to their host. 'What are you thinking of, talking like that? It is ungenerous in you.'

'Ha, ha! I've affronted you. Isn't that it, fair angel, fair – what do you call it? – fair vestal? Ah, well! would you was safe in my own house! But honour must be minded now, not courting. Rollicum-rorum, tol-lol-lorum. Pardon me, my sweet, I like ye! It may be a come down for me, owning land; but I do like ye.'

'Sir, please be quiet,' said Anne, distressed.

'I will, I will. Well, Corporal Tullidge, how's your head?' he said, going towards the other end of the room, and leaving Anne to herself.

The company had again recovered its liveliness, and it was a long time before the bouncing Rufus who had joined them could find heart to tear himself away from their society and good liquors, although he had had quite enough of the latter before he entered. The natives received him at his own valuation, and the soldiers of the camp, who sat beyond the table, smiled behind

their pipes at his remarks, with a pleasant twinkle of the eye which approached the satirical, John Loveday being not the least conspicuous in this bearing. But he and his friends were too courteous on such an occasion as the present to challenge the young man's large remarks, and readily permitted him to set them right on the details of camping and other military routine, about which the troopers seemed willing to let persons hold any opinion whatever, provided that they themselves were not obliged to give attention to it; showing, strangely enough, that if there was one subject more than another which never interested their minds, it was the art of war. To them the art of enjoying good company in Overcombe Mill, the details of the miller's household, the swarming of his bees, the number of his chickens, and the fatness of his pigs, were matters of infinitely greater concern.

The present writer, to whom this party has been described times out of number by members of the Loveday family and other aged people now passed away, can never enter the old living-room of Overcombe Mill without beholding the genial scene through the mists of the seventy or eighty years that intervene between then and now. First and brightest to the eye are the dozen candles, scattered about regardless of expense, and kept well snuffed by the miller, who walks round the room at intervals of five minutes, snuffers in hand, and nips each wick with great precision, and with something of an executioner's grim look upon his face as he closes the snuffers upon the neck of

the candle. Next to the candle-light show the red and blue coats and white breeches of the soldiers – nearly twenty of them in all besides the ponderous Derriman – the head of the latter, and, indeed, the heads of all who are standing up, being in dangerous proximity to the black beams of the ceiling. There is not one among them who would attach any meaning to 'Vittoria,' or gather from the syllables 'Waterloo' the remotest idea of his own glory or death. Next appears the correct and innocent Anne, little thinking what things Time has in store for her at no great distance off. She looks at Derriman with a half-uneasy smile as he clanks hither and thither, and hopes he will not single her out again to hold a private dialogue with – which, however, he does, irresistibly attracted by the white muslin figure. She must, of course, look a little gracious again now, lest his mood should turn from sentimental to quarrelsome – no impossible contingency with the yeoman-soldier, as her quick perception had noted.

'Well, well; this idling won't do for me, folks,' he at last said, to Anne's relief. 'I ought not to have come in, by rights; but I heard you enjoying yourselves, and thought it might be worth while to see what you were up to; I have several miles to go before bedtime;' and stretching his arms, lifting his chin, and shaking his head, to eradicate any unseemly curve or wrinkle from his person, the yeoman wished them an off-hand good-night, and departed.

'You should have teased him a little more, father,' said the trumpet-major drily. 'You could soon have made him as crabbed

as a bear.'

'I didn't want to provoke the chap – 'twasn't worth while. He came in friendly enough,' said the gentle miller without looking up.

'I don't think he was overmuch friendly,' said John.

"Tis as well to be neighbourly with folks, if they be not quite onbearable,' his father genially replied, as he took off his coat to go and draw more ale – this periodical stripping to the shirt-sleeves being necessitated by the narrowness of the cellar and the smeary effect of its numerous cobwebs upon best clothes.

Some of the guests then spoke of Fess Derriman as not such a bad young man if you took him right and humoured him; others said that he was nobody's enemy but his own; and the elder ladies mentioned in a tone of interest that he was likely to come into a deal of money at his uncle's death. The person who did not praise was the one who knew him best, who had known him as a boy years ago, when he had lived nearer to Overcombe than he did at present. This unappreciative person was the trumpet-major.

VI. OLD MR. DERRIMAN OF OXWELL HALL

At this time in the history of Overcombe one solitary newspaper occasionally found its way into the village. It was lent by the postmaster at Budmouth (who, in some mysterious way, got it for nothing through his connexion with the mail) to Mr. Derriman at the Hall, by whom it was handed on to Mrs. Garland when it was not more than a fortnight old. Whoever remembers anything about the old farmer-squire will, of course, know well enough that this delightful privilege of reading history in long columns was not accorded to the Widow Garland for nothing. It was by such ingenuous means that he paid her for her daughter's occasional services in reading aloud to him and making out his accounts, in which matters the farmer, whose guineas were reported to touch five figures – some said more – was not expert.

Mrs. Martha Garland, as a respectable widow, occupied a twilight rank between the benighted villagers and the well-informed gentry, and kindly made herself useful to the former as letter-writer and reader, and general translator from the printing tongue. It was not without satisfaction that she stood at her door of an evening, newspaper in hand, with three or four cottagers standing round, and poured down their open throats any

paragraph that she might choose to select from the stirring ones of the period. When she had done with the sheet Mrs. Garland passed it on to the miller, the miller to the grinder, and the grinder to the grinder's boy, in whose hands it became subdivided into half pages, quarter pages, and irregular triangles, and ended its career as a paper cap, a flagon bung, or a wrapper for his bread and cheese.

Notwithstanding his compact with Mrs. Garland, old Mr. Derriman kept the paper so long, and was so chary of wasting his man's time on a merely intellectual errand, that unless she sent for the journal it seldom reached her hands. Anne was always her messenger. The arrival of the soldiers led Mrs. Garland to despatch her daughter for it the day after the party; and away she went in her hat and pelisse, in a direction at right angles to that of the encampment on the hill.

Walking across the fields for the distance of a mile or two, she came out upon the high-road by a wicket-gate. On the other side of the way was the entrance to what at first sight looked like a neglected meadow, the gate being a rotten one, without a bottom rail, and broken-down palings lying on each side. The dry hard mud of the opening was marked with several horse and cow tracks, that had been half obliterated by fifty score sheep tracks, surcharged with the tracks of a man and a dog. Beyond this geological record appeared a carriage-road, nearly grown over with grass, which Anne followed. It descended by a gentle slope, dived under dark-rinded elm and chestnut trees, and conducted

her on till the hiss of a waterfall and the sound of the sea became audible, when it took a bend round a swamp of fresh watercress and brooklime that had once been a fish pond. Here the grey, weather-worn front of a building edged from behind the trees. It was Oxwell Hall, once the seat of a family now extinct, and of late years used as a farmhouse.

Benjamin Derriman, who owned the crumbling place, had originally been only the occupier and tenant-farmer of the fields around. His wife had brought him a small fortune, and during the growth of their only son there had been a partition of the Oxwell estate, giving the farmer, now a widower, the opportunity of acquiring the building and a small portion of the land attached on exceptionally low terms. But two years after the purchase the boy died, and Derriman's existence was paralyzed forthwith. It was said that since that event he had devised the house and fields to a distant female relative, to keep them out of the hands of his detested nephew; but this was not certainly known.

The hall was as interesting as mansions in a state of declension usually are, as the excellent county history showed. That popular work in folio contained an old plate dedicated to the last scion of the original owners, from which drawing it appeared that in 1750, the date of publication, the windows were covered with little scratches like black flashes of lightning; that a horn of hard smoke came out of each of the twelve chimneys; that a lady and a lap-dog stood on the lawn in a strenuously walking position; and a substantial cloud and nine flying birds of no known species

hung over the trees to the north-east.

The rambling and neglected dwelling had all the romantic excellencies and practical drawbacks which such mildewed places share in common with caves, mountains, wildernesses, glens, and other homes of poesy that people of taste wish to live and die in. Mustard and cress could have been raised on the inner plaster of the dewy walls at any height not exceeding three feet from the floor; and mushrooms of the most refined and thin-stemmed kinds grew up through the chinks of the larder paving. As for the outside, Nature, in the ample time that had been given her, had so mingled her filings and effacements with the marks of human wear and tear upon the house, that it was often hard to say in which of the two or if in both, any particular obliteration had its origin. The keenness was gone from the mouldings of the doorways, but whether worn out by the rubbing past of innumerable people's shoulders, and the moving of their heavy furniture, or by Time in a grander and more abstract form, did not appear. The iron stanchions inside the window-panes were eaten away to the size of wires at the bottom where they entered the stone, the condensed breathings of generations having settled there in pools and rusted them. The panes themselves had either lost their shine altogether or become iridescent as a peacock's tail. In the middle of the porch was a vertical sun-dial, whose gnomon swayed loosely about when the wind blew, and cast its shadow hither and thither, as much as to say, 'Here's your fine model dial; here's any time for any man; I am an old dial; and

shiftiness is the best policy.'

