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Содержание

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THE YEAR OF REACTION

If the year 1848 – "THE YEAR OF REVOLUTIONS" was one pre-eminent among all others for the magnitude and interest of the events it brought forth, the year which has just expired – THE YEAR OF REACTION – is still more worthy of serious reflection, and affords subjects for more cheering meditation. If the first exhibited the whirlwind of anarchy let loose, the second showed the power by which it is restrained; if the former filled every heart with dread at the fierce passions which were developed, and the portentous events which occurred in the world, the latter afforded reason for profound thankfulness, at the silent but irresistible force with which Omnipotence overrules the wickedness of men, and restrains the madness of the people.

"Celsâ sedet Æolus arce,
Sceptra tenens, mollitque animos, et temperat iras.
Ni faciat, maria ac terras cœlumque profundum
Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verruntque per auras.
Sed Pater Omnipotens speluncis abdidit atris,
Hoc metuens; regemque dedit qui fœdere certo
Et premere et laxas sciret dare jussus habenas."[1]

The history of the world during those periods of convulsion, happily of very rare occurrence, when an eruption of popular passions takes place – when thrones are overturned, and the long-established order of things is subverted – is nothing else but the folly and wickedness of man warring against the wisdom of nature. All history demonstrates that there is a certain order of things which is favourable to human felicity – under which industry flourishes, population increases, the arts are encouraged, agriculture improves, general happiness is diffused. The basis of such a state of things is the *security of property*; the moving power which puts in motion the whole complicated machine of society, is the certainty that every man will enjoy the fruits of his toil. As clearly do past events demonstrate, that there is a state of things wherein the reverse of all this takes place; when industry is paralysed, population arrested, the arts languish, agriculture decays, general misery prevails. The chief cause of such a state of things is to be found in the insecurity of property, the dread that industry will not reap its appointed reward; but that external violence or domestic spoliation may interfere between the labourer and the fruits of his toil. When such a state of things arises from internal commotion, it is generally preceded by the warmest hopes, and the most unbounded anticipations of felicity. It is universally characterised by a resolute disregard of experience, and a universal passion for innovation in all the institutions of society, and all the relations of life. It constantly appeals to the generous affections: speaks of humanity, justice, and fraternity; proclaims mankind as brothers; and professes the warmest desire for general felicity, and the diminution of the sources of human suffering. It veils the advance of selfishness under the guise of generosity. Revolutions demonstrate that the homage which vice pays to virtue is not confined to individuals. The maxim of Rochefoucault applies also to

[1] *Æneid*, i. 56.

nations. Its truth is never seen with such brightness as during the intensity of a revolution; and this demonstrates at once the wisdom which governs, and the selfishness which desolates the world.

So prone, however, are the bulk of mankind to delusion; so easily are they led away by expressions which appeal to their passions, or projects which seem to forward their interests; so little are the lessons of experience either known to, or heeded by, the immense majority of men, that we should be led to despair of the fortunes of the species, and dread in every age a repetition of the seductive passions which had desolated the one that had preceded it, were it not that a provision is made for the extinction of popular passion in the very first effects of its ebullition. It is in its *effect upon property* that the curb is found which restrains the madness of the people; by the insolvency it induces that the barrier is formed, which as a matter of necessity forces back society to its habitual forms and relations. In the complicated state of social relations in which we live, it is by the capital of the rich that the industry of the poor is put in motion; by their expenditure that it is alimented. However specious and alluring the projects may be which are brought forward by the popular leaders, they involve in them one source of weakness, which inevitably ere long paralyses all their influence. Directly or indirectly, they all tend to the destruction of property. To excite the passions of the working classes, they are obliged to hold out to them the prospect of a division of property, or such a system of taxation as practically amounts to the same thing: the immediate effect of which is a cessation of expenditure on the part of the affluent classes; a hoarding of capital; a run upon the banks for specie; universal scarcity of money, general distrust, and a fearful decrease of employment. These evils are first felt by the working classes, because, having no stock, they are affected by any diminution in their daily wages; and they are felt with the more bitterness that they immediately succeed extravagant hopes, and highly wrought expectations. Invariably the effects of revolutions are precisely the reverse of the predictions of its supporters. No man is insensible to his own suffering, however much he may be so to that of his predecessors; and thence the universal and general reaction which, sooner or later, takes place against revolutions.

That this reaction would take place to a certainty, in the end, with the French revolution of 1848, as it had done with all similar convulsions since the beginning of the world, could be doubted by none who had the least historical information: and in our first article on that event, within a few weeks of its occurrence, we distinctly foretold that this would be the case.[2] But we confess we did not anticipate the *rapidity* with which the reaction has set in. Not two years have elapsed since the throne of Louis Philippe was overturned, and a republic proclaimed in Paris amidst the transports of the revolutionary party over all Europe, and the gaze in astonishment of all the world; and already the delusion is over, the transports are at an end, the Jacobins are silent, and the convulsed commonwealth is fast sinking back to its pristine monarchical form of government. Every country in Europe felt the shock. The passions were universally let loose; sanguinary wars arose on every side; and while the enlightened Free-traders of England were dreaming, amidst their cotton bales, of universal and perpetual peace, which should open to them the markets of the world, hostilities the most terrible, contests the most dreadful, dissensions the most implacable, broke out in all quarters. It was not merely the war of opinion which Mr Canning long ago prophesied as the next which would desolate Europe: to it was superadded the still more frightful contest of races. The Lombard rose against the German, the Bohemian against the Imperialist, the Hungarian against the Austrian; the Celt and the Saxon stood in arms against each other. Naples was rent in twain; a revolutionary state was established in Sicily; the supreme pontiff was dethroned at Rome; Piedmont joined the innovating party; Lombardy rose up against Austria, Bohemia was in arms against Vienna, the Magyars revived against the Germans the fierce hostility of five centuries; Prussia was revolutionised, Baden ravaged, Denmark invaded; the Poles could with difficulty be restrained amidst the general effervescence; the Irish openly made preparations for rebellion and separation from Great Britain. England itself was shaken: the gravity

[2] See "The Fall of the Throne of the Barricades," April 1, 1848.

and practical tendency of the Anglo-Saxon character in part yielded to the general contagion. London was threatened with a revolutionary movement; the Chartists in all the manufacturing towns were prepared to follow the example; treasonable placards, calling on the people to rise, were to be seen on all sides; and the mighty conqueror who had struck down Napoleon exerted his consummate skill in baffling the rebellion of his own countrymen, and won a victory over anarchy not less momentous than that of Waterloo, and not the less memorable that it did not cost a drop of human blood.

What a contrast, within the short period of eighteen months, did Europe afterwards exhibit! France, the centre of impulsion to the civilised world, was restrained; the demon of anarchy was crushed in its birthplace; the visions of the Socialists had been extinguished in the blood of the barricades. Dispersed, dejected, in despair, the heroes of February were languishing in exile, or mourning in prison the blasting of their hopes, the ruin of their prospects, the unveiling of their sophistries. Revolution had been crushed without the effusion of blood in Berlin: law had regained its ascendency; rebellion had quailed before the undaunted aspect of the defenders of order and the throne. Naples had regained the dominion of Sicily; the arms of France had restored the Pope at Rome; the Eternal City had yielded to the assault of the soldiers of Louis Napoleon. Austria had regained her ascendency in Italy; the perfidious aggression of Charles Albert had been signally chastised by the skill and determination of the veteran Radetsky; Milan was again the seat of Imperial government; the dream of a Venetian republic had passed away, and the Place of St Mark again beheld the double-headed eagle of Austria at the summit of its domes. Baden was conquered, Saxony pacified; the fumes of revolutionary aggression in Schleswig had been dissipated by the firmness of Denmark, and the ready, although unexerted, support of Russia. Poland was overawed by the Colossus of the North; and even the heroic valour of the Magyars, so often in happier days the bulwark of the Cross, had yielded to that loyalty and tenacity of purpose which has so long distinguished the Austrian people, joined and aided by the support which, on this as on many previous occasions, Russia has afforded to the cause of order in Europe. Though last, not least, Great Britain was pacified: the dreams of the Socialists, the treason of the Chartists, had recoiled before the energy of a people yet on the whole loyal and united. Ireland, blasted by the triple curse of rebellion, pestilence, and famine, had ceased to be an object of disquietude to England, save from the incessant misery which it exhibited; and its furious patriots, abandoning in multitudes the land of their birth, were carrying into Transatlantic regions those principles of anarchy, and deathless hatred at civilisation, which had so long laid waste their own country.

Acknowledging, as all must do, with devout thankfulness, that it is to the Great Disposer of events that we are to ascribe so marvellous a DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL – so blessed an escape from a fate which would have renewed, in Europe, a devastation as wide-spread, and darkness as thick, as occurred during the middle ages – it may yet, humanly speaking, be discerned how it is that our salvation has been effected. The days of miracles are past; the law is not now delivered amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai; the walls of fortresses do not fall down at the sound of the Lord's trumpet; there is no longer a chosen people, over whose safety the eye of Omnipotence watches, and whom, in the last extremity, the destroying angel rescues from their enemies. The direction of human affairs by Supreme Wisdom; the coercion of wickedness; the support of virtue; the ceaseless advance of the race of man, amidst all the folly and selfishness with which its concerns are conducted, have not, indeed, passed away: all these are in as complete operation now as when the Red Sea opened to the retreating Israelites, or the walls of Jericho fell before the blast of Joshua's trumpet, or the rending of the vail of the Temple announced that the era had commenced when the whole human race was to be admitted to the sanctuary of the temple. But it is by human means alone that Providence now acts; it is by general laws that the affairs of men are regulated. The agents of Omnipotence are the moving principles of the human heart: the safeguards against ruin are to be found in the barriers which, in injured interests or counteracting passions, are raised up amidst the agitated multitude, against the further progress of devastation. It is not from oblivion, therefore, but with a constant recognition

of Divine superintendence, that we shall now endeavour to trace out the means by which the most alarming moral pestilence which ever appeared in modern times has been arrested; the happiness of Europe saved, for the time at least, from the destruction by which it was menaced – from the earthquake in its own bosom; and the progress of real freedom throughout the world prevented from being blasted by the selfish ambition or insane delusions of the demagogues who, for a time, got possession of its current.

The first circumstance which must strike every observer, in the contemplation of the terrible crisis through which we have passed, is, that the destruction with which we were threatened was mainly, if not entirely, owing to *want of moral courage* on the part of the depositaries of power. The Revolution in Paris, it is well known, owed its success entirely to the pusillanimity of the *men* of the royal family. Louis Philippe, old and enfeebled by disease, was paralysed by a still more fatal source of weakness – the consciousness of a throne won by treason – the terror inspired by the sight of the barricades, behind which his own government had been constructed. His sons who were present showed that the Orleans family had lost, with the possession of a usurped throne, the courage which, for several generations, had constituted the only virtue of their race. The King of Prussia abandoned the contest in Berlin in the moment of victory – a nervous reluctance to the shedding of blood paralysed, as it had done in the days of Louis XVI., the defenders of the throne. In Austria, the known imbecility, physical and moral, of the emperor, rendered him wholly unequal to the crisis in which he was placed – delivered over the empire, undefended, to a set of revolutionary murderers, and rendered a change in the reigning sovereign indispensable. In Rome, the Pope himself began the movement – he first headed the reform crusade; and whatever his unhappy subjects have since suffered is to be ascribed to his blind delusion and weak concessions. Such was the conduct of the kings of Europe – such the front which our sex in high places opposed to the revolutionary tempest. But women often, in the last extremity, exhibit a courage which puts to shame the pusillanimity of the men by whom they are surrounded; and never was this more signally evinced than in the present instance. The Queen of France tried in vain, at the Tuileries, to inspire her husband with her own heroic spirit; the Duchess of Orleans showed it in front of levelled muskets in the Chamber of Deputies; and, that order is still preserved in our country, is to be ascribed in no small degree to the firm conduct of the sovereign on the throne, and the determination with which she inspired her government to risk everything rather than concede one iota to the revolutionists.