Anne passed under the arched gateway which screened the main front; over it was the porter's lodge, reached by a spiral staircase. Across the archway was fixed a row of wooden hurdles, one of which Anne opened and closed behind her. Their necessity was apparent as soon as she got inside. The quadrangle of the ancient pile was a bed of mud and manure, inhabited by calves, geese, ducks, and sow pigs surprisingly large, with young ones surprisingly small. In the groined porch some heifers were amusing themselves by stretching up their necks and licking the carved stone capitals that supported the vaulting. Anne went on to a second and open door, across which was another hurdle to keep the live stock from absolute community with the inmates. There being no knocker, she knocked by means of a short stick which was laid against the post for that purpose; but nobody attending, she entered the passage, and tried an inner door.

A slight noise was heard inside, the door opened about an inch, and a strip of decayed face, including the eye and some forehead wrinkles, appeared within the crevice.

'Please I have come for the paper,' said Anne.

'O, is it you, dear Anne?' whined the inmate, opening the door a little further. 'I could hardly get to the door to open it, I am so weak.'

The speaker was a wizened old gentleman, in a coat the colour of his farmyard, breeches of the same hue, unbuttoned at the knees, revealing a bit of leg above his stocking and a dazzlingly

white shirt-frill to compensate for this untidiness below. The edge of his skull round his eye-sockets was visible through the skin, and he had a mouth whose corners made towards the back of his head on the slightest provocation. He walked with great apparent difficulty back into the room, Anne following him.

'Well, you can have the paper if you want it; but you never give me much time to see what's in en! Here's the paper.' He held it out, but before she could take it he drew it back again, saying, 'I have not had my share o' the paper by a good deal, what with my weak sight, and people coming so soon for en. I am a poor put-upon soul; but my "Duty of Man" will be left to me when the newspaper is gone.' And he sank into his chair with an air of exhaustion.

Anne said that she did not wish to take the paper if he had not done with it, and that she was really later in the week than usual, owing to the soldiers.

'Soldiers, yes – rot the soldiers! And now hedges will be broke, and hens' nests robbed, and sucking-pigs stole, and I don't know what all. Who's to pay for't, sure? I reckon that because the soldiers be come you don't mean to be kind enough to read to me what I hadn't time to read myself.'

She would read if he wished, she said; she was in no hurry. And sitting herself down she unfolded the paper.

'"Dinner at Carlton House"?'

'No, faith. 'Tis nothing to I.'

'"Defence of the country"?'

'Ye may read that if ye will. I hope there will be no billeting in this parish, or any wild work of that sort; for what would a poor old lamiger like myself do with soldiers in his house, and nothing to feed 'em with?'

Anne began reading, and continued at her task nearly ten minutes, when she was interrupted by the appearance in the quadrangular slough without of a large figure in the uniform of the yeomanry cavalry.

'What do you see out there?' said the farmer with a start, as she paused and slowly blushed.

'A soldier – one of the yeomanry,' said Anne, not quite at her ease.

'Scrounch it all – 'tis my nephew!' exclaimed the old man, his face turning to a phosphoric pallor, and his body twitching with innumerable alarms as he formed upon his face a gasping smile of joy, with which to welcome the new-coming relative. 'Read on, prithee, Miss Garland.'

Before she had read far the visitor straddled over the door-hurdle into the passage and entered the room.

'Well, nunc, how do you feel?' said the giant, shaking hands with the farmer in the manner of one violently ringing a hand-bell. 'Glad to see you.'

'Bad and weakish, Festus,' replied the other, his person responding passively to the rapid vibrations imparted. 'O, be tender, please – a little softer, there's a dear nephew! My arm is no more than a cobweb.'

'Ah, poor soul!'

'Yes, I am not much more than a skeleton, and can't bear rough usage.'

'Sorry to hear that; but I'll bear your affliction in mind. Why, you are all in a tremble, Uncle Benjy!'

''Tis because I am so gratified,' said the old man. 'I always get all in a tremble when I am taken by surprise by a beloved relation.'

'Ah, that's it!' said the yeoman, bringing his hand down on the back of his uncle's chair with a loud smack, at which Uncle Benjy nervously sprang three inches from his seat and dropped into it again. 'Ask your pardon for frightening ye, uncle. 'Tis how we do in the army, and I forgot your nerves. You have scarcely expected to see me, I dare say, but here I am.'

'I am glad to see ye. You are not going to stay long, perhaps?'

'Quite the contrary. I am going to stay ever so long!'

'O I see! I am so glad, dear Festus. Ever so long, did ye say?'

'Yes, *ever* so long,' said the young gentleman, sitting on the slope of the bureau and stretching out his legs as props. 'I am going to make this quite my own home whenever I am off duty, as long as we stay out. And after that, when the campaign is over in the autumn, I shall come here, and live with you like your own son, and help manage your land and your farm, you know, and make you a comfortable old man.'

'Ah! How you do please me!' said the farmer, with a horrified smile, and grasping the arms of his chair to sustain himself.

'Yes; I have been meaning to come a long time, as I knew

you'd like to have me, Uncle Benjy; and 'tisn't in my heart to refuse you.'

'You always was kind that way!'

'Yes; I always was. But I ought to tell you at once, not to disappoint you, that I shan't be here always – all day, that is, because of my military duties as a cavalry man.'

'O, not always? That's a pity!' exclaimed the farmer with a cheerful eye.

'I knew you'd say so. And I shan't be able to sleep here at night sometimes, for the same reason.'

'Not sleep here o' nights?' said the old gentleman, still more relieved. 'You ought to sleep here – you certainly ought; in short, you must. But you can't!'

'Not while we are with the colours. But directly that's over – the very next day – I'll stay here all day, and all night too, to oblige you, since you ask me so very kindly.'

'Th-thank ye, that will be very nice!' said Uncle Benjy.

'Yes, I knew 'twould relieve ye.' And he kindly stroked his uncle's head, the old man expressing his enjoyment at the affectionate token by a death's-head grimace. 'I should have called to see you the other night when I passed through here,' Festus continued; 'but it was so late that I couldn't come so far out of my way. You won't think it unkind?'

'Not at all, if you *couldn't*. I never shall think it unkind if you really *can't* come, you know, Festy.' There was a few minutes' pause, and as the nephew said nothing Uncle Benjy went on: 'I

wish I had a little present for ye. But as ill-luck would have it we have lost a deal of stock this year, and I have had to pay away so much.'

'Poor old man – I know you have. Shall I lend you a seven-shilling piece, Uncle Benjy?'

'Ha, ha! – you must have your joke; well, I'll think o' that. And so they expect Buonaparty to choose this very part of the coast for his landing, hey? And that the yeomanry be to stand in front as the forlorn hope?'

'Who says so?' asked the florid son of Mars, losing a little redness.

'The newspaper-man.'

'O, there's nothing in that,' said Festus bravely. 'The gover'ment thought it possible at one time; but they don't know.'

Festus turned himself as he talked, and now said abruptly: 'Ah, who's this? Why, 'tis our little Anne!' He had not noticed her till this moment, the young woman having at his entry kept her face over the newspaper, and then got away to the back part of the room. 'And are you and your mother always going to stay down there in the mill-house watching the little fishes, Miss Anne?'

She said that it was uncertain, in a tone of truthful precision which the question was hardly worth, looking forcedly at him as she spoke. But she blushed fitfully, in her arms and hands as much as in her face. Not that she was overpowered by the great boots, formidable spurs, and other fierce appliances of his person, as he imagined; simply she had not been prepared to meet

him there.

'I hope you will, I am sure, for my own good,' said he, letting his eyes linger on the round of her cheek.

Anne became a little more dignified, and her look showed reserve. But the yeoman on perceiving this went on talking to her in so civil a way that he irresistibly amused her, though she tried to conceal all feeling. At a brighter remark of his than usual her mouth moved, her upper lip playing uncertainly over her white teeth; it would stay still – no, it would withdraw a little way in a smile; then it would flutter down again; and so it wavered like a butterfly in a tender desire to be pleased and smiling, and yet to be also sedate and composed; to show him that she did not want compliments, and yet that she was not so cold as to wish to repress any genuine feeling he might be anxious to utter.

'Shall you want any more reading, Mr. Derriman?' said she, interrupting the younger man in his remarks. 'If not, I'll go homeward.'

'Don't let me hinder you longer,' said Festus. 'I'm off in a minute or two, when your man has cleaned my boots.'

'Ye don't hinder us, nephew. She must have the paper: 'tis the day for her to have 'n. She might read a little more, as I have had so little profit out o' en hitherto. Well, why don't ye speak? Will ye, or won't ye, my dear?'

'Not to two,' she said.

'Ho, ho! damn it, I must go then, I suppose,' said Festus, laughing; and unable to get a further glance from her he left

the room and clanked into the back yard, where he saw a man; holding up his hand he cried, 'Anthony Cripplestraw!'