As it was the opposite conduct from this, and the moral weakness of the depositaries of power, which mainly induced the revolutions of 1848, and rendered them so formidable, so those causes which have at length arrested that terrible convulsion seem to have been no other but the moral laws of nature, destined for the correction of wickedness and the coercion of passion, when they have risen to such a pitch as seriously to endanger the existence of society. And, without presuming to scan too deeply the intentions of Providence, or the great system by which evil is brought out of good, and an irresistible power says to the madness of the people, as to the storms of the ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be staid," we may probably discover, humanly speaking, the means by which the evil has been arrested.

The first circumstance which has produced the reaction, and arrested the progress of evil so much more rapidly than was the case in the former great convulsion, is the memory of that convulsion itself. It is no doubt true, that every generation is taught by its own and none by its predecessors' sufferings; but, in the case of the first French Revolution, the suffering was so long-continued and dreadful, that the memory of it descended to the next generation. It was impossible that the sons of the men who had been guillotined, exiled, or mown down by the conscription, who had seen their estates and honours torn from them by the ruthless hand of Revolutionary violence, should not retain a vivid sense of the sufferings they had experienced, and the wrongs they had undergone. All classes, not excluding even those who had been most ardent and active in support of the first Revolution, had writhed alike under the calamities and exactions of the latter years of the war, and the ignominious

conquest in which it had terminated, which was only felt the more keenly from the unparalleled triumphs to which the nation had so long been habituated. Add to this, that the attention of all the intelligent classes of society in Europe generally, and in France in particular, had been long, and to an extent of which in this country we can scarcely form an idea, riveted on the events of the first Revolution. The Reign of Terror was not forgotten; the prophecy of the historian[3] proved true: – "A second French Revolution, of the same character as the former, and the age in which it is to arise must be ignorant of the first." Its heartstirring incidents, its mournful catastrophes, its tragic events, its heroic virtue, its appalling wickedness, its streams of blood, were indelibly engraven on the hearts of a considerable, and that too the most influential, part of the people. The revolutionists, indeed, in every country – the Red Republicans in France, the Chartists in England, the Rebels in Ireland, the Carbonari in Italy, the *Illuminés* in Germany, were perfectly prepared to renew for their own profit the same scenes of spoliation, bloodshed, and massacre. But such extreme characters form, even in the most depraved society, but a small part of the whole inhabitants. It is the delusion or timidity of the great body, not the absolute strength or numbers of the violent party, which is the principal danger. The force of the first Revolution consisted in its novelty; in the enchantment of its visions, the warmth of its professed philanthropy, the magnitude of its promises. But time had dispelled these, as it does many other delusions. The mask had fallen from the spectre which had charmed the world, and the awful form of Death had appeared.

The second circumstance which tended to coerce, more rapidly than could have been hoped for, the progress of the revolution of 1848, was the firmness and loyalty of the soldiers. It is historically known that it was the defection of the troops which brought on, and rendered irresistible the march of the first Revolution: which induced, in rapid succession, the Reign of Terror, the assignats, the conscription, the capture of Paris, the subjugation of the kingdom. But here, too, experience and suffering came to the aid of deluded and wandering humanity. It was seen that what is unjust and dishonourable is *never* expedient: that the violation of their oaths by the sworn defenders of order is not the commencement of the regeneration, but the first step in the decline of society: and that to fear God and honour the king is the only way to insure, not only the preservation of order, but the ultimate ascendancy of freedom. On the foundation of the revolt of the Gardes Françaises in 1789, were successively built the despotism of the Committee of Public Salvation, the blood of Robespierre, the carnage of Napoleon. The awful example was not lost on the next generation. The throne of Charles X. was overthrown by the defection of the troops of the line; but it was again found that the glorious fabric of civil liberty was not to be erected on the basis of treachery and treason. None of the troops revolted on the crisis of February 1848. The Guards and the line were alike steady. Marshal Bugeaud, when he received the command, speedily passed the whole barricades, and in six hours would have extinguished the revolt. The throne was lost not by the defection of the troops, but by the pusillanimity of the princes of the blood; and accordingly, when the next contest occurred – as occur it ever will in such cases – the troops were resolutely led, the revolution was put down under circumstances ten times more formidable, though not without a frightful loss of human life.

We are so accustomed to the loyalty and steadiness of the English army, that the possibility of their wavering never enters into our imagination. But still all must admit that we too, with all our boasted safeguards of popular representation, general information, a free press, and centuries of freedom, stood on the edge of an abyss; and that, not less than Austria or Prussia, our salvation had come to depend chiefly, if not entirely, on the fidelity of the soldiers. If the six thousand men who garrisoned London on the 10th April 1848 had wavered, and one-half of them had joined the insurgents, where would now have been the British constitution? Had a hundred thousand men from Kennington Common crossed Waterloo Bridge, headed by a regiment of the Guards, and three regiments of the line, where would now have been the British liberties? Where would have been all

[3] Alison.

the safeguards formed, all the hopes expressed, all the prophecies hazarded, as to its being perpetual? But in that dread hour, perhaps the most eventful that England ever knew, we were saved by the courage of the Queen, the firmness of the government, the admirable arrangements of the Duke of Wellington, and the universal steadiness and loyalty of our soldiers. We are quite aware of the special constables, and the immense *moral* influence of the noble display which the aristocracy and middle classes of England made on that occasion. But moral influence, often all-powerful in the end, is not alone sufficient at the beginning; physical force is then required to withstand the *first assault* of the enemy: and, highly as we respect the civic force with batons in their hands; and fully as we admit the immense importance of that citizen-demonstration in its ultimate effects, we ascribe our deliverance from the instant peril which threatened, entirely to the steadiness of the British army, and the incomparable arrangements of their chief.

In the Continental states, order succeeded in regaining the ascendency over anarchy entirely in consequence of the fidelity of the soldiers. On that memorable day, when the Prussian army marched into Berlin playing the old airs of *the monarchy*, and formed in a circle around, distant only twenty-five paces from the insurgent host, and there tranquilly loaded their pieces, the opposing forces were directly brought into collision; it was seen that, in a few seconds, law or rebellion would be victorious. Law prevailed, as it generally does where its defenders are steady and resolutely led – and what has been the result? Is it that freedom has been extinguished in Prussia, that liberty has sunk under the pressure of tyrannic power, and that a long period of servitude and degradation is to close the bright meridian of her national splendour? Quite the reverse: anarchy has been extinguished in Prussia only to make room for the fair forms of order and liberty, which cannot exist but side by side; the revolutionists are overawed, but the lovers of real freedom are only the better confirmed in their hopes of the ultimate establishment of a constitutional monarchy, such as Prussia has been sighing for for thirty years. It is ever to be recollected that the prospects of freedom are never so bright as when they are in the inverse ratio to those of revolution; liberty is never so safe as where anarchy is most thoroughly repressed; despotism is never so near at hand as immediately after the greatest triumphs of insurrection.

In Austria a different and more melancholy prospect has been exhibited. That great and noble country has been the victim, not merely of the passions of revolution, but of those of race. It has been torn asunder, not only by the ambition of the revolutionists, and the ardent zeal of a people yet inexperienced in social dissensions sighing after freedom, but by the force and inextinguishable rivalry of different and discordant races. The Lombard has risen up against the German, the Bohemian against the Austrian; the Magyars have buckled on their armour against both, and, animated alike by revolutionary zeal and national jealousy, have striven to obtain what they deem the first of blessings – national independence – by revolting against the government of Austria, in the moment of its utmost need. That strange compound of races and nations, the Austrian monarchy, in which it is hard to say whether the Slave, the Magyar, the Teuton, the Lombard, or the old Roman had the preponderance, and the union of which, for so long a period, had been a subject of astonishment to all observers, at length revealed its inherent weakness. Worse than the war of opinion, the war of races began. Like the Lacedemonian confederacy, after the defeat of Leuctra, or the Athenian after the catastrophe of Aigos Potamos, or the Roman republic after the disaster of Cannæ, the Austrian aggregate of kingdoms threatened to fall to pieces on the dreadful shock of opinion which resulted from the success of the French revolution. The contest of nations did not now intervene, to bar the spread of democratic ideas; the military passions were not arrayed in opposition to the civic. Lamartine was perfectly right in his prognostic: the pacific French revolution of 1848 achieved greater conquests, in three months, than the warlike republic of 1793 had gained in ten years. Prussia was apparently revolutionised; Austria was all but won to the democratic side; Vienna, Prague, and Milan were in the hands of the insurgents. Never, in the darkest periods of the revolutionary war, was Austria in such desperate straits, as when Radetsky retreated behind the Mincio, and the treacherous assault of Charles Albert

was aided by the whole strength of revolutionary Italy, and the tacit support or lukewarm indifference of France and England.

But in that awful hour, by far the most perilous which Austria ever knew, and which threatened with immediate and irrevocable destruction the whole balance of power in Europe, she was saved by the fidelity of her native soldiers, and the incomparable spirit of her German nobility. Then appeared in its highest lustre what is the principle of life and the tenacity of purpose which exist in an aristocratic society, not yet wholly debilitated by the pleasures and the selfishness of a court. Although the Hungarian nobles, for the most part, sided with the Magyar insurgents; although the whole Lombard troops had passed over from the standards of Radetsky to those of Charles Albert, and all the Hungarians in his service sullenly wended their way back to their native places; although Prague was wrested from the crown by the Bohemian insurgents, and Vienna by a vehement urban tumult in the capital; although Hungary was not only lost, but arrayed in fierce hostility against the monarchy – the noble Austrian leaders never lost heart – they realised the dream of the Roman poet —

"Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ."