Cripplestraw came up in a trot, moved a lock of his hair and replaced it, and said, 'Yes, Maister Derriman.' He was old Mr. Derriman's odd hand in the yard and garden, and like his employer had no great pretensions to manly beauty, owing to a limpness of backbone and speciality of mouth, which opened on one side only, giving him a triangular smile.

'Well, Cripplestraw, how is it to-day?' said Festus, with socially-superior heartiness.

'Middlin', considering, Maister Derriman. And how's yerself?'

'Fairish. Well, now, see and clean these military boots of mine. I'll cock my foot up on this bench. This pigsty of my uncle's is not fit for a soldier to come into.'

'Yes, Maister Derriman, I will. No, 'tis not fit, Maister Derriman.'

'What stock has uncle lost this year, Cripplestraw?'

'Well, let's see, sir. I can call to mind that we've lost three chickens, a tom-pigeon, and a weakly sucking-pig, one of a fare of ten. I can't think of no more, Maister Derriman.'

'H'm, not a large quantity of cattle. The old rascal!'

'No, 'tis not a large quantity. Old what did you say, sir?'

'O nothing. He's within there.' Festus flung his forehead in the direction of a right line towards the inner apartment. 'He's a regular sniche one.'

'Hee, hee; fie, fie, Master Derriman!' said Cripplestraw,

shaking his head in delighted censure. 'Gentlefolks shouldn't talk so. And an officer, Mr. Derriman! 'Tis the duty of all cavalry gentlemen to bear in mind that their blood is a knowed thing in the country, and not to speak ill o't.'

'He's close-fisted.'

'Well, maister, he is – I own he is a little. 'Tis the nater of some old venerable gentlemen to be so. We'll hope he'll treat ye well in yer fortune, sir.'

'Hope he will. Do people talk about me here, Cripplestraw?' asked the yeoman, as the other continued busy with his boots.

'Well, yes, sir; they do off and on, you know. They says you be as fine a piece of calvery flesh and bones as was ever growed on fallow-ground; in short, all owns that you be a fine fellow, sir. I wish I wasn't no more afraid of the French than you be; but being in the Locals, Maister Derriman, I assure ye I dream of having to defend my country every night; and I don't like the dream at all.'

'You should take it careless, Cripplestraw, as I do; and 'twould soon come natural to you not to mind it at all. Well, a fine fellow is not everything, you know. O no. There's as good as I in the army, and even better.'

'And they say that when you fall this summer, you'll die like a man.'

'When I fall?'

'Yes, sure, Maister Derriman. Poor soul o' thee! I shan't forget 'ee as you lie mouldering in yer soldier's grave.'

'Hey?' said the warrior uneasily. 'What makes 'em think I am

going to fall?'

'Well, sir, by all accounts the yeomanry will be put in front.'

'Front! That's what my uncle has been saying.'

'Yes, and by all accounts 'tis true. And naterelly they'll be mowed down like grass; and you among 'em, poor young galliant officer!'

'Look here, Cripplestraw. This is a reg'lar foolish report. How can yeomanry be put in front? Nobody's put in front. We yeomanry have nothing to do with Buonaparte's landing. We shall be away in a safe place, guarding the possessions and jewels. Now, can you see, Cripplestraw, any way at all that the yeomanry can be put in front? Do you think they really can?'

'Well, maister, I am afraid I do,' said the cheering Cripplestraw. 'And I know a great warrior like you is only too glad o' the chance. 'Twill be a great thing for ye, death and glory! In short, I hope from my heart you will be, and I say so very often to folk – in fact, I pray at night for't.'

'O! cuss you! you needn't pray about it.'

'No, Maister Derriman, I won't.'

'Of course my sword will do its duty. That's enough. And now be off with ye.'

Festus gloomily returned to his uncle's room and found that Anne was just leaving. He was inclined to follow her at once, but as she gave him no opportunity for doing this he went to the window, and remained tapping his fingers against the shutter while she crossed the yard.

'Well, nephy, you are not gone yet?' said the farmer, looking dubiously at Festus from under one eyelid. 'You see how I am. Not by any means better, you see; so I can't entertain 'ee as well as I would.'

'You can't, nunc, you can't. I don't think you are worse – if I do, dash my wig. But you'll have plenty of opportunities to make me welcome when you are better. If you are not so brisk inwardly as you was, why not try change of air? This is a dull, damp hole.'

''Tis, Festus; and I am thinking of moving.'

'Ah, where to?' said Festus, with surprise and interest.

'Up into the garret in the north corner. There is no fireplace in the room; but I shan't want that, poor soul o' me.'

''Tis not moving far.'

''Tis not. But I have not a soul belonging to me within ten mile; and you know very well that I couldn't afford to go to lodgings that I had to pay for.'

'I know it – I know it, Uncle Benjy! Well, don't be disturbed. I'll come and manage for you as soon as ever this Boney alarm is over; but when a man's country calls he must obey, if he is a man.'

'A splendid spirit!' said Uncle Benjy, with much admiration on the surface of his countenance. 'I never had it. How could it have got into the boy?'

'From my mother's side, perhaps.'

'Perhaps so. Well, take care of yourself, nephy,' said the farmer, waving his hand impressively. 'Take care! In these warlike times your spirit may carry ye into the arms of the enemy;

and you are the last of the family. You should think of this, and not let your bravery carry ye away.'

'Don't be disturbed, uncle; I'll control myself,' said Festus, betrayed into self-complacency against his will. 'At least I'll do what I can, but nature will out sometimes. Well, I'm off.' He began humming 'Brighton Camp,' and, promising to come again soon, retired with assurance, each yard of his retreat adding private joyousness to his uncle's form.

When the bulky young man had disappeared through the porter's lodge, Uncle Benjy showed preternatural activity for one in his invalid state, jumping up quickly without his stick, at the same time opening and shutting his mouth quite silently like a thirsty frog, which was his way of expressing mirth. He ran upstairs as quick as an old squirrel, and went to a dormer window which commanded a view of the grounds beyond the gate, and the footpath that stretched across them to the village.

'Yes, yes!' he said in a suppressed scream, dancing up and down, 'he's after her: she've hit en!' For there appeared upon the path the figure of Anne Garland, and, hastening on at some little distance behind her, the swaggering shape of Festus. She became conscious of his approach, and moved more quickly. He moved more quickly still, and overtook her. She turned as if in answer to a call from him, and he walked on beside her, till they were out of sight. The old man then played upon an imaginary fiddle for about half a minute; and, suddenly discontinuing these signs of pleasure, went downstairs again.

VII. HOW THEY TALKED IN THE PASTURES

'You often come this way?' said Festus to Anne rather before he had overtaken her.

'I come for the newspaper and other things,' she said, perplexed by a doubt whether he were there by accident or design.

They moved on in silence, Festus beating the grass with his switch in a masterful way. 'Did you speak, Mis'ess Anne?' he asked.

'No,' said Anne.

'Ten thousand pardons. I thought you did. Now don't let me drive you out of the path. I can walk among the high grass and giltycups – they will not yellow my stockings as they will yours. Well, what do you think of a lot of soldiers coming to the neighbourhood in this way?'

'I think it is very lively, and a great change,' she said with demure seriousness.

'Perhaps you don't like us warriors as a body?'

Anne smiled without replying.

'Why, you are laughing!' said the yeoman, looking searchingly at her and blushing like a little fire. 'What do you see to laugh at?'

'Did I laugh?' said Anne, a little scared at his sudden

mortification.

'Why, yes; you know you did, you young sneerer,' he said like a cross baby. 'You are laughing at me – that's who you are laughing at! I should like to know what you would do without such as me if the French were to drop in upon ye any night?'

'Would you help to beat them off?' said she.

'Can you ask such a question? What are we for? But you don't think anything of soldiers.'

O yes, she liked soldiers, she said, especially when they came home from the wars, covered with glory; though when she thought what doings had won them that glory she did not like them quite so well. The gallant and appeased yeoman said he supposed her to mean chopping off heads, blowing out brains, and that kind of business, and thought it quite right that a tender-hearted thing like her should feel a little horrified. But as for him, he should not mind such another Blenheim this summer as the army had fought a hundred years ago, or whenever it was – dash his wig if he should mind it at all. 'Hullo! now you are laughing again; yes, I saw you!' And the choleric Festus turned his blue eyes and flushed face upon her as though he would read her through. Anne strove valiantly to look calmly back; but her eyes could not face his, and they fell. 'You did laugh!' he repeated.

'It was only a tiny little one,' she murmured.

'Ah – I knew you did!' thundered he. 'Now what was it you laughed at?'

'I only – thought that you were – merely in the yeomanry,' she

murmured slily.

'And what of that?'

'And the yeomanry only seem farmers that have lost their senses.'

'Yes, yes! I knew you meant some jeering o' that sort, Mistress Anne. But I suppose 'tis the way of women, and I take no notice. I'll confess that some of us are no great things: but I know how to draw a sword, don't I? – say I don't just to provoke me.'