Windischgratz in Bohemia, Radetsky in Italy, Jellachich in Austria, stood forth as the saviours of the monarchy, and, with it, of the cause of European freedom. Though deserted by their sovereign, who had bent before the revolutionary tempest, they fronted, sometimes, it is believed, in opposition to constrained orders, the dangers with which they were assailed – they acted in conformity with the maxim of a noble people not yet debased by democratic selfishness: Vive le Roi quand-meme! Slowly, but steadily, the forces of order regained their ascendant over the assaults of anarchy. The Tyrol, ever steadfast in its loyalty, first offered an asylum to the emperor, when driven from his capital; Prague was next recovered, and Bohemia coerced by the moral courage and skilful dispositions of Prince Windischgratz; Radetsky, shortly after, reinforced by the loyalty of Austria, regained his ascendant on the Mincio, routed the revolutionary rabble of Italy, and restored Milan to the Imperial government; Vienna, after a desperate conflict, was won by the forces of Order; and Jellachich and Windischgratz enjoyed the proud triumph of having restored his capital to their discrowned sovereign. Hungary, inhabited by a bolder and more numerous race, actuated by stronger passions, held out longest, and was only subdued after a sanguinary conflict, by the aroused vigour and national passions, aided by the support of the Colossus of the North, which has so often sent forth its battalions as the last resource of order and religion, when all but vanquished by the forces of anarchy and infidelity. Yet, though thus constrained, in the last extremity, to call in the aid of the Czar, and array a hundred thousand Muscovites on the plains of Hungary, the stand thus made by the Austrian monarchy is not the less glorious and worthy of eternal remembrance. It demonstrates what so many other passages in the history of that noble people indicate, how great is the strength, and unbounded the resources, of a brave and patriotic nation, even when afflicted by the most terrible disasters; and how uniformly Providence, in the end, lends its protection to a people who have shown themselves worthy of its blessings, by faithfully discharging their duty in a period of disaster. The year 1849 will ever rank with the glories of Maria Theresa, the triumph of Aspern, the devotion of Wagram, as the brightest periods in the long and glorious Austrian annals.

The people of England, ever ready to sympathise with even the name of freedom, and prone beyond any other nation to delusions springing from generous feelings, acting on erroneous information, were at one time much disposed to sympathise with the Hungarian insurgents. They enlisted the wishes of a considerable part, especially of the citizens of towns, on their side. Never were generous and estimable feelings more misapplied. The contest in Hungary, it is to be feared, was not in the slightest degree a struggle for public freedom: it was an effort only to establish the *domination of a race* in opposition to a lawful government. Like the Sikhs or Ameers in India at this moment, the Normans in England in former times, or the "insane plebeian noblesse" of

Poland, whom John Sobieski denounced as the authors of the ruin of his country, the Magyars were a proud and haughty dominant race, not a fourth part of the whole inhabitants of Hungary, but brave and ambitious, and animated with the strongest desire of establishing an independent oligarchy in their wide-spread country. They took the opportunity for asserting their principles when Austria was pierced to the heart, and its provinces, apparently all falling asunder, had the fairest prospect of establishing separate dominions, as in the ancient Roman empire, on the ruins of the Imperial authority. Had they succeeded, they would have established the same monstrous tyranny of a dominant race, which has so long blasted the happiness, and at length destroyed the independence of Poland.

That the contest in Hungary was one for the domination of a race, not the freedom of people, is evident from two circumstances which have been studiously kept out of view by the Liberal party, both on the Continent and in England. The first is that *after* the emperor had conceded to Hungary the most extreme liberal institutions, based on universal suffrage, the Magyar leaders sent private orders to all the Hungarian regiments in Radetsky's army to leave his banners, and return to Hungary; thus rendering to all appearance the dismemberment of the monarchy inevitable, and surrendering the Italian provinces, the brightest jewel in the Imperial crown, to the tender mercies of Charles Albert. The second is, that, in the contest which ensued, the Hungarians were in the end overthrown. Possessing, as Hungary does, fourteen millions of inhabitants – nearly a moiety of the whole Austrian empire, and four times more than Upper and Lower Austria, with the Tyrol, which alone could be relied on in that crisis – it is evident that, if the *whole* Hungarian people had been united, they must have proved victorious, and have decided the contest long before the distant Muscovite battalions could have appeared on the theatre of war. The Hungarian insurrection broke out in April 1848, and was aided by contemporaneous revolts in Prague, Lombardy, Venice, and Vienna. To all appearance the Austrian monarchy was torn in pieces. Muniments of war they had in abundance: Comorn, with its vast arsenal and impregnable walls, opened its arms to receive them. When Georgey capitulated, he had one hundred and thirty-eight guns, besides those in the hands of Kossuth and Bem. Fully half the military stores of Austria fell into the hands of the Hungarians, the moment the insurrection broke out. Yet, with all these advantages, they were overcome. This demonstrates that the war was not a national one, in the proper sense of the word: that is, it did not interest the *whole* people. It was an effort of a gallant and ambitious race, forming a small minority of the population, to establish a domination over the whole remainder of the inhabitants, and sever themselves from the Austrian empire; and a greater calamity than such a separation, both to the Hungarians themselves and the general balance of power in Europe, cannot be imagined.

How was the balance of power to be maintained in Europe, especially against Russia, if the Austrian monarchy had been broken up? Experience had long ago proved that no coalitions for the preservation of the independence of central Europe, either against Russia on the one side or France on the other, had the least chance of success, in which Austria did not take a prominent part. Even the disasters of the Peninsular campaigns, and the awful catastrophe of the Moscow retreat, could not enable Europe to combat Napoleon, till Metternich, at the Congress of Prague, threw the weight of Austria into the scale. It was by an alliance of Austria, France, and England that, at the Congress of Vienna, a curb was put on the ambition of Russia: by a similar alliance that the Turkish empire was saved from ruin, when the Muscovite standards were advanced to Adrianople, and the Pacha of Egypt was encamped on Scutari. It was a coalition of Austria, England, Russia, and Prussia, which in 1834 coerced the ambition of France, when M. Thiers had sent orders to the French admiral to attack and burn the English fleet in the bay of Vourlas, at dead of night. But if Austria had been broken up into a Hungarian, a Lombard, and a Bohemian republic, how was such an alliance to be formed? What central power could, in such an event, have existed under such circumstances, to oppose a mid impediment to the grasping ambition of Russia on the one side, and France on the other? Prussia, it is well known, is entirely under the influence of Russia, and does not, except in the first fervour

of revolution, venture to deviate from the policy which it prescribes. Sweden and Denmark are mere subsidiary states. Austria alone is so strong as to be able, with the aid of England, to bid Russia defiance; and is situated so near to its southern provinces, as to be actuated by a ceaseless dread of its encroachments. The breaking up of the Austrian empire would have been a fatal blow to the balance of power, and with it to real liberty in Europe. It would have left the field open to the Cossacks on the one side, and the Red Republicans on the other.

It is deeply to be regretted that Austria was not able to regain its dominion over its rebellious Hungarian subjects, without the aid of the Muscovite arms. Although the Czar has recalled his troops after the vast service was rendered, and no projects of immediate aggrandisement are apparent, yet it is impossible to doubt – it is fruitless to attempt to disguise – that the influence of Russia in the east of Europe has been immensely extended by this intervention. So weighty an obligation as saving an empire from dismemberment is too great to be easily forgotten; and supposing, what is probably the case, that gratitude is a feeling unknown to cabinets – and that the recollection of salvation from ruin is likely to produce no other sentiment but that of dislike – still the contest, which was adjourned, rather than decided, on the Hungarian plains, has for a very long period, it is to be feared, thrown Austria into the arms of Russia. They are united by the common bond of enduring interest. The Magyars in Hungary, the Poles in Sarmatia, are the enemies of both; and each feels that it is by a close alliance of the cabinets, that the evident dangers of an insurrection of these powerful and warlike races can be provided against. It is more than probable that a secret treaty, offensive and defensive, already unites the two powers; that the crushing of the Magyars was bought by the condition, that the extension of Muscovite influence in Turkey was to be connived at; and that the Czar will one day advance to Constantinople without fear, because he knows that his right flank is secure on the side of Austria. Certain it is, that the *joint* demand made by Austria and Russia, for the extradition of the Hungarian refugees, and which, as all unwarrantable stretch against the independence of Turkey, was resisted with so much spirit and wisdom by England and France, looks very like the first-fruits of such an alliance. And observe, now, the immediate effects on the balance of power of the revolution of 1848. This invasion of the independence of Turkey was made by Russia and Austria in concert, and was only resisted by France and England! Woful, indeed, for the interests of real freedom, has been the result of those convulsions which have ended in transplanting Austria from its natural position, and have converted the jealous opponent of Muscovite power into its obsequious ally. Nothing could have effected such a metamorphosis, but the terrible convulsion which almost tore out the entrails of the Austrian empire. But that is ever the case with revolutionists. Blinded by the passions with which they are actuated, they rush headlong on their own destruction; and destroy, in their insane ambition, the very bulwarks by which alone durable freedom is to be secured in their own or any other country.

It is commonly thought in this country that the war in Hungary was a contest for national independence, and that it bears a close analogy to the memorable conflicts by which, in former times, the independence of Scotland was maintained, or the liberties of England purchased. There never was a more unfounded opinion. *After* the Hungarian insurrection had taken place, indeed, and when the Austrian empire had been wellnigh torn to pieces in the shock, Hungary was formally incorporated with Austria, just as the grand-duchy of Warsaw was with Russia after the sanguinary revolt of 1831, and Ireland with England after the rebellion of 1798. But *anterior* to the revolution, what step had the cabinet of Vienna taken which was hostile to the independence of Hungary? Not one. The constitution which the Austrian government had given to the Hungarians, if it erred at all, did so on the liberal side: for it conceded to a people, scarcely emerged from barbarism, a constitution founded on universal suffrage, such as England, with its centuries of freedom, could not withstand for three months. It was the Hungarian insurgents who are responsible for the loss of their national independence; because they first put it in issue by joining Lombardy and the revolutionists of Prague and Vienna, in their assault upon the Imperial government, at a time when nothing whatever had been done which menaced their separate existence. The truth is, they thought, as many others did, that the Austrian empire was

breaking up, and that now was the time to become a separate power. Having voluntarily, and without a cause, committed high treason, they cannot complain with reason, if in a mitigated form they incur its penalties by forfeiting their national existence.

The ultimate suppression of the revolt in Hungary has been attended with a most distressing amount of bloodshed on the scaffold, and the occurrence of several mournful scenes, in which courage and fidelity have asserted their wonted superiority, in the supreme hour, over all the storms of fate. God forbid that we should either justify or approve of such severity, or deprive the heroic Hungarian leaders of the well-earned praise which some of them deserve, for their noble constancy in misfortune! But while fully admitting this on the one hand, we must, in justice to the Austrian government on the other, recall to recollection the circumstances in which they were placed at the close of the contest, the dangers they had undergone, and the dreadful devastation which the Hungarian war had brought upon their country. When Georgey capitulated and Comorn surrendered, Austria was wellnigh exhausted by the conflict: she had owed her salvation in part at least to foreign intervention. She had been forced to proclaim her weakness in the face of Europe, and to bring down the hated Muscovite battalions into the heart of the empire. In judging of the course which her rulers, when victorious, pursued, we must in justice recall to mind the perils they had escaped, and the humiliations to which they had been reduced. We must recollect also the state of civilisation which Hungary has attained, and go back, in imagination, to what we ourselves did in a similar stage of national progress. Hungary is hardly more advanced in civilisation than England was during the Wars of the Roses, when the prisoners on both sides were put to death without mercy, and eighty princes of the blood or nobles were massacred in cold blood; or than Scotland was when the Covenanters murdered all the Irish in Montrose's army, with their wives and children. What did the English government do at Carlisle after the advance of the Pretender to Derby, or in Ireland after the rebellion of 1798? What has she recently done in the Ionian islands, after the insurrection in Cephalonia? Nay, would we have been less rigorous than the Austrians, even at this time, if we had been reduced to similar extremities? It is very easy to be lenient after an insurrection which has been extinguished in a cabbage garden, and rendered the insurgents ridiculous in the eyes of all the world; but what should we have done, and how would we have felt, if Smith O'Brien at the head of the Irish rebels had invaded England, taken London, nourished for a year and a half a frightful civil war in the heart of the empire, and compelled us to call in the legions of France into the midland counties to save the nation from ruin? We do not mean, by these observations, to justify the executions of Haynau and the other Imperial generals: God knows, we deplore them as much as any one can do, and yield to none in admiration of the heroism of the Hungarian leaders, who have shown themselves so worthy of the noble nation to which they belong. But we extenuate, if we cannot justify, the severity of the Austrians, by the recollection of their sufferings; and reserve the weight of our indignation for those insane and selfish demagogues who, for their own elevation, lighted so terrible a conflagration, and caused so much noble blood to be shed, alike on the part of those who fanned and those who sought to extinguish the flames.

The third circumstance which seems to have mainly tended to stop the progress of revolution in Europe, has been the great amount of *interests* in France which could not fail to be injured, either by foreign warfare or domestic Socialist triumph. This is mainly owing to France having already undergone fusion in the revolutionary crucible. Scarcely anything remains to melt, but the dross which had flowed out of the first furnace. The great estates and church lands were divided; two-thirds were cut off from the national debt. Nobody remained to despoil but the *tiers état* and revolutionary proprietors. They stood shoulder to shoulder in defence of their all, which they saw was seriously menaced; and thence the stoppage of the revolution at Paris, and the rapid retrograde movement of opinion on the subject, in the majority, over all France. Foreign war was not less an object of apprehension than internal spoliation. The peasants recollected the conscription and the Cossacks, and the weighty contributions of the Allies; the bourgeois dreaded the cessation of foreign travelling in their country, and the termination of the prolific shower of English gold. It was a general terror

that the best interests of society were in danger which produced the determined resistance to the insurgents in Paris on the 23d of June, and formed the majority of four millions who elected Prince Louis Napoleon to the president's chair. Beyond all doubt, the greater part of the electors, when they recorded their suffrages for him, understood they were really voting for an emperor, and opposing the barrier of force to the revolution.

This circumstance suggests a very important consideration, on which it well becomes the people of this country to ponder, in reasoning from the example of France to themselves. It is not unusual now to hear the opinion advanced, that the result of universal suffrage in France proves that the apprehensions entertained on this subject, on this side of the Channel, are unfounded; and that, in truth, there is no such effectual barrier against revolution as universal, or, at least, a very low suffrage. America is frequently referred to, also, in confirmation of the same opinion. But under what circumstances has universal suffrage been forced to uphold property in these two countries? Recollect that both are overspread with a host of small proprietors: in France no less than 6,000,000 persons, for the most part in very indigent circumstances, being holders of land; and in America, the whole soil, from its having been so recently reclaimed from the forest, and the law of equal succession, *ab intestato*, being in the hands of the actual cultivators. But can any opinion be formed from this as to what would be the effect of a change in the electoral law, which created 6,000,000 of voters in a country where there are not 300,000 holders of land, and not above an equal number of proprietors in the funds? It is evident that we can never argue from a country which *has been revolutionised*, and where property *has been divided*, to one where neither of these events has taken place. Doubtless the robber will make a fight before he allows his prey to be torn from him; and when there are six millions of persons, for the most part possessed of the fruits of robbery, the rendering these back will not be very easily effected. But if we would see the effect of an extended suffrage, in a country which has not been revolutionised, and where the strong curb-chain of individual interest does not exist to restrain the majority, we have only to look to what the electors of France in 1793 did with the estates of the church and the nobility; to what the American freeholders did in 1837, when they destroyed five-sixths commercial wealth of the country, by raising the cry "Bank, or no Bank: " or what the British ten-pounders have done with the other classes of society, and, eventually, though they did not intend it, with themselves, by their measures of free trade and a restricted currency. Beyond all doubt, *these* measures would at once be repealed by an extended constituency; but are we sure they would stop there? What security have we they would not apply the sponge to the National Debt, confiscate the church property, and openly, or by a graduated assessment on land, divide the estates of the nobility?

But perhaps the most powerful agent, which has been at work, in stopping the progress of revolution in Europe, has been the public and private Insolvency which in an abandoned state of society inevitably and rapidly follows such convulsions. This is the great check upon the government and the madness of the people. That France, ever since the revolution of February 1848, has been in a state of almost hopeless monetary embarrassment, is well known to all the world. In fact, nothing but the most consummate prudence, and the adoption of the wisest measures on the part of the Bank of France, has saved them from a general public and private bankruptcy. What those measures were, will immediately be explained. In the mean time, to show the magnitude of the difficulties against which they had to make head, it is sufficient to observe, that in twenty-one months the Revolutionary Government has incurred a floating debt of £22,000,000; and that the deficiency for the year 1849, wholly unprovided for – and which must be made good by Exchequer bills, or other temporary expedients – is no less than *eleven millions and a half sterling*. It is not surprising it should have swelled to this enormous amount; for the very first demand of revolutionists, when they have proved victorious, is to diminish the public burdens and increase the public expenditure. And they did this so effectually in France, that in one year after the revolution of 1848, they had increased the public expenditure by 162,000,000 francs, or about £6,500,000; while they had caused the public revenue to fall by 248,000,000 francs, or nearly £10,000,000!

The dreadful prostration of industry which such a state of the public revenue implies, would have proved altogether fatal to France, had it not been rescued from the abyss by the surpassing wisdom with which, in that crisis, the measures of the Bank of France were conducted. But the conduct of that establishment, at that trying crisis, proved that they had taken a lesson from the archives of history. Carefully shunning the profuse and exorbitant issue of paper which, under the name of assignats, effected so dreadful a destruction of property in France in the first revolution, they imitated the cautious and prudent policy by which Mr Pitt surmounted the crisis of 1797, and brought the nation triumphant through the whole dangers of the war. They obtained an act from the legislature authorising the issue, not of £600,000,000 sterling of notes, as in 1793 and 1794, but of 400,000,000 francs, or £16,000,000 sterling, not convertible into gold and silver. This, and this alone, it was that brought France through the crisis of the Revolution. Specie, before this aid was obtained, was fast disappearing from circulation; the Bank of France had suspended cash payments; three of the principal banks in Paris had become bankrupt; the payment of all bills was suspended by act of government – for this plain reason, that no debtor could find cash to discharge his engagements. But this wise measure gave the French people that most inestimable of all blessings in a political and monetary crisis – a currency which, without being redundant, is sufficient, and, being not convertible into the precious metals, neither augments the strain on them, nor is liable to be swept away by foreign export. In consequence of this seasonable advance, the crisis was surmounted, though not without most acute general suffering; and industry, since a government comparatively stable was established, in the person of Prince Louis Napoleon, has revived to a surprising degree over the whole country. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the general misery which prevailed in France, desolated by a revolution, but sustained by a moderate inconvertible paper currency, was greater than was felt in the manufacturing cities of Great Britain, saved by the firmness of government and the good sense of the nation from a political convulsion, but withering under the fetters of a contracted currency, and unrestricted admission of foreign produce.[4]

One thing is perfectly apparent from the result of the revolution in Italy, that the establishment of either civil liberty or political independence is hopeless in that beautiful peninsula. The total and easy rout of the Piedmontese and Tuscan forces by Radetsky is a proof of this. Venice was defended by its Lagunæ – Rome not by the descendants of the ancient masters of the world, but by the revolutionary mercenaries of Poland, Hungary, and Germany, whom the Austrian victories drove back from the banks of the Po to those of the Tiber. On the other hand, the example of Naples, where the firmness of the king has preserved in the end his dominions entire, though Sicily for a time was severed from the kingdom, and Naples itself was the theatre of a bloody convulsion, proves alike of what flimsy materials revolution is composed in the south of Europe, and through what a perilous crisis a nation can be safely conducted, when the depositaries of power are not unworthy of the elevated duties with which they are entrusted.

Still more important is the lesson read to the world by the attempted revolution in England and Ireland. That Great Britain was threatened with the convulsions, in the throes of which France and Germany were labouring, is universally known. The Chartists openly declared that monarchy could not stand two months in England or Scotland; the Repealers were counting the hours till the Saxon was expelled from the Emerald Isle, and a Hibernian republic proclaimed in Dublin, in close alliance with the great parent democracy in Paris. Where are these boasters now? The English revolutionists were

[4] In Paris, after the Revolution in April and May, it was stated there were 300,000 persons out of employment, including the dependants of those without work. This number was, doubtless, fearfully great out of a population of 1,200,000 souls. But it was exceeded in some parts of Great Britain. In April 1848, the number of unemployed persons in and around Glasgow was so excessive, that an examination of them was made, by order of the magistrates of that city, with a view to an application to government for assistance. The men out of work were found, in that city and its vicinity, to be 31,000, which, allowing two and a half dependants to each male, implies 93,000 persons destitute of employment, out of a population at that time estimated at 360,000; being somewhat more than 300,000 out of 1,200,000 in Paris.

morally slaughtered in London on the 10th April: the Irish rebels were blown into the air by the fire of the police in the cabbage garden. They have been more than vanquished; they have been rendered ridiculous. In despair, they are now leaving in crowds their wo-stricken isle; and it is to be hoped a better race, more industrious habits, and a more tractable people, will gradually be introduced into the deserts which Celtic improvidence and folly has made. It is a glorious spectacle to see an attempted revolution which broke out in both islands suppressed almost without the effusion of blood; and England, the first-born of freedom in modern times, reasserting, in its advanced period of existence, at once the order and moderation which are the glorious inheritance of genuine Liberty.

Would that we could say that our foreign policy during the two last eventful years has been as worthy of praise, as the conduct of our government in combating our internal enemies has been. But here the meed of our approbation must fail. Contrary alike to our obvious interests and to our real and long-established principles, we have apparently been guided by no other principle but that of fomenting revolution, after the example of France, in every country which the contagion had reached. We all but severed Sicily from Naples, and openly assisted the Sicilian insurgents with arms and ammunition. We once stopped, for "humanity's sake," the Neapolitan expedition from sailing to combat the rebels: we more than once interposed in favour of Charles Albert and the Piedmontese revolutionists: we have alienated Austria, it is to be feared, beyond redemption, by our strange and tortuous policy in regard to the Hungarian insurrection: we, without disguise, countenanced the revolutionary Germans in their attack upon the Danes. What object Ministers had in that, or how they thought the interests of England, a great commercial and exporting nation, were to be forwarded by throwing its whole customers into confusion and misery, we cannot divine. Apparently, their sympathy with revolution anywhere but at home, was so strong, that they could not abstain from supporting it all around them, though to the infinite detriment of their own people. And it is a most curious circumstance, that, while the Chancellor of the Exchequer constantly told us – no doubt with a certain degree of truth – that the failure of our exports, and the general distress of the country, was, in a great degree, to be ascribed to the European revolutions, the whole policy of the Foreign Office, during the same period, was directed to countenance and support these very revolutions.