'I am sure you do,' said Anne sweetly. 'If a Frenchman came up to you, Mr. Derriman, would you take him on the hip, or on the thigh?'

'Now you are flattering!' he said, his white teeth uncovering themselves in a smile. 'Well, of course I should draw my sword – no, I mean my sword would be already drawn; and I should put spurs to my horse – charger, as we call it in the army; and I should ride up to him and say – no, I shouldn't say anything, of course – men never waste words in battle; I should take him with the third guard, low point, and then coming back to the second guard – '

'But that would be taking care of yourself – not hitting at him.'

'How can you say that!' he cried, the beams upon his face turning to a lurid cloud in a moment. 'How can you understand military terms who've never had a sword in your life? I shouldn't take him with the sword at all.' He went on with eager sulkiness, 'I should take him with my pistol. I should pull off my right glove, and throw back my goat-skin; then I should open my priming-pan, prime, and cast about – no, I shouldn't, that's wrong; I should

draw my right pistol, and as soon as loaded, seize the weapon by the butt; then at the word "Cock your pistol" I should – '

'Then there is plenty of time to give such words of command in the heat of battle?' said Anne innocently.

'No!' said the yeoman, his face again in flames. 'Why, of course I am only telling you what *would* be the word of command *if*– there now! you la – '

'I didn't; 'pon my word I didn't!'

'No, I don't think you did; it was my mistake. Well, then I come smartly to Present, looking well along the barrel – along the barrel – and fire. Of course I know well enough how to engage the enemy! But I expect my old uncle has been setting you against me.'

'He has not said a word,' replied Anne; 'though I have heard of you, of course.'

'What have you heard? Nothing good, I dare say. It makes my blood boil within me!'

'O, nothing bad,' said she assuringly. 'Just a word now and then.'

'Now, come, tell me, there's a dear. I don't like to be crossed. It shall be a sacred secret between us. Come, now!'

Anne was embarrassed, and her smile was uncomfortable. 'I shall not tell you,' she said at last.

'There it is again!' said the yeoman, throwing himself into a despair. 'I shall soon begin to believe that my name is not worth sixpence about here!'

'I tell you 'twas nothing against you,' repeated Anne.

'That means it might have been for me,' said Festus, in a mollified tone. 'Well, though, to speak the truth, I have a good many faults, some people will praise me, I suppose. 'Twas praise?'

'It was.'

'Well, I am not much at farming, and I am not much in company, and I am not much at figures, but perhaps I must own, since it is forced upon me, that I can show as fine a soldier's figure on the Esplanade as any man of the cavalry.'

'You can,' said Anne; for though her flesh crept in mortal terror of his irascibility, she could not resist the fearful pleasure of leading him on. 'You look very well; and some say, you are – '

'What? Well, they say I am good-looking. I don't make myself, so 'tis no praise. Hullo! what are you looking across there for?'

'Only at a bird that I saw fly out of that tree,' said Anne.

'What? Only at a bird, do you say?' he heaved out in a voice of thunder. 'I see your shoulders a-shaking, young madam. Now don't you provoke me with that laughing! By God, it won't do!'

'Then go away!' said Anne, changed from mirthfulness to irritation by his rough manner. 'I don't want your company, you great bragging thing! You are so touchy there's no bearing with you. Go away!'

'No, no, Anne; I am wrong to speak to you so. I give you free liberty to say what you will to me. Say I am not a bit of a soldier, or anything! Abuse me – do now, there's a dear. I'm scum, I'm

froth, I'm dirt before the besom – yes!'

'I have nothing to say, sir. Stay where you are till I am out of this field.'

'Well, there's such command in your looks that I ha'n't heart to go against you. You will come this way to-morrow at the same time? Now, don't be uncivil.'

She was too generous not to forgive him, but the short little lip murmured that she did not think it at all likely she should come that way to-morrow.

'Then Sunday?' he said.

'Not Sunday,' said she.

'Then Monday – Tuesday – Wednesday, surely?' he went on experimentally.

She answered that she should probably not see him on either day, and, cutting short the argument, went through the wicket into the other field. Festus paused, looking after her; and when he could no longer see her slight figure he swept away his deliberations, began singing, and turned off in the other direction.

VIII. ANNE MAKES A CIRCUIT OF THE CAMP

When Anne was crossing the last field, she saw approaching her an old woman with wrinkled cheeks, who surveyed the earth and its inhabitants through the medium of brass-rimmed spectacles. Shaking her head at Anne till the glasses shone like two moons, she said, 'Ah, ah; I zeed ye! If I had only kept on my short ones that I use for reading the Collect and Gospel I shouldn't have zeed ye; but thinks I, I be going out o' doors, and I'll put on my long ones, little thinking what they'd show me. Ay, I can tell folk at any distance with these – 'tis a beautiful pair for out o' doors; though my short ones be best for close work, such as darning, and catching fleas, that's true.'

'What have you seen, Granny Seamore?' said Anne.

'Fie, fie, Miss Nancy! you know,' said Granny Seamore, shaking her head still. 'But he's a fine young feller, and will have all his uncle's money when 'a's gone.' Anne said nothing to this, and looking ahead with a smile passed Granny Seamore by.

Festus, the subject of the remark, was at this time about three-and-twenty, a fine fellow as to feet and inches, and of a remarkably warm tone in skin and hair. Symptoms of beard and whiskers had appeared upon him at a very early age, owing to his persistent use of the razor before there was any necessity

for its operation. The brave boy had scraped unseen in the out-house, in the cellar, in the wood-shed, in the stable, in the unused parlour, in the cow-stalls, in the barn, and wherever he could set up his triangular bit of looking-glass without observation, or extemporize a mirror by sticking up his hat on the outside of a window-pane. The result now was that, did he neglect to use the instrument he once had trifled with, a fine rust broke out upon his countenance on the first day, a golden lichen on the second, and a fiery stubble on the third to a degree which admitted of no further postponement.

His disposition divided naturally into two, the boastful and the cantankerous. When Festus put on the big pot, as it is classically called, he was quite blinded ipso facto to the diverting effect of that mood and manner upon others; but when disposed to be envious or quarrelsome he was rather shrewd than otherwise, and could do some pretty strokes of satire. He was both liked and abused by the girls who knew him, and though they were pleased by his attentions, they never failed to ridicule him behind his back. In his cups (he knew those vessels, though only twenty-three) he first became noisy, then excessively friendly, and then invariably nagging. During childhood he had made himself renowned for his pleasant habit of pouncing down upon boys smaller and poorer than himself, and knocking their birds' nests out of their hands, or overturning their little carts of apples, or pouring water down their backs; but his conduct became singularly the reverse of aggressive the moment the little

boys' mothers ran out to him, brandishing brooms, frying-pans, skimmers, and whatever else they could lay hands on by way of weapons. He then fled and hid behind bushes, under faggots, or in pits till they had gone away; and on one such occasion was known to creep into a badger's hole quite out of sight, maintaining that post with great firmness and resolution for two or three hours. He had brought more vulgar exclamations upon the tongues of respectable parents in his native parish than any other boy of his time. When other youngsters snowballed him he ran into a place of shelter, where he kneaded snowballs of his own, with a stone inside, and used these formidable missiles in returning their pleasantry. Sometimes he got fearfully beaten by boys his own age, when he would roar most lustily, but fight on in the midst of his tears, blood, and cries.

He was early in love, and had at the time of the story suffered from the ravages of that passion thirteen distinct times. He could not love lightly and gaily; his love was earnest, cross-tempered, and even savage. It was a positive agony to him to be ridiculed by the object of his affections, and such conduct drove him into a frenzy if persisted in. He was a torment to those who behaved humbly towards him, cynical with those who denied his superiority, and a very nice fellow towards those who had the courage to ill-use him.

This stalwart gentleman and Anne Garland did not cross each other's paths again for a week. Then her mother began as before about the newspaper, and, though Anne did not much like the

errand, she agreed to go for it on Mrs. Garland pressing her with unusual anxiety. Why her mother was so persistent on so small a matter quite puzzled the girl; but she put on her hat and started.

As she had expected, Festus appeared at a stile over which she sometimes went for shortness' sake, and showed by his manner that he awaited her. When she saw this she kept straight on, as if she would not enter the park at all.

'Surely this is your way?' said Festus.

'I was thinking of going round by the road,' she said.

'Why is that?'

She paused, as if she were not inclined to say. 'I go that way when the grass is wet,' she returned at last.

'It is not wet now,' he persisted; 'the sun has been shining on it these nine hours.' The fact was that the way by the path was less open than by the road, and Festus wished to walk with her uninterrupted. 'But, of course, it is nothing to me what you do.' He flung himself from the stile and walked away towards the house.

Anne, supposing him really indifferent, took the same way, upon which he turned his head and waited for her with a proud smile.

'I cannot go with you,' she said decisively.

'Nonsense, you foolish girl! I must walk along with you down to the corner.'

'No, please, Mr. Derriman; we might be seen.'

'Now, now – that's shyness!' he said jocosely.

'No; you know I cannot let you.'

'But I must.'

'But I do not allow it.'

'Allow it or not, I will.'

'Then you are unkind, and I must submit,' she said, her eyes brimming with tears.

'Ho, ho; what a shame of me! My wig, I won't do any such thing for the world,' said the repentant yeoman. 'Haw, haw; why, I thought your "go away" meant "come on," as it does with so many of the women I meet, especially in these clothes. Who was to know you were so confoundedly serious?'

As he did not go Anne stood still and said nothing.

'I see you have a deal more caution and a deal less good-nature than I ever thought you had,' he continued emphatically.

'No, sir; it is not any planned manner of mine at all,' she said earnestly. 'But you will see, I am sure, that I could not go down to the hall with you without putting myself in a wrong light.'

'Yes; that's it, that's it. I am only a fellow in the yeomanry cavalry – a plain soldier, I may say; and we know what women think of such: that they are a bad lot – men you mustn't speak to for fear of losing your character – chaps you avoid in the roads – chaps that come into a house like oxen, daub the stairs wi' their boots, stain the furniture wi' their drink, talk rubbish to the servants, abuse all that's holy and righteous, and are only saved from being carried off by Old Nick because they are wanted for Boney.'

'Indeed, I didn't know you were thought so bad of as that,' said she simply.

'What! don't my uncle complain to you of me? You are a favourite of that handsome, nice old gaffer's, I know.'

'Never.'

'Well, what do we think of our nice trumpet-major, hey?'

Anne closed her mouth up tight, built it up, in fact, to show that no answer was coming to that question.

'O now, come, seriously, Loveday is a good fellow, and so is his father.'

'I don't know.'

'What a close little rogue you are! There is no getting anything out of you. I believe you would say "I don't know," to every mortal question, so very discreet as you are. Upon my heart, there are some women who would say "I don't know," to "Will ye marry me?"'

The brightness upon Anne's cheek and in her eyes during this remark showed that there was a fair quantity of life and warmth beneath the discretion he complained of. Having spoken thus, he drew aside that she might pass, and bowed very low. Anne formally inclined herself and went on.

She had been at vexation point all the time that he was present, from a haunting sense that he would not have spoken to her so freely had she been a young woman with thriving male relatives to keep forward admirers in check. But she had been struck, now as at their previous meeting, with the power she possessed of

working him up either to irritation or to complacency at will; and this consciousness of being able to play upon him as upon an instrument disposed her to a humorous considerateness, and made her tolerate even while she rebuffed him.

When Anne got to the hall the farmer, as usual, insisted upon her reading what he had been unable to get through, and held the paper tightly in his skinny hand till she had agreed. He sent her to a hard chair that she could not possibly injure to the extent of a pennyworth by sitting in it a twelvemonth, and watched her from the outer angle of his near eye while she bent over the paper. His look might have been suggested by the sight that he had witnessed from his window on the last occasion of her visit, for it partook of the nature of concern. The old man was afraid of his nephew, physically and morally, and he began to regard Anne as a fellow-sufferer under the same despot. After this sly and curious gaze at her he withdrew his eye again, so that when she casually lifted her own there was nothing visible but his keen bluish profile as before.

When the reading was about half-way through, the door behind them opened, and footsteps crossed the threshold. The farmer diminished perceptibly in his chair, and looked fearful, but pretended to be absorbed in the reading, and quite unconscious of an intruder. Anne felt the presence of the swashing Festus, and stopped her reading.

'Please go on, Miss Anne,' he said, 'I am not going to speak a word.' He withdrew to the mantelpiece and leaned against it at

his ease.

'Go on, do ye, maidy Anne,' said Uncle Benjy, keeping down his tremblings by a great effort to half their natural extent.

Anne's voice became much lower now that there were two listeners, and her modesty shrank somewhat from exposing to Festus the appreciative modulations which an intelligent interest in the subject drew from her when unembarrassed. But she still went on that he might not suppose her to be disconcerted, though the ensuing ten minutes was one of disquietude. She knew that the bothering yeoman's eyes were travelling over her from his position behind, creeping over her shoulders, up to her head, and across her arms and hands. Old Benjy on his part knew the same thing, and after sundry endeavours to peep at his nephew from the corner of his eye, he could bear the situation no longer.

'Do ye want to say anything to me, nephew?' he quaked.

'No, uncle, thank ye,' said Festus heartily. 'I like to stay here, thinking of you and looking at your back hair.'

The nervous old man writhed under this vivisection, and Anne read on; till, to the relief of both, the gallant fellow grew tired of his amusement and went out of the room. Anne soon finished her paragraph and rose to go, determined never to come again as long as Festus haunted the precincts. Her face grew warmer as she thought that he would be sure to waylay her on her journey home to-day.

On this account, when she left the house, instead of going in the customary direction, she bolted round to the further side,

through the bushes, along under the kitchen-garden wall, and through a door leading into a rutted cart-track, which had been a pleasant gravelled drive when the fine old hall was in its prosperity. Once out of sight of the windows she ran with all her might till she had quitted the park by a route directly opposite to that towards her home. Why she was so seriously bent upon doing this she could hardly tell but the instinct to run was irresistible.

It was necessary now to clamber over the down to the left of the camp, and make a complete circuit round the latter – infantry, cavalry, sutlers, and all – descending to her house on the other side. This tremendous walk she performed at a rapid rate, never once turning her head, and avoiding every beaten track to keep clear of the knots of soldiers taking a walk. When she at last got down to the levels again she paused to fetch breath, and murmured, 'Why did I take so much trouble? He would not, after all, have hurt me.'

As she neared the mill an erect figure with a blue body and white thighs descended before her from the down towards the village, and went past the mill to a stile beyond, over which she usually returned to her house. Here he lingered. On coming nearer Anne discovered this person to be Trumpet-major Loveday; and not wishing to meet anybody just now Anne passed quickly on, and entered the house by the garden door.

'My dear Anne, what a time you have been gone!' said her mother.

'Yes, I have been round by another road.'

'Why did you do that?'

Anne looked thoughtful and reticent, for her reason was almost too silly a one to confess. 'Well, I wanted to avoid a person who is very busy trying to meet me – that's all,' she said.

Her mother glanced out of the window. 'And there he is, I suppose,' she said, as John Loveday, tired of looking for Anne at the stile, passed the house on his way to his father's door. He could not help casting his eyes towards their window, and, seeing them, he smiled.

Anne's reluctance to mention Festus was such that she did not correct her mother's error, and the dame went on: 'Well, you are quite right, my dear. Be friendly with him, but no more at present. I have heard of your other affair, and think it is a very wise choice. I am sure you have my best wishes in it, and I only hope it will come to a point.'

'What's that?' said the astonished Anne.

'You and Mr. Festus Derriman, dear. You need not mind me; I have known it for several days. Old Granny Seamore called here Saturday, and told me she saw him coming home with you across Park Close last week, when you went for the newspaper; so I thought I'd send you again to-day, and give you another chance.'

'Then you didn't want the paper – and it was only for that!'

'He's a very fine young fellow; he looks a thorough woman's protector.'

'He may look it,' said Anne.

'He has given up the freehold farm his father held at Pitstock,

and lives in independence on what the land brings him. And when Farmer Derriman dies, he'll have all the old man's, for certain. He'll be worth ten thousand pounds, if a penny, in money, besides sixteen horses, cart and hack, a fifty-cow dairy, and at least five hundred sheep.'

Anne turned away, and instead of informing her mother that she had been running like a doe to escape the interesting heir-presumptive alluded to, merely said 'Mother, I don't like this at all.'

IX. ANNE IS KINDLY FETCHED BY THE TRUMPET-MAJOR

After this, Anne would on no account walk in the direction of the hall for fear of another encounter with young Derriman. In the course of a few days it was told in the village that the old farmer had actually gone for a week's holiday and change of air to the Royal watering-place near at hand, at the instance of his nephew Festus. This was a wonderful thing to hear of Uncle Benjy, who had not slept outside the walls of Oxwell Hall for many a long year before; and Anne well imagined what extraordinary pressure must have been put upon him to induce him to take such a step. She pictured his unhappiness at the bustling watering-place, and hoped no harm would come to him.

She spent much of her time indoors or in the garden, hearing little of the camp movements beyond the periodical Ta-ta-ta-taa of the trumpeters sounding their various ingenious calls for watch-setting, stables, feed, boot-and-saddle, parade, and so on, which made her think how clever her friend the trumpet-major must be to teach his pupils to play those pretty little tunes so well.

On the third morning after Uncle Benjy's departure, she was disturbed as usual while dressing by the tramp of the troops down the slope to the mill-pond, and during the now familiar stamping and splashing which followed there sounded upon the glass of the

window a slight smack, which might have been caused by a whip or switch. She listened more particularly, and it was repeated.

As John Loveday was the only dragoon likely to be aware that she slept in that particular apartment, she imagined the signal to come from him, though wondering that he should venture upon such a freak of familiarity.