But from the painful contemplation of the follies and aberrations of man, let us turn, with thankfulness, to the contemplation of the great moral lessons which the events of the two last years teach us as to the wisdom and beneficence of Nature. It is now clear beyond the possibility of doubt, that the wisdom of Providence has provided barriers against the passions, vices, and follies of men; and that if the leaders in thought and station fail in their duty, an invisible bulwark against the progress of anarchy is provided in the general misery which is the consequence of their excesses. Pre-eminent above all others in the history of mankind, THE YEAR OF REACTION, immediately succeeding THE YEAR OF REVOLUTIONS, is fraught with the demonstration of these great and consoling moral and religious truths. From it the patriot will derive consolation and hope, amidst the darkest periods which may yet be in store for the human race: for never was a darker period than that through which we have passed; and from its checkered scenes the virtuous and upright will draw the conclusion that there are limits to human wickedness even in this scene of trial; and that the safest, not less than the most honourable course, for all classes, from the throne to the cottage, in periods of danger, is to be found in the fearless discharge of DUTY.

MY PENINSULAR MEDAL

BY AN OLD PENINSULAR

PART III. – CHAPTER VII

Next morning, shortly after daybreak, we were all hurried out of our berths by Joey, to come on deck, and take a first view of the coast of Spain. We made the land to the north-east of Cape Villano, and were not a little struck with the bare, black, scowling aspect of that mountainous and iron-bound coast. Off Oporto we stood in, with the design of entering the river. But a signal from the shore announced the bar impassable, and we had nothing before us but the delightful prospect of standing off and on, till the weather permitted us to land the bags. Gingham, I observed, stood anxiously peering with his telescope in the direction of the bar, where the sea, for miles, was foam and fury. "Well," said I at last, "are you looking for a cork in that yeast?" – "I am," replied Gingham, "and there it is. See, they have passed the bar. We shall soon have them alongside."

I saw nothing, but at length was able to discern in the distance a small speck, which was executing most extraordinary vagaries in the midst of the surf. Now it was high, now low; now visible, now lost. Its approach was indicated, not so much by any perceptible change of position, as by an increase of apparent magnitude. Gingham now handed me the glass, and I saw a large boat, full of men, pulling towards us like Tritons. At length they reached the ship. Smart fellows those Oporto boatmen – know how to handle those clumsy-looking, enormous boats of theirs. What a scene was that alongside! The wind high; the sea rough; the boat banging against the ship's side; the men in her all talking together. Talking? Say jabbering, shouting, screaming. I was in perfect despair. Where was my Portuguese? Hadn't I studied it at Trinity College, Cambridge? Couldn't I make out a page of my Portuguese Gil Blas? Hadn't I got a Portuguese grammar and dictionary in my trunk? And hadn't I got a nice little volume of Portuguese dialogues in my pocket? Yet not one word could I understand of what those fellows in the boat were bawling about. Their idiom was provincial, their pronunciation Spanish. That I didn't know. It seemed to me, at the time, that all my toil had been wasted. Never despair, man. If you want to learn a language, and can't learn it in the country, why, learn it at home. You may, you probably will, feel at a loss, when you first get among the natives. But, after two or three days, all will begin to come right: your ear, untutored hitherto, will begin to do its part; then your stores of previously acquired knowledge will all come into use, and you may jabber away to your heart's content. But mind, whatever the language you learn – Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, or High Dutch – go to work in a scholarlike, businesslike manner; learn the verbs, study the syntax, master all the technicalities, or you are doing no good. Doubtless, in your travels abroad, you will fall in with lively old English residents, who "speak the language as fluently as a native," and tell you it's all nonsense, *they* never looked into a grammar, nor into a book neither. But never mind that; follow your own plan. Speak the language whenever you can – that of course; hear it spoken; dine at the table d'hôte – that's worth a five shilling lesson at any time, and you get your dinner extra; but, all the while, read daily, work your grammar, turn out the words in your dictionary, and mark the result. You, after a space, can not only speak the language, but *write* it; whereas those intelligent individuals, let alone writing, can't *read* it. Another suggestion, which I – but where are we? What are we talking about? While I am boring you with suggestions, the despatches have been handed into the boat; the boat has shoved off, and is making for the shore – plunging, ramping, tearing through the surf under a press of sail: and, on the deck of the Princess Wilhelmina gun-brig, stand three new and very rum-

looking passengers – a Spaniard, a Portuguese, and a nondescript – one deal box, one old leathern portmanteau, one canvass bag, two umbrellas (blue,) one ditto (red,) and a high-crowned Spanish hat, tied up in a faded cotton pocket-handkerchief.

Our new companions were all a little "indisposed" the first day; but, the weather moderating in the night, they grew better the next, and were able to take their places at the dinner table. The Spaniard had come on board, assuming that he was to victual himself, or pay extra. Under this impression, opening his box in the forenoon, he produced with much gravity a bundle, consisting of half-a-dozen oranges, some very coarse brown bread, a flask of wine, and a chump of splendid garlick sausage, all tied up together, in a second cotton pocket-handkerchief. Spreading said handkerchief on the cabin table as a cloth, he next brought out from his pocket a formidable cheese-toaster, and was preparing to do battle with the prog. The Major, perceiving his mistake, addressed him in Spanish, politely explaining that the passage-money covered everything, and that he could call for whatever the ship afforded. The Hidalgo, thus advised, and courteously thanking the Major, contented himself with an orange, carefully tied up the remaining provender as before, and restored it to the sky-blue deal box.

This act of the Major's, benignant reader, piqued my curiosity. The Major was a very good fellow, as you have doubtless discovered ere this; but he was not a man to do anything without a *motive*. I couldn't feel easy, without getting to the bottom of it.

"Very kind of you, Major," said I, "to give the Don that information respecting his rights *in transitu*."

"Kind?" said the Major indignantly; "what do you mean by kind? Had he once attacked that sausage, we should have smelt garlic all the way to Lisbon." I now appreciated the Major's urbanity.

"Close fellows, those Spaniards," added the Major. "I knew very well he wouldn't give me part of his sausage. Didn't go for it."

"Why, if you had shared the feast," said I, "we should have smelt garlic twice as bad."

"Yes," replied the Major "but *I* shouldn't have smelt it *at all*."

Said hidalgo was a tall, kiln-dried attomy of a man – hair black and lanky – forehead high and corrugated – eyebrows pencilled and elevated – eyes almost closed by the dropping of the eyelids – nose long, thin, and very inexpressive – mouth diminutive – chin sharp – cheek-bones high and enormously prominent – cheeks hollow and cadaverous, regular excavations; half one of his oranges, stuck in each, would about have brought them to a level with his face. Of course he was dubbed Don Quixotte. The Portuguese came on board with his hair dressed as a wig, enormous white choker, no neck (that's why I called him Punch,) *chapeau de bras*, short black cock-tail coat, white silk waistcoat flowered green and gold, black satin unmentionables, black silk stockings, and top-boots – the tops a sort of red japan. As to the third visitor, no one could assert who he was, or what he was. He obtained a passage without any document from the Oporto authorities, on the plea that he was a courier, and carried despatches from Oporto to Lisbon. This, the Colonel remarked, was rather odd, as the bag generally went by land. One said he was a Spaniard; another said he was a Jew. Gingham pronounced him a Frenchman: – but what could a Frenchman be doing there? The one index of his identity was a nose, which forthwith won him the name of 'Hookey.' Hookey spoke French, Spanish, Portuguese, lots besides – disclaimed English – yet seemed always listening while we talked. He was constantly smiling, too; the habit had given him a deep semicircular maxillary furrow – say trench if you will – on each side of his ugly mug. There was something in his smile that I didn't like. If he saw you looking at him, he put on a smile.

At dinner the Colonel, anxious to do the honours, took an early opportunity of challenging Don Quixotte to a glass of wine. The Don filled a bumper; the Colonel nodded: the Don, with majestic and silent gravity, rose slowly from his seat, his glass in one hand, the other on his heart; bowed profoundly to each of the company in succession; tossed off the wine; melo-dramatically extended the empty glass at arm's length; bowed again; sighed; squeezed his hand very hard upon his heart, and sat down. The Major challenged Punch, who half filled his tumbler, sipped, filled up with water,

sipped again, nodded then, not before, as if he would say "Now it will do," and drank off the whole. Captain Gabion challenged Hookey, who, alone of the three, performed correctly. "Hookey, my boy," thought I, "where did you learn that?"

Neither Punch nor Don Quixotte manifested the least disposition to amalgamate with us. They kept themselves apart, replied civilly when addressed – that was all. I must say, speaking from my own observations, it is a slander which describes the English abroad as exclusive. The exclusiveness, so far as I have seen, lies much more with the Continentals.

But if, on the present occasion, the Spaniard and the Portuguese kept their distance, it certainly was far otherwise with my friend Hookey. I take the liberty of calling him my friend, because I was particularly honoured by his attentions. I have already said that he seemed interested in our conversation. The interest extended to everything about us. He inquired respecting each and every one; his name, his rank, his department, his destination: asked me, in an off-hand way, if I could guess how many troops the British general had – what was to be the plan of the ensuing campaign – did our Government intend to carry on the war with vigour? When, by inquiring elsewhere, he discovered that I was attached to the military chest, he redoubled his attentions, and eke his interrogatories. Had I bullion on board? How much? Should I convey treasure from Lisbon to headquarters? On bullock-cars or on mules? By what route? Of course I should have a guard – did I know? Travelling up the country would be dangerous as the army advanced into Spain – wouldn't it advance? – when? – he knew every part of the Peninsula – was himself bound for headquarters after delivering his despatches – would be happy to go with me – wouldn't mind waiting a day or two in Lisbon – would assist me in obtaining a servant – a horse – a mule – anything. I, communicative as he was inquisitive, lavished information in floods; advised him as to the amount of bullion on board, to go down into the hold, and see with his own eyes; informed him, as a particular secret, that I shouldn't wonder if I was sent to headquarters, unless it happened otherwise; and hadn't the least doubt that I should have the conveyance of whatever amount of treasure was placed under my charge for that purpose; declined saying anything then about a servant, horse, or mule, as I should probably find "Milord Vilinton" had thought of me, and had everything of that kind ready against my arrival; begged to tell him I was a person of great importance, but maintaining the strictest incognito – hoped he wouldn't mention it. Presently he stole away to the forecastle, where I got a sight of him. He was jotting down like mad.

On the evening of our second day from Oporto, we made the Berlings; been six weeks at sea, from leaving the Tagus. If, instead of coasting it, which secured them a foul wind, they had struck out at once, from the mouth of the river, two or three days' sail into the Atlantic, they would probably have got the wind they wanted. That is what Captain Nil did, when I came home, passenger from Lisbon, 1843, in his clever little fruit-ship, the King Alfred. Didn't we give the go-by to the northerly current which blows down the coast, and catch a south-wester, which was just what we needed? Didn't we jockey two other orangemen, that started in company, and thought to beat us by working up along shore? And didn't we bring our prime oranges first to market, and sell them off-hand at London Bridge, with an extra profit of ten shillings a chest?

The morning after we passed the Berlings, we saw the Rock of Lisbon. This, I suppose, is about the most striking object the mariner beholds, in approaching any coast in the known world. Not more than fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, it stands so dark in tint, so grim in aspect, so ragged in outline, you fancy some fresh earthquake has heaved it up, crude and pinnacled, from the volcanic bowels of the soil, and there left it to frown above the waves that thunder at its base, and spout up in unavailing froth and fume. "There it stands," said Gingham, "the old Rock! Often have I rounded it before; often have I viewed it; often have I ranged it: worthy the attention of the naturalist; still more of the geologist; but, above all, of the meteorologist: the Promontory of the Moon; yes, the advanced guard of mountain ridges, that condense the invisible vapours of the ocean; the medium and thoroughfare of electric communication between Europe and the Atlantic! See how the thin air of the tropics becomes mist, when it reaches those thunder-splintered pinnacles – hem! *Lady of the*

Lake. See how it caps them with a perpetual cloud, which, though perpetual, is constantly diminished by the moisture which it discharges, and constantly replenished by fresh supplies of vapour from the sea. Here, the wind is north: but there, in that elevated region, the upper current is blowing steadily from the south-west. Take my advice, Mr Y – . Don't leave Lisbon without visiting the Rock. Go to Cintra. Inquire for Madam Dacey's hotel; and don't allow her to charge you more than two dollars a-day, wine included, spirits and bottled porter extra."