Wrapping herself up in a red cloak, she went to the window, gently drew up a corner of the curtain, and peeped out, as she had done many times before. Nobody who was not quite close beneath her window could see her face; but as it happened, somebody was close. The soldiers whose floundering Anne had heard were not Loveday's dragoons, but a troop of the York Hussars, quite oblivious of her existence. They had passed on out of the water, and instead of them there sat Festus Derriman alone on his horse, and in plain clothes, the water reaching up to the animal's belly, and Festus' heels elevated over the saddle to keep them out of the stream, which threatened to wash rider and horse into the deep mill-head just below. It was plainly he who had struck her lattice, for in a moment he looked up, and their eyes met. Festus laughed loudly, and slapped her window again; and just at that moment the dragoons began prancing down the slope in review order. She could not but wait a minute or two to see them pass. While doing so she was suddenly led to draw back, drop the corner of the curtain, and blush privately in her room. She had not only been seen by Festus Derriman, but by John Loveday, who, riding along with his trumpet slung up

behind him, had looked over his shoulder at the phenomenon of Derriman beneath Anne's bedroom window and seemed quite astounded at the sight.

She was quite vexed at the conjunction of incidents, and went no more to the window till the dragoons had ridden far away and she had heard Festus's horse laboriously wade on to dry land. When she looked out there was nobody left but Miller Loveday, who usually stood in the garden at this time of the morning to say a word or two to the soldiers, of whom he already knew so many, and was in a fair way of knowing many more, from the liberality with which he handed round mugs of cheering liquor whenever parties of them walked that way.

In the afternoon of this day Anne walked to a christening party at a neighbour's in the adjoining parish of Springham, intending to walk home again before it got dark; but there was a slight fall of rain towards evening, and she was pressed by the people of the house to stay over the night. With some hesitation she accepted their hospitality; but at ten o'clock, when they were thinking of going to bed, they were startled by a smart rap at the door, and on it being unbolted a man's form was seen in the shadows outside.

'Is Miss Garland here?' the visitor inquired, at which Anne suspended her breath.

'Yes,' said Anne's entertainer, warily.

'Her mother is very anxious to know what's become of her. She promised to come home.' To her great relief Anne recognized the voice as John Loveday's, and not Festus

Derriman's.

'Yes, I did, Mr. Loveday,' said she, coming forward; 'but it rained, and I thought my mother would guess where I was.'

Loveday said with diffidence that it had not rained anything to speak of at the camp, or at the mill, so that her mother was rather alarmed.

'And she asked you to come for me?' Anne inquired.

This was a question which the trumpet-major had been dreading during the whole of his walk thither. 'Well, she didn't exactly ask me,' he said rather lamely, but still in a manner to show that Mrs. Garland had indirectly signified such to be her wish. In reality Mrs. Garland had not addressed him at all on the subject. She had merely spoken to his father on finding that her daughter did not return, and received an assurance from the miller that the precious girl was doubtless quite safe. John heard of this inquiry, and, having a pass that evening, resolved to relieve Mrs. Garland's mind on his own responsibility. Ever since his morning view of Festus under her window he had been on thorns of anxiety, and his thrilling hope now was that she would walk back with him.

He shifted his foot nervously as he made the bold request. Anne felt at once that she would go. There was nobody in the world whose care she would more readily be under than the trumpet-major's in a case like the present. He was their nearest neighbour's son, and she had liked his single-minded ingenuousness from the first moment of his return home.

When they had started on their walk, Anne said in a practical way, to show that there was no sentiment whatever in her acceptance of his company, 'Mother was much alarmed about me, perhaps?'

'Yes; she was uneasy,' he said; and then was compelled by conscience to make a clean breast of it. 'I know she was uneasy, because my father said so. But I did not see her myself. The truth is, she doesn't know I am come.'

Anne now saw how the matter stood; but she was not offended with him. What woman could have been? They walked on in silence, the respectful trumpet-major keeping a yard off on her right as precisely as if that measure had been fixed between them. She had a great feeling of civility toward him this evening, and spoke again. 'I often hear your trumpeters blowing the calls. They do it beautifully, I think.'

'Pretty fair; they might do better,' said he, as one too well-mannered to make much of an accomplishment in which he had a hand.

'And you taught them how to do it?'

'Yes, I taught them.'

'It must require wonderful practice to get them into the way of beginning and finishing so exactly at one time. It is like one throat doing it all. How came you to be a trumpeter, Mr. Loveday?'

'Well, I took to it naturally when I was a little boy,' said he, betrayed into quite a gushing state by her delightful interest. 'I used to make trumpets of paper, eldersticks, eltrot stems, and

even stinging-nettle stalks, you know. Then father set me to keep the birds off that little barley-ground of his, and gave me an old horn to frighten 'em with. I learnt to blow that horn so that you could hear me for miles and miles. Then he bought me a clarionet, and when I could play that I borrowed a serpent, and I learned to play a tolerable bass. So when I 'listed I was picked out for training as trumpeter at once.'

'Of course you were.'

'Sometimes, however, I wish I had never joined the army. My father gave me a very fair education, and your father showed me how to draw horses – on a slate, I mean. Yes, I ought to have done more than I have.'

'What, did you know my father?' she asked with new interest.

'O yes, for years. You were a little mite of a thing then; and you used to cry when we big boys looked at you, and made pig's eyes at you, which we did sometimes. Many and many a time have I stood by your poor father while he worked. Ah, you don't remember much about him; but I do!'

Anne remained thoughtful; and the moon broke from behind the clouds, lighting up the wet foliage with a twinkling brightness, and lending to each of the trumpet-major's buttons and spurs a little ray of its own. They had come to Oxwell park gate, and he said, 'Do you like going across, or round by the lane?'

'We may as well go by the nearest road,' said Anne.

They entered the park, following the half-obliterated drive till they came almost opposite the hall, when they entered a footpath

leading on to the village. While hereabout they heard a shout, or chorus of exclamation, apparently from within the walls of the dark buildings near them.

'What was that?' said Anne.

'I don't know,' said her companion. 'I'll go and see.'

He went round the intervening swamp of watercress and brooklime which had once been the fish-pond, crossed by a culvert the trickling brook that still flowed that way, and advanced to the wall of the house. Boisterous noises were resounding from within, and he was tempted to go round the corner, where the low windows were, and look through a chink into the room whence the sounds proceeded.

It was the room in which the owner dined – traditionally called the great parlour – and within it sat about a dozen young men of the yeomanry cavalry, one of them being Festus. They were drinking, laughing, singing, thumping their fists on the tables, and enjoying themselves in the very perfection of confusion. The candles, blown by the breeze from the partly opened window, had guttered into coffin handles and shrouds, and, choked by their long black wicks for want of snuffing, gave out a smoky yellow light. One of the young men might possibly have been in a maudlin state, for he had his arm round the neck of his next neighbour. Another was making an incoherent speech to which nobody was listening. Some of their faces were red, some were sallow; some were sleepy, some wide awake. The only one among them who appeared in his usual frame of mind was Festus, whose

huge, burly form rose at the head of the table, enjoying with a serene and triumphant aspect the difference between his own condition and that of his neighbours. While the trumpet-major looked, a young woman, niece of Anthony Cripplestraw, and one of Uncle Benjy's servants, was called in by one of the crew, and much against her will a fiddle was placed in her hands, from which they made her produce discordant screeches.

The absence of Uncle Benjy had, in fact, been contrived by young Derriman that he might make use of the hall on his own account. Cripplestraw had been left in charge, and Festus had found no difficulty in forcing from that dependent the keys of whatever he required. John Loveday turned his eyes from the scene to the neighbouring moonlit path, where Anne still stood waiting. Then he looked into the room, then at Anne again. It was an opportunity of advancing his own cause with her by exposing Festus, for whom he began to entertain hostile feelings of no mean force.

'No; I can't do it,' he said. "Tis underhand. Let things take their chance.'

He moved away, and then perceived that Anne, tired of waiting, had crossed the stream, and almost come up with him.

'What is the noise about?' she said.

'There's company in the house,' said Loveday.

'Company? Farmer Derriman is not at home,' said Anne, and went on to the window whence the rays of light leaked out, the trumpet-major standing where he was. He saw her face enter

the beam of candlelight, stay there for a moment, and quickly withdraw. She came back to him at once. 'Let us go on,' she said.

Loveday imagined from her tone that she must have an interest in Derriman, and said sadly, 'You blame me for going across to the window, and leading you to follow me.'

'Not a bit,' said Anne, seeing his mistake as to the state of her heart, and being rather angry with him for it. 'I think it was most natural, considering the noise.'

Silence again. 'Derriman is sober as a judge,' said Loveday, as they turned to go. 'It was only the others who were noisy.'

'Whether he is sober or not is nothing whatever to me,' said Anne.

'Of course not. I know it,' said the trumpet-major, in accents expressing unhappiness at her somewhat curt tone, and some doubt of her assurance.