> The hill where fond Diana looked and loved,
> While chaste Endymion slept and dreamed of heaven:

Gingham now drew out his telescope. "Ah!" said he, "there's Colares; and there's Cintra, just at the base of the Penha. There goes a donkey party, on a visit to the Cork Convent. My respects to the old Capuchins. There's Madam Dacey herself, fat and rosy as ever, scolding Francisco the cook for spoiling that omelet. How are you, old lady? – Villain! He's making a *pâté* with one hand, and taking snuff with the other! Don't roast that hare, blockhead; it's dry enough already. Make it into soup. That's the way to serve a Cintra hare. Clap a thin slice of bacon on the breast of each of those red partridges, before you put them down. What, boil that gurnet? Bake it, bake it, stupid! Serve it up cold for supper: beats lobster, and should be dressed the same way – oil, cayenne, vinegar, and a modicum of salt. I say, Francisco; mind you send up the soup hot. What an extraordinary fact, Mr Y – ! You may get good soups, and all the materials for good dinners, go where you will; but our own countrymen are the only people in the world who know how a dinner should be served up, and set on table. Why, sir, at those hotels at Lisbon and Cintra, I've tasted most splendid soups, magnificent! – but, positively, sent to table lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – tepid, sir! what do you think of that?"

I was thinking, just at that moment, that I should like to hear more about Cintra. But Gingham had now got on the subject of *la cuisine*; *la cuisine* was one of his hobbies (he kept a *stud*) – and, once mounted, there was no getting him off. Yet Gingham, much as he delighted in dinner-giving, was not himself a gourmand. In him the passion was disinterested – a matter of taste – a sentiment. And ah! need I add how it enhanced the value of his friendship?

About noon we crossed the bar; by two P.M. were off Lisbon, and, while I was all agape, admiring the surpassing beauties of the scene, had dropped our anchor. Captain Gabion took me by the elbow, and proposed that we should sojourn at the same hotel. The motive transpired that afternoon. Gingham had his own quarters, in the Rua d'Alecrim. We all landed together at the Yellow House, where our luggage underwent an examination – in those days a very off-hand business, the English, in fact, being in military occupation of the country. My traps were despatched among the first; and I sat waiting for the Captain, whose turn came later. Meanwhile Hookey's bag was opened, and the contents turned out. Among them I expected to see a letterbox; but there was nothing that looked like despatches. While Hookey was engaged with his bag, he was joined by a shabby-genteel personage, who had the look of a military man in plain clothes – an Englishman, or, I rather thought, an Irishman. They recognised each other at once, and seemed to meet by appointment – left the office arm in arm, the new-comer carrying Hookey's bag. They passed without observing me, as I sat in the background near the door, among bags and boxes. *Both* were speaking *English*: *i. e.*, Hookey, English as it is spoken by Frenchmen; his companion, English as it ought to be spoken, the pure vernacular of the Sister Isle. "Kim, kim away wid ye, now; isn't it aal krikt and wrigler?" – "Oh, yase; now I sal comb vid you, presently." "Aha! Mister Hookey; so you don't understand English," thought I. Not to be an eavesdropper, I started up, and put out my paw, in tender of a parting shake. Hookey, a little taken aback, clasped it fervently in both his; and, repudiating disguise, laughed, and spoke English again, grasping and shaking my fist with intense cordiality. I suppose it was his surprise, that made him substitute greeting for leave-taking: "Ah, how you do, sare? I hope you varraval."

Gingham took a kind but rather distant leave. The Captain and I adjourned with our luggage, which was first cleverly laid together and packed, and then borne, swinging by ropes from two bars,

which rested on the shoulders of four stout Gallegos, who walked two and two, hugging each other round the neck, and stepping together in admirable time. The Captain indicated the road; and we soon reached our domicile, MacDermot's Hotel (as it was then called), Rua do Prior, Buenos Ayres, – for air and prospect, the finest situation in all Lisbon; and that is not saying a little.

I was for ordering dinner forthwith. The Captain, for reasons best known to himself, wished an hour's delay. Reluctantly acceding, I retired to my private apartment, and commenced operations in the soap and dowlas line. Presently the Captain tapped at my door, and entered. Wanted me just to walk down with him to the water's side – wanted me particularly. Away we went. The Captain spoke little – seemed to have some project. At length he opened: "I rather think the skipper will catch a precious good hiding presently; serve him right." All this was Greek to me, though I had heard something of the skipper's bad conduct to the Major.

We now, having descended by a side street as steep as a ladder, entered the main road, or broadway, which runs by the water's side. Who should meet us there, but the Major? He was evidently on the look-out for us, and joined forthwith. "Has the boat left the brig yet?" said Captain Gabion.

"Not yet, I think," said the Major; "I saw her alongside, though. Come down to the water's edge. That's the place."

We descended, through a passage between stone walls. Captain Gabion now addressed me a second time: "Mr Y – , I have already undertaken to officiate as the Major's friend. You must pick up the skipper."

"Well, but what's it all about?" said I. "Hadn't any idea of your intention. You never told me."

"No time for explanation now," said the Captain. "Will you officiate, or will you not?"

"Always ready to do the needful when the case requires," said I. "But, if the Major feels himself aggrieved, is there no other redress? Won't it be *infra dig.*?"

"The fact is," said the Major, "I don't intend to give him a *heavy* licking – only just to polish him off a bit. As to redress, if I lodged a complaint, it must come ultimately before our own authorities. Now Englishmen abroad, when ill-treated, are always ignored or deserted by their government. I've seen that often. That rascal would get off scot-free; and the very fact of my having applied would be remembered to my disadvantage, and perhaps would injure me in my profession. If I was a Frenchman or a Yankee travelling abroad, and had been oppressed or ill-treated, I would apply to my government. But as I am an Englishman, what would be the use?"

"Well," said I, "the skipper's conduct on board was very bad, I admit; to you, I've heard, particularly. But it's all over now. Come, let him off this time."

"Very well," said the Major. "In a fortnight he sails for England – takes home a ship-load of British officers, sick, wounded, invalided. If he ill treats such fine fellows as you and me, and goes unpunished, how will he treat them, do you think? I'll tell you what. All I fear is, after he has got a few taps, he'll go down; then there'll be no getting him up again, and he'll escape with only half his deserts. Now that's just what I want you to prevent."

"Well," said I; "if I am to officiate as the skipper's friend, of course I must do him justice. I only tell you that."

"Very well," said the Major, between his teeth. "You pick him up; that's all."

We reached the high bank by the water's edge, just above the landing-place. A boat was seen approaching from the Princess Wilhelmina: four men pulling, skipper steering. Captain Gabion addressed the Major:

"I'll tell you what; it won't do here. First, there isn't room. Secondly – don't you see? – when he gets more than he likes, he has nothing to do but to roll down the bank, jump into the boat, and shove off. Thirdly, the boat's crew might interfere; and then we should get the worst of it."

Meanwhile the boat reached the jetty; the skipper landed; ascended the bank by a zigzag path with Snowball at his heels; passed without noticing us, as we stood among other lookers on; and walked up the passage. The Major followed him. Captain Gabion and I followed the Major.

Just as the skipper was emerging from the passage into the street, the Major stepped smartly after him, and tapped him on the shoulder, exclaiming, "Take that, you ruffian." *That* was a sharp application of the toe.

Like a caged lizard touched in the tail, the skipper sprang fiercely round.

"What's that for?" he cried, with a furious look.

"Ah, what's that for?" replied the Major, administering a stinging soufflet.

The skipper, calm in an instant, and savage in cold blood, commenced peeling. I stepped up to him, received his jacket, and handed it to the nigger, thereby installing myself in office. The Major turned up the cuffs of his coat-sleeves.

"Now, coolly, my man," said I, as the skipper went in like a mad bull.

The first three rounds, like the Three Graces, had a mutual resemblance. Superior to the Major in weight and strength – formidable, too, as a hitter – the skipper did not succeed in planting a single effective blow. Some were stopped, some were dodged, some fell short, and one or two hit short. Still worse for the skipper, he had no idea of guard. His antagonist, a first-rate *artiste*, went on gradually painting his portrait. At the end of the third round, "his mammy wouldn't a' knowed him." The Major, in striking, did not throw in his weight, merely hit from the shoulder and elbow. But his punishing told: he hit with a snap; he hit fast; he had the faculty of rapidly hitting twice with the same hand. In short, the skipper was evidently getting the worst of it. All this time, the Major continued perfectly cool and fresh; and, like Shelton, the navigator – whom I remember well, though you, perhaps, do not – as often as he stopped a hit, he politely inclined his head, as much as to say, "Well intended – try again." At the close of the third round, however, in consequence of the skipper's attempting a rush, the Major was constrained to put in a really hard blow as a stopper. It not only answered that purpose, but nearly lifted the skipper, and sent him reeling some paces backwards.

Instead of coming, as before, to my extended arms, and seating himself, like a good child, on my knee till time was up, the skipper now staggered towards Snowball, and began rummaging in his jacket. I was too quick for him. Just as he extracted an enormous clasp-knife, I whipped it out of his hand, and passed it to Captain Gabion. On this demonstration, supposing that "legitimate war" was at an end, and my "occupation gone," I was quietly walking away, with my hands in my pockets. But the Captain, having first communicated with the Major, met and stopped me, saying, "Come, we overlook that. The next round."

The fourth round presented no novelty. The painting went on; I may say, this time, was pretty well finished. Never was an ugly monkey more completely "beautified" than the poor skipper. He still had his strength and wind, and there was as yet no reason why he should not ultimately win – especially as he hit out like the kick of a horse, and one of his blows, if it told, might have turned the day. I began, however, to be apprehensive that he would soon be put *hors de combat*, by losing the use of his peepers. When, therefore, I sent him in the fifth time, I whispered, "You must try to close, or you'll have the worst of it."

Suddenly rushing in, giving his head, and boring on with his right arm extended, the skipper, at the commencement of the fifth round, contrived to get his left about the Major's waist. This led to a grapple, and a short but fierce struggle. The skipper had the advantage in physical power; but the Major was his superior in wrestling, as well as in the nobler science. They fell together, the Major uppermost. On the ground, strength resuming its advantage, the skipper soon rolled the Major over, and had the ascendency. Supposing the round concluded, I was going to pull him off. "Let alone, let alone," said the Major; "leave him to me." The Major, I presumed, was waiting an opportunity for a "hoist."

The skipper now, with his right arm extended, held the Major's extended left, pinned down by the wrist. The skipper's left arm and shoulder were passed under the Major's right, so as completely to put it out of commission. With his left hand, the skipper seemed to be pulling the Major's hair. All this was so completely *hors des règles*, that nothing but the Major's veto kept us from interposing.

At this juncture of the combat there was evidently something out of the usual course, which particularly interested the nigger. Stooping down almost to a squat, his face peering close over the heads of the two combatants, his big eyes bulging and gloating with eager expectation, his mouth open, his blubber lips projecting, and his two hands uplifted and expanded with intense curiosity, he watched the result. Just in time, I grasped the skipper's thumb! Half a second more, and the Major's eye would have been out of its socket!

Captain Gabion, breathing the only execration I ever heard from his lips, choked the skipper off.

The Portuguese bystanders, though much interested in the fray, had not been thoroughly sensible of its character. To them, probably, the fight had looked as if a man, in perfect possession of his temper, had been merely playing with a very savage assailant, so clean and easy was the Major's style of punishing. But now, when they walked up, and looked in the miserable sufferer's face, they perceived the serious nature of the castigo administered. Instead of features they beheld – a mask, I was going to say, but that would be incorrect; for in most masks, you have eyes, nose, and mouth. Here, distinctness was obliterated; and as to eyes, why, you couldn't see the eyelashes. I handed the skipper to Snowball, advising he should be taken on board, and seen to. Snowball walked of, conducting him down the passage. I thought of the knife, procured it from the Captain, ran, and handed it to the nigger. "Tell him," said I, "never to use that again, except for cheese-toasting, picking his teeth, and so forth." "Yes, massa; me tell him you say so." "I say, Snowball," added I, "hadn't you better put a little oil on his face, to keep off the mosquitos? If they get at him as he is now, they'll drive him mad." "Ah no, massa," said Blackey, regretfully; "no muskitto here, dis tree, five week; dis place too cold, mosh very. Let alone, no muskitto on de wottah here, nebber at no time."

I hurried back, and found Captain Gabion supporting the Major, who stood with both hands spread out over his right eye, and, to all appearance, suffering intense agony. Blood was visible between his fingers, and on his cheek. The Captain, solicitous to ascertain the amount of injury, made a gentle attempt to withdraw the Major's hands.

"Don't! don't!" gasped the Major. "Has he – got my eye – in his pocket?"

"All right, all right," replied the Captain; "you have still a spare eye to wink with. Near thing, though."

"To-night I meant to have slept at Villa Franca," said the Major, still speaking as if his agony was extreme. "My man is waiting just by with the horses, at the *chafriz*."

"Nonsense, nonsense!" said Captain Gabion; "to-night you must sleep at our quarters. Pledget is there, and will look at your eye. Mr Y – , there's the *chafriz*; that stone fountain, where you see the open space."

I stepped in that direction, and found an English servant, holding two horses. The Major had intended to "polish off" the skipper, mount forthwith, and away for Sacavem at a hand-gallop. So he might; only that the skipper, according to his own ideas of manly combat, having got his opponent undermost, and secured a grip of the Major's love-lock with his four fingers, had hooked his thumb-nail, and eke a portion of his thumb, in the – but enough. I brought up the man and horses, and with some difficulty we got the Major to the hotel.

Pledget was there, examined the eye, did not consider the injury serious, but deferred giving any decided opinion. Ordered the Major to bed, and prescribed leeches: wanted to apply a poultice, but the patient couldn't bear the pressure. For a few days he remained a prisoner. After that, I met him in the streets with a green shade – eye doing well. Next spring, saw him on duty. No damage was then visible, save and except a small scar at the inner corner of the eye.

How soon, or how slowly, the skipper recovered from his polishing I never learned. The skipper, it appears, a year or two before the American war broke out, had put into the Tagus in a vessel from New Orleans, damaged. She was detained for repairs; and he, not liking an idle life, had procured employment in a Falmouth ship. After the war commenced, he chose to continue in the packet line. The exact nature of his offence, offered to the Major, I never ascertained. But it was

something connected with the pumping of bilge-water, when the Major was suffering from sea-sickness, prostrate on the deck. Some years after, I heard of the skipper again. He had left Falmouth, and had obtained the command of a packet running between Southampton and the coast of France. He still had a bad name for insulting and ill-treating his passengers; and, what is curious, he again received a polishing from an English officer, at Dieppe. On this occasion, if I mistake not, the operator was an officer of the engineers. Whether said officer came out of the *mêlée* a Cyclops – the little dog forgot to mention.

CHAPTER VIII

The morning after our landing from the packet, I sought out, and with some difficulty discovered, my uncle's office; where I was very cordially received by both uncles, and very politely by the other gentlemen of the department. I announced myself prepared to start forthwith for headquarters; fully expecting to be off that night, or next day at latest. Uncle No. 1 told me I must go home with him to dinner, and see my aunt and cousins. Uncle No. 2 advised me to look out for a billet.

All this sounded ominous. The sympathising reader is already advised, that my progress from Lisbon to headquarters was not quite so expeditious as I had anticipated. The cause of the delay was this.

My dear mother, as I have already related, had overruled all objections to my joining the Peninsular army; and through her influence, my honoured father gave his reluctant consent. Shortly after, he was ordered to sea: his ship left the Downs; and he did not return, till after my departure from England. As the time of my departure drew nigh, my dear mother, left to her own cogitations, began to view the subject in a very different light. In short, she was perfectly frightened at her own act; and, when it came to the last, wrote off, without my knowledge, a letter to my uncle No. 2, entreating him by all means to detain me at Lisbon, not for the world to send me up the country – in short, to keep me far beyond the sound, let alone the range, of hostile cannon. Her letter, posted at Deal the very day I started thence for London, came out to Lisbon by the same conveyance with myself; and was doubtless in my uncle's hands, when I presented myself at the office. Many years after, in looking over some old correspondence, I found a letter of hers to my father at sea, revealing the whole plot.

Next morning, I again presented myself, still expecting to receive my orders, and be off slick to headquarters. Uncle No. 2 was there; hoped I had not been *much* tormented with bugs and fleas; pointed out a desk with a high seat; and informed me – that was my place!

The scene, which would have instantly appalled the whole department, had I given expression to my feelings, was happily prevented by one reflection, which struck me just in time; viz., that I was now an *employé*, bound to obedience by military law, and that Nunky was my commanding officer.

I sulkily took my seat; and Nunky left me for a few minutes, to the pleasing process of mental digestion. Presently, he stood by my side with a huge bundle of papers: – laid the papers on my desk.

"A fortnight," said he, "will probably elapse ere you can proceed to headquarters. I wish, in the mean time, you would just see what you can do, in arranging these convalescent accounts. We could not spare a hand for them, and they have got sadly into arrear. Do try what you can make of them."

I went to work; – worked hard for a fortnight. At the end of that time, with occasional directions from my uncle, the confused mass of accounts was reduced to something like order. Still nothing was said about my journey to headquarters. Fresh work was given me, which took another week. I began to get regularly savage – was rapidly turning misanthrope – sympathised with George Barnwell. Nunky requested my company in a private room.

"You came out," said he, "expecting to go up the country."

"Yes; and on that understanding I applied for the appointment, as I expressed in my letter from England. On that understanding too, unless I mistook the reply, my services were accepted."

"Well, G – ," said he, "I put it to yourself. The fact is, those plaguy convalescent accounts have given us more trouble than all the business of the office besides. Till you came out, we never have had a clerk that could do them. You do them excellently. Of course, you are well aware the public service is the first thing. The long and the short of it is, you perform this duty so much to our satisfaction, your uncle J – and I have come to the determination – we must keep you with us at Lisbon."

This, my dear madam, with the exception of being crossed in love – and to that, you know, we all are liable – was my first serious disappointment in life. Baulked in my schemes of military glory – for already, in imagination, I was a gentleman volunteer, had mounted a breach, and won a

commission – I had now but one remedy; to resign my clerkship, and return forthwith to England. And this, under other circumstances, I should doubtless have done. But the case, as I then viewed it, stood thus. Here were my two dear uncles, with enormous responsibility – that of dispensing and accounting for the whole ready-money transactions of the Peninsular army; here was one miserable branch of accounts, which gave them more trouble than all the rest; and here was I, the only lad that could tackle it. Though that, by the bye, was just so much soft solder; for there were at least a dozen gentlemen, in our department, who could have made up and kept the convalescent books quite as well as myself, and probably far better.

Well; bad luck to the shilling. There was no remedy; so I settled to my work; devoting my leisure hours, as a safety-valve, to the furious study of Portuguese and Spanish. This blew off my wrath, and in after years proved of good service.

But I rather suspect, gentle reader, you're a bloody-minded fellow, and want to get away without further bother from Lisbon to the seat of war, among shot and shells, grape, canister and congreves. So, cutting it short, I shall just tell you how, at last, I out-generalled my dear uncle, and broke from bondage. After that, if you've no objection, we'll be off at once to join the army.

Please to bear in mind, then, that I was utterly unconscious of any wish that I should remain at Lisbon, on the part of my honoured parents, or either of them. Had I been aware, I would have acquiesced. My position, according to the view which I now took of it, was this. My parents had acceded to my scheme of joining the army: my uncles had brought me out upon that understanding, and upon no other: and yet, on my arrival, instead of forwarding me up the country, had, for no earthly reason that I could discover, detained me at Lisbon, to discharge a duty which, it was now perfectly clear, might quite as well have been committed to other hands. This, I say, being my actual view of the case, you will not think it strange, that I deemed it perfectly fair to employ all lawful means for my own enlargement and emancipation.

An opportunity presented itself, in the early part of 1814. The Allied army was now in the Pyrenees and south of France. Convoys of specie had been, from time to time, despatched to headquarters; and were always accompanied by a clerk or conductor of our department, who went in charge. While headquarters remained in Portugal, or were not far advanced into Spain, this duty was considered an agreeable change, and was rather sought than shunned. But, as the distance lengthened, the departmental view of the subject became different. The journey was now tedious, and began to be deemed unsafe. Reports occasionally reached us of British officers ill treated, robbed, or murdered on the road, by our brave Spanish allies. Our conductors, who were for the most part natives, began to be very subject to the fever of the country. Whenever their turn came to take the charge of treasure to headquarters, they were sure to have it. Well; how could they help that? You see, it was an *intermittent* fever. In this condition of affairs, another large amount of specie was counted out, packed, and all ready for remittance: and – no conductor being forthcoming – one of my fellow-clerks received directions to make the usual preparations for attending it to headquarters. Obeyed, as a matter of course; but didn't like it at all. Communicated to me his secret sorrows – was really far from strong – would much prefer remaining at Lisbon. My determination was taken: I volunteer, as his substitute. Proposed my plan, to which he assented with hilarity.

Still, there, was need of management. Had I spoken to Nunky in private, I knew full well I should be foiled. Combining persuasion with authority, he would discourage the scheme, and I should have no course but acquiescence. So, waiting till office-hours, I took my usual place, expecting his appearance in the great room, where half-a-dozen of us were seated together at our desks.

His step was heard in the passage. Half-a-dozen tongues ceased to wag, and half-a-dozen pens went hard to work, while half-a-dozen noses came into close contiguity to half-a-dozen official documents. Nunky entered, took his seat, and commenced the perusal of a pile of letters. I stood beside him.

"Well, G – ?"

"I believe, sir, Mr N – has received instructions to prepare for a journey to headquarters. Not being in very good health, he would be glad, with your permission, to remain at Lisbon. I therefore beg leave to offer myself as his substitute."