Before they had emerged from the shadow of the hall some persons were seen moving along the road. Loveday was for going on just the same; but Anne, from a shy feeling that it was as well not to be seen walking alone with a man who was not her lover, said —

'Mr. Loveday, let us wait here a minute till they have passed.'

On nearer view the group was seen to comprise a man on a piebald horse, and another man walking beside him. When they were opposite the house they halted, and the rider dismounted, whereupon a dispute between him and the other man ensued, apparently on a question of money.

'Tis old Mr. Derriman come home!' said Anne. 'He has hired that horse from the bathing-machine to bring him. Only fancy!'

Before they had gone many steps further the farmer and his companion had ended their dispute, and the latter mounted the horse and cantered away, Uncle Benjy coming on to the house at a nimble pace. As soon as he observed Loveday and Anne, he fell into a feebler gait; when they came up he recognized Anne.

'And you have torn yourself away from King George's Esplanade so soon, Farmer Derriman?' said she.

'Yes, faith! I couldn't bide at such a ruination place,' said the farmer. 'Your hand in your pocket every minute of the day. 'Tis a shilling for this, half-a-crown for that; if you only eat one egg, or even a poor windfall of an apple, you've got to pay; and a bunch o' radishes is a halfpenny, and a quart o' cider a good tuppence three-farthings at lowest reckoning. Nothing without paying! I couldn't even get a ride homeward upon that screw without the man wanting a shilling for it, when my weight didn't take a penny out of the beast. I've saved a penn'orth or so of shoeleather to be sure; but the saddle was so rough wi' patches that 'a took twopence out of the seat of my best breeches. King George hev' ruined the town for other folks. More than that, my nephew promised to come there to-morrow to see me, and if I had stayed I must have treated en. Hey – what's that?'

It was a shout from within the walls of the building, and Loveday said —

'Your nephew is here, and has company.'

'My nephew *here*?' gasped the old man. 'Good folks, will you come up to the door with me? I mean – hee – hee – just for company! Dear me, I thought my house was as quiet as a church?'

They went back to the window, and the farmer looked in, his mouth falling apart to a greater width at the corners than in the middle, and his fingers assuming a state of radiation.

''Tis my best silver tankards they've got, that I've never used! O! 'tis my strong beer! 'Tis eight candles guttering away, when I've used nothing but twenties myself for the last half-year!'

'You didn't know he was here, then?' said Loveday.

'O no!' said the farmer, shaking his head half-way. 'Nothing's known to poor I! There's my best rummers jingling as careless as if 'twas tin cups; and my table scratched, and my chairs wrenched out of joint. See how they tilt 'em on the two back legs – and that's ruin to a chair! Ah! when I be gone he won't find another old man to make such work with, and provide goods for his breaking, and house-room and drink for his tear-brass set!'

'Comrades and fellow-soldiers,' said Festus to the hot farmers and yeomen he entertained within, 'as we have vowed to brave danger and death together, so we'll share the couch of peace. You shall sleep here to-night, for it is getting late. My scram blue-vinnied gallicrow of an uncle takes care that there shan't be much comfort in the house, but you can curl up on the furniture if beds run short. As for my sleep, it won't be much. I'm melancholy! A woman has, I may say, got my heart in her pocket, and I have hers in mine. She's not much – to other folk, I mean – but she

is to me. The little thing came in my way, and conquered me. I fancy that simple girl! I ought to have looked higher – I know it; what of that? 'Tis a fate that may happen to the greatest men.'

'Whash her name?' said one of the warriors, whose head occasionally drooped upon his epaulettes, and whose eyes fell together in the casual manner characteristic of the tired soldier. (It was really Farmer Stubb, of Duddle Hole.)

'Her name? Well, 'tis spelt, A, N – but, by gad, I won't give ye her name here in company. She don't live a hundred miles off, however, and she wears the prettiest cap-ribbons you ever saw. Well, well, 'tis weakness! She has little, and I have much; but I do adore that girl, in spite of myself!'

'Let's go on,' said Anne.

'Prithee stand by an old man till he's got into his house!' implored Uncle Benjy. 'I only ask ye to bide within call. Stand back under the trees, and I'll do my poor best to give no trouble.'

'I'll stand by you for half-an-hour, sir,' said Loveday. 'After that I must bolt to camp.'

'Very well; bide back there under the trees,' said Uncle Benjy. 'I don't want to spite 'em?'

'You'll wait a few minutes, just to see if he gets in?' said the trumpet-major to Anne as they retired from the old man.

'I want to get home,' said Anne anxiously.

When they had quite receded behind the tree-trunks and he stood alone, Uncle Benjy, to their surprise, set up a loud shout, altogether beyond the imagined power of his lungs.

'Man a-lost! man a-lost!' he cried, repeating the exclamation several times; and then ran and hid himself behind a corner of the building. Soon the door opened, and Festus and his guests came tumbling out upon the green.

"Tis our duty to help folks in distress,' said Festus. 'Man a-lost, where are you?'

"Twas across there,' said one of his friends.

'No! 'twas here,' said another.

Meanwhile Uncle Benjy, coming from his hiding-place, had scampered with the quickness of a boy up to the door they had quitted, and slipped in. In a moment the door flew together, and Anne heard him bolting and barring it inside. The revellers, however, did not notice this, and came on towards the spot where the trumpet-major and Anne were standing.

'Here's succour at hand, friends,' said Festus. 'We are all king's men; do not fear us.'

'Thank you,' said Loveday; 'so are we.' He explained in two words that they were not the distressed traveller who had cried out, and turned to go on.

"Tis she! my life, 'tis she said Festus, now first recognizing Anne. 'Fair Anne, I will not part from you till I see you safe at your own dear door.'

'She's in my hands,' said Loveday civilly, though not without firmness, 'so it is not required, thank you.'

'Man, had I but my sword – '

'Come,' said Loveday, 'I don't want to quarrel. Let's put it to

her. Whichever of us she likes best, he shall take her home. Miss Anne, which?'

Anne would much rather have gone home alone, but seeing the remainder of the yeomanry party staggering up she thought it best to secure a protector of some kind. How to choose one without offending the other and provoking a quarrel was the difficulty.

'You must both walk home with me,' she adroitly said, 'one on one side, and one on the other. And if you are not quite civil to one another all the time, I'll never speak to either of you again.'

They agreed to the terms, and the other yeomen arriving at this time said they would go also as rearguard.

'Very well,' said Anne. 'Now go and get your hats, and don't be long.'

'Ah, yes; our hats,' said the yeomanry, whose heads were so hot that they had forgotten their nakedness till then.

'You'll wait till we've got 'em – we won't be a moment,' said Festus eagerly.

Anne and Loveday said yes, and Festus ran back to the house, followed by all his band.

'Now let's run and leave 'em,' said Anne, when they were out of hearing.

'But we've promised to wait!' said the trumpet-major in surprise.

'Promised to wait!' said Anne indignantly. 'As if one ought to keep such a promise to drunken men as that. You can do as you

like, I shall go.'

'It is hardly fair to leave the chaps,' said Loveday reluctantly, and looking back at them. But she heard no more, and flitting off under the trees, was soon lost to his sight.

Festus and the rest had by this time reached Uncle Benjy's door, which they were discomfited and astonished to find closed. They began to knock, and then to kick at the venerable timber, till the old man's head, crowned with a tasselled nightcap, appeared at an upper window, followed by his shoulders, with apparently nothing on but his shirt, though it was in truth a sheet thrown over his coat.

'Fie, fie upon ye all for making such a hullaballoo at a weak old man's door,' he said, yawning. 'What's in ye to rouse honest folks at this time o' night?'

'Hang me – why – it's Uncle Benjy! Haw – haw – haw?' said Festus. 'Nunc, why how the devil's this? 'Tis I – Festus – wanting to come in.'

'O no, no, my clever man, whoever you be!' said Uncle Benjy in a tone of incredulous integrity. 'My nephew, dear boy, is miles away at quarters, and sound asleep by this time, as becomes a good soldier. That story won't do to-night, my man, not at all.'

'Upon my soul 'tis I,' said Festus.

'Not to-night, my man; not to-night! Anthony, bring my blunderbuss,' said the farmer, turning and addressing nobody inside the room.

'Let's break in the window-shutters,' said one of the others.

'My wig, and we will!' said Festus. 'What a trick of the old man!'

'Get some big stones,' said the yeomen, searching under the wall.

'No; forbear, forbear,' said Festus, beginning to be frightened at the spirit he had raised. 'I forget; we should drive him into fits, for he's subject to 'em, and then perhaps 'twould be manslaughter. Comrades, we must march! No, we'll lie in the barn. I'll see into this, take my word for 't. Our honour is at stake. Now let's back to see my beauty home.'

'We can't, as we hav'n't got our hats,' said one of his fellow-troopers – in domestic life Jacob Noakes, of Muckleford Farm.

'No more we can,' said Festus, in a melancholy tone. 'But I must go to her and tell her the reason. She pulls me in spite of all.'

'She's gone. I saw her flee across park while we were knocking at the door,' said another of the yeomanry.

'Gone!' said Festus, grinding his teeth and putting himself into a rigid shape. 'Then 'tis my enemy – he has tempted her away with him! But I am a rich man, and he's poor, and rides the King's horse while I ride my own. Could I but find that fellow, that regular, that common man, I would – '

'Yes?' said the trumpet-major, coming up behind him.

'I,' – said Festus, starting round, – 'I would seize him by the hand and say, "Guard her; if you are my friend, guard her from all harm!"'

'A good speech. And I will, too,' said Loveday heartily.

‘And now for shelter,’ said Festus to his companions.

They then unceremoniously left Loveday, without wishing him good-night, and proceeded towards the barn. He crossed the park and ascended the down to the camp, grieved that he had given Anne cause of complaint, and fancying that she held him of slight account beside his wealthier rival.

X. THE MATCH-MAKING VIRTUES OF A DOUBLE GARDEN

Anne was so flurried by the military incidents attending her return home that she was almost afraid to venture alone outside her mother's premises. Moreover, the numerous soldiers, regular and otherwise, that haunted Overcombe and its neighbourhood, were getting better acquainted with the villagers, and the result was that they were always standing at garden gates, walking in the orchards, or sitting gossiping just within cottage doors, with the bowls of their tobacco-pipes thrust outside for politeness' sake, that they might not defile the air of the household. Being gentlemen of a gallant and most affectionate nature, they naturally turned their heads and smiled if a pretty girl passed by, which was rather disconcerting to the latter if she were unused to society. Every belle in the village soon had a lover, and when the belles were all allotted those who scarcely deserved that title had their turn, many of the soldiers being not at all particular about half-an-inch of nose more or less, a trifling deficiency of teeth, or a larger crop of freckles than is customary in the Saxon race. Thus, with one and another, courtship began to be practised in Overcombe on rather a large scale, and the dispossessed young men who had been born in the place were left to take their walks alone, where, instead of studying the works of nature, they

meditated gross outrages on the brave men who had been so good as to visit their village.

Anne watched these romantic proceedings from her window with much interest, and when she saw how triumphantly other handsome girls of the neighbourhood walked by on the gorgeous arms of Lieutenant Knockheelmann, Cornet Flitzenhart, and Captain Klaspenkissen, of the thrilling York Hussars, who swore the most picturesque foreign oaths, and had a wonderful sort of estate or property called the Vaterland in their country across the sea, she was filled with a sense of her own loneliness. It made her think of things which she tried to forget, and to look into a little drawer at something soft and brown that lay in a curl there, wrapped in paper. At last she could bear it no longer, and went downstairs.

'Where are you going?' said Mrs. Garland.

'To see the folks, because I am so gloomy!'

'Certainly not at present, Anne.'

'Why not, mother?' said Anne, blushing with an indefinite sense of being very wicked.

'Because you must not. I have been going to tell you several times not to go into the street at this time of day. Why not walk in the morning? There's young Mr. Derriman would be glad to – '

'Don't mention him, mother, don't!'

'Well then, dear, walk in the garden.'

So poor Anne, who really had not the slightest wish to throw her heart away upon a soldier, but merely wanted to displace old

thoughts by new, turned into the inner garden from day to day, and passed a good many hours there, the pleasant birds singing to her, and the delightful butterflies alighting on her hat, and the horrid ants running up her stockings.

This garden was undivided from Loveday's, the two having originally been the single garden of the whole house. It was a quaint old place, enclosed by a thorn hedge so shapely and dense from incessant clipping that the mill-boy could walk along the top without sinking in – a feat which he often performed as a means of filling out his day's work. The soil within was of that intense fat blackness which is only seen after a century of constant cultivation. The paths were grassed over, so that people came and went upon them without being heard. The grass harboured slugs, and on this account the miller was going to replace it by gravel as soon as he had time; but as he had said this for thirty years without doing it, the grass and the slugs seemed likely to remain.

The miller's man attended to Mrs. Garland's piece of the garden as well as to the larger portion, digging, planting, and weeding indifferently in both, the miller observing with reason that it was not worth while for a helpless widow lady to hire a man for her little plot when his man, working alongside, could tend it without much addition to his labour. The two households were on this account even more closely united in the garden than within the mill. Out there they were almost one family, and they talked from plot to plot with a zest and animation which Mrs. Garland could never have anticipated when she first removed thither after

her husband's death.

The lower half of the garden, farthest from the road, was the most snug and sheltered part of this snug and sheltered enclosure, and it was well watered as the land of Lot. Three small brooks, about a yard wide, ran with a tinkling sound from side to side between the plots, crossing the path under wood slabs laid as bridges, and passing out of the garden through little tunnels in the hedge. The brooks were so far overhung at their brinks by grass and garden produce that, had it not been for their perpetual babbling, few would have noticed that they were there. This was where Anne liked best to linger when her excursions became restricted to her own premises; and in a spot of the garden not far removed the trumpet-major loved to linger also.

Having by virtue of his office no stable duty to perform, he came down from the camp to the mill almost every day; and Anne, finding that he adroitly walked and sat in his father's portion of the garden whenever she did so in the other half, could not help smiling and speaking to him. So his epaulettes and blue jacket, and Anne's yellow gipsy hat, were often seen in different parts of the garden at the same time; but he never intruded into her part of the enclosure, nor did she into Loveday's. She always spoke to him when she saw him there, and he replied in deep, firm accents across the gooseberry bushes, or through the tall rows of flowering peas, as the case might be. He thus gave her accounts at fifteen paces of his experiences in camp, in quarters, in Flanders, and elsewhere; of the difference between line and

column, of forced marches, billeting, and such-like, together with his hopes of promotion. Anne listened at first indifferently; but knowing no one else so good-natured and experienced, she grew interested in him as in a brother. By degrees his gold lace, buckles, and spurs lost all their strangeness and were as familiar to her as her own clothes.

At last Mrs. Garland noticed this growing friendship, and began to despair of her motherly scheme of uniting Anne to the moneyed Festus. Why she could not take prompt steps to check interference with her plans arose partly from her nature, which was the reverse of managing, and partly from a new emotional circumstance with which she found it difficult to reckon. The near neighbourhood that had produced the friendship of Anne for John Loveday was slowly effecting a warmer liking between her mother and his father.

Thus the month of July passed. The troop horses came with the regularity of clockwork twice a day down to drink under her window, and, as the weather grew hotter, kicked up their heels and shook their heads furiously under the maddening sting of the dun-fly. The green leaves in the garden became of a darker dye, the gooseberries ripened, and the three brooks were reduced to half their winter volume.

At length the earnest trumpet-major obtained Mrs. Garland's consent to take her and her daughter to the camp, which they had not yet viewed from any closer point than their own windows. So one afternoon they went, the miller being one of the party.

The villagers were by this time driving a roaring trade with the soldiers, who purchased of them every description of garden produce, milk, butter, and eggs at liberal prices. The figures of these rural sutlers could be seen creeping up the slopes, laden like bees, to a spot in the rear of the camp, where there was a kind of market-place on the greensward.

Mrs. Garland, Anne, and the miller were conducted from one place to another, and on to the quarter where the soldiers' wives lived who had not been able to get lodgings in the cottages near. The most sheltered place had been chosen for them, and snug huts had been built for their use by their husbands, of clods, hurdles, a little thatch, or whatever they could lay hands on. The trumpet-major conducted his friends thence to the large barn which had been appropriated as a hospital, and to the cottage with its windows bricked up, that was used as the magazine; then they inspected the lines of shining dark horses (each representing the then high figure of two-and-twenty guineas purchase money), standing patiently at the ropes which stretched from one picket-post to another, a bank being thrown up in front of them as a protection at night.

They passed on to the tents of the German Legion, a well-grown and rather dandy set of men, with a poetical look about their faces which rendered them interesting to feminine eyes. Hanoverians, Saxons, Prussians, Swedes, Hungarians, and other foreigners were numbered in their ranks. They were cleaning arms, which they leant carefully against a rail when the work was

complete.

On their return they passed the mess-house, a temporary wooden building with a brick chimney. As Anne and her companions went by, a group of three or four of the hussars were standing at the door talking to a dashing young man, who was expatiating on the qualities of a horse that one was inclined to buy. Anne recognized Festus Derriman in the seller, and Cripplestraw was trotting the animal up and down. As soon as she caught the yeoman's eye he came forward, making some friendly remark to the miller, and then turning to Miss Garland, who kept her eyes steadily fixed on the distant landscape till he got so near that it was impossible to do so longer. Festus looked from Anne to the trumpet-major, and from the trumpet-major back to Anne, with a dark expression of face, as if he suspected that there might be a tender understanding between them.

'Are you offended with me?' he said to her in a low voice of repressed resentment.

'No,' said Anne.

'When are you coming to the hall again?'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.