Nunky gave me a look: – saw at once that he was beat. In private, he might have urged his objections: but, before the whole office, he could not appear to dissuade me from taking my turn at a duty, now considered anything but agreeable. No course, then, remained for him, but to signify his consent. "Oh, very well," said he, "if that's the way you've settled it between yourselves. Of course, *I* can have no objection. Get the usual advance, then; draw your allowance for a mule; and have all ready for starting the day after to-morrow."

Exchanging winks with my fellow-subs, right and left, I returned triumphant to my seat. Nunky remained a few minutes at his desk, evidently in a little bit of a fidget. How could I tell that, do you think, when I sat with my back to him? Oh, I suppose you never were a clerk in a public office. Else you wouldn't require to be informed, that office-clerks have eyes in the back of their heads. When the governor is present, his actions, each and all, are seen and chronicled by every subordinate in the room. And a great relief it is, let me tell you, to the tedium of public business, to recount, criticise, and dramatise them, the moment he's off. Nunky took up a letter, and began to read it – laid it down unread – took up another – rose from his seat – sat down again – put on his hat – and bolted.

Dicky Gossip – a Portuguese clerk commonly so called – rushed forthwith to the front office, and returned with equal rapidity. "Ah, Mister Y – , you is doane. You no sall go up to de coantree deece toim. Your oankle I vos see him git into him coashe. Ah, him, gallop down de treet, faster as four mules can carry him. Ah, Mister Y – , I sall tell you vot!"

In the course of the afternoon, I received a message to attend my uncle in another apartment. He met me with a look of triumph, which, I feared, boded no good.

"Well, G – ," said he, "I wish you had mentioned that business this morning in private. Then, you know, we would have talked it over together. As, however, you chose to tender your services in the public room, of course I was forced to view the thing officially, and there's no remedy for it. You have volunteered for headquarters, and to headquarters you must go."

"Oh, thank you, sir! thank you. That's just what I always wished."

"Just what you always wished? Of course I know that, as well as you can tell me, Mr G – . Happy to say, though, I have effected one arrangement, which will make matters far safer, and more agreeable too."

"I fear, sir, if you send me off without the treasure, you will have some difficulty – "

"No, no, G – ; you and the treasure will go together; that of course. But the fact is, I've been thinking those Spanish fellows behave so ill, I'm hardly justified in forwarding so large an amount of specie by land, all the way from Lisbon to the Pyrenees. In short, since you spoke to me this morning, I have been on board the flag-ship – seen the admiral. You and the treasure go to Passages in a frigate. Beautiful vessel – passed under her stern in coming ashore."

Alas, my object, then, was only half effected! I was to join the army, but not to travel through Spain. Nunky saw my chagrin and chuckled.

"Come, come, Mr G – ," said he, "you beat me this morning; now I've beat you. So make up your mind to a voyage by his Majesty's frigate the M – . Be quick with your arrangements, for she's prepared to sail at a moment's warning. We shall ship the treasure instanter. So everything is ready, when you are."

The next day, at noon, I stood on the deck of the M – , a silent and admiring spectator of a grand, peristrephic panorama, as we glided down the Tagus under easy sail.

CHAPTER IX

No occurrence worthy of record signalised our voyage from Lisbon to Passages. As you are a member of the Yacht Club, though, and passionately fond of romantic scenery, follow my advice, and treat yourself, some fine week in the summer, to a run along the north coast of Spain – say from Cape Finisterre to the mouth of the Bidassoa. By the bye, hadn't you better reverse it? An awkward thing you'd find it, to catch an on-shore wind at the head of the Bay of Biscay. What would become of you – ah, and what would become of that clever little craft of yours, the Water Wagtail, with her dandified rig, and her enormous breadth of beam, and her six pretty little brass popguns as bright as candlesticks, should a stiff north-wester surprise you on that horrid coast? Won't it be better, then, to secure some safe roadstead – the Gironde for instance – make that your starting-point; choose your weather; and, coasting along the shores of Biscay and Asturias, have the pleasure of feeling that you are running out of the Bay, and not running into it?

That I leave to you. But depend upon it, if you visit that coast, you will see not merely rocks, not merely mountains, not merely wild scenery; but scenery so peculiar in character, that you will not easily find the like. Such was the scenery which, on a fine day towards the beginning of March, 1814, I viewed one morning early, standing by the side of the Hon. Mr Beckenham, third lieutenant of the M – . Mr B., having the morning watch, and thinking it dull alone, had persuaded me to turn out, long, long before breakfast; – as he said the night before, "to view that magnificent coast at daybreak;" but, as he obligingly informed me when I came on deck, "that he might enjoy the pleasure of my agreeable society."

The scene, at a first glance, rather disappointed my expectations. "Stupendous ridge of mountains those Santillanos, though," said Mr B.; "equal, I should think, to the Pyrenees themselves – of which, in fact, they are a continuation, though some maps of Spain don't show it."

The view, as I viewed it, had a threefold character. *First*, there was the coast itself; a black line, occasionally diversified with specks of white; this line a ledge of rocks, extending along shore as far as the eye could reach, both east and west. The ocean-swell, incessantly rolling in, though the morning was still, thundered on this eternal sea-wall: and the surf, of which, at our distance, the eye distinguished nothing but those white specks, visible from time to time, presented, when viewed with a glass, every conceivable variety and vagary of breaking waves: the foam now rushing up some sloping shelf, like troops storming a breach; now arched sublime in a graceful curve, that descended in a smoking deluge of spray; now shooting vertically to a columnar height, as though the breaker had first dashed downwards into some dark abyss, and then, reverberated, flew sky-high in a pillar of froth. Beyond this line of rocks, appeared, *secondly*, a ridge of low hills, presenting nothing very remarkable, either in aspect or in outline. And beyond these again, further up the country, appeared, *thirdly*, a very respectable and loftier range – mountains, if you're a Lincolnshire man, and choose to call them so.

"So, this is your ridge of mountains," said I. "Stupendous? I don't call twelve or fourteen hundred feet stupendous, anyhow. And I'm inclined to think you might look down on most of them, at that altitude."

"You don't see them," said he. "You are looking at the coast range. Do you perceive nothing beyond?"

"Nothing but a few light clouds," said I, "in the sickly blue of the morning sky."

"Well, look at them," replied Mr. B. "View those clouds attentively. Watch whether they change their shape, as clouds usually do, when seen near the horizon."

I watched, but there was no visible change. The clouds were fixtures! Sure enough, those faint, pale streaks above the hills, that gleamed like aerial patches of silver vapour, were no other than

the lofty summits of the distant Santillanos, capped with snow, and touched by the beam of early morning. It was worth a turnout, any day.

Well, at length we reached Passages. Night had closed in, before we dropped our anchor off the harbour's mouth. The captain dreaded the very disaster to which I have already alluded, that of being caught by an on-shore wind in that ugly corner. It was settled, therefore, that a boat should be sent at once to announce our arrival, and the treasure landed next morning early, in order that the frigate might be off with the least delay possible.

Next morning early, then, the treasure – dollars packed in boxes, one thousand dollars in a bag, two bags in a box – was brought up from the hold, and stowed in three boats alongside. Making my best bow to the captain, and tendering both to him and to his staff, my sincere and grateful acknowledgments for all the polite attentions, &c., I stepped over the side, and seated myself in the boat destined for my conveyance. In the largest boat, which also contained the largest portion of the treasure, sat the Hon. Mr Beckenham; in the next was a middy; in my own, which was the smallest, were only about half-a-dozen boxes, and four sailors to pull ashore. Mr B. requested me to steer. We pulled for the mouth of the harbour, which was distinguishable, at the distance of a mile, by an abrupt and narrow cleft, dividing two lofty hills; and by a line of foam, which extended right across the entrance, without any visible opening.

Three boats leaving the ship in company, there was a race of course. Mine was astern, having been brought close alongside for my accommodation, and so getting the last start. The race was commenced by middy, who, by the rules of the service, ought to have kept astern of Mr B., and therefore tried to get ahead of him. My men, seeing the contest, began pulling like mad; and, though outnumbered by the crew of the other boats, yet ours being light, and the weather moderate, soon overtook and passed them. We pulled away, maintaining the lead, till a dull roar, like continued thunder, reminded us that we were just upon the bar. There it was, right ahead, crossing our course, not a hundred yards distant, and no passage perceptible; the sea, elsewhere, comparatively tranquil, there swelling and raging, like a mild-tempered man in a passion; the breakers curling, flouncing, tumbling one over the other, rolling in opposite directions, tilting as they crossed, and flying up with the force of the shock. How were we to pass? or by what dodge to give the go-by? My men, excited by the race, would have led at that moment into Charybdis. Still they pulled, onward, onward, to all appearance right upon the reef. The difficulty was solved, like many other difficulties, just when we got into the thick of it. The reef, single in appearance, was in reality double; that is to say, it consisted of two ledges, one ledge overlapping the other: so that, just at the instant when three strokes more of the oars would have taken us into the midst of the tumblification, a narrow opening, with comparatively smooth water, appeared at our left; a turn of the rudder brought us cleverly round into that friendly channel, and the next moment we floated on the tranquil surface of the outer harbour. The luff-tackle and the reefer, as if they had let me go ahead only to see how a landsman could turn a corner, now seemed disposed to renew the race. Raising a shout, which rang from hill to hill in the cleft of that narrow roadstead, their crews gave way again with redoubled ardour. But, having gained the precedence outside, we easily kept it in smooth water, and led in, with a sweep, through the larger harbour to the town. There, as we coasted along, I noticed a little jetty; and on it, in the full uniform of our department, a little man, who was anxiously watching our approach. I laid my boat alongside, jumped ashore, and received a hearty welcome from Mr Deputy-Paymaster-General Q – , whom I had previously known at Lisbon, and who was now in charge of the military chest at Passages. Another individual whom I had met at Lisbon, a gentleman holding office in a department attached to the army – suppose, for want of a better name, we call him "My Friend" – stepped up at the same time, as if he had come by accident, was amazingly glad to see me, took my hand, and greeted me with many smiles – begged I wouldn't think of troubling myself about a billet – his quarters were quite roomy enough for two. Had I a mule? Shouldn't be able to get one in all Passages. Must have something. He would sell me a pony cheap.

A working party was at hand, to convey the boxes of specie from the jetty to the office, which was established hard by, for the convenience of landing remittances that came by sea. A guard was now set, and the sailors turned to, handing the boxes smartly out of the boats, and ranging them on *terra firma*; the shore party began conveying them from the jetty into the office. The Hon. Mr Beckenham was in a dreadful fuss to get back to the frigate. "The skipper wants to be off while the wind is fair, and the men haven't breakfasted," – nor had he. Up came my commanding officer just at the moment, and hoped Mr B. and the middy would favour us with their company to breakfast, as soon as the boxes were stowed.

Mr B. glanced circularly at the horizon, looked at the clouds, looked at the flags in the harbour, looked at the clouds again. "Don't think there's any sign of a change of wind at present," said he. "Blows very steady from the south, sir," said the middy. The boxes were housed; they suffered themselves to be persuaded, and walked with us into the office. "My friend" also received an invite, and came in company.

The men in the boats were supplied with bread, butter, and cheese; some enormous Spanish sausages, by way of a relish, delicious Spanish onions, as mild as an apple, and a handsome allowance of brilliant draught cider. By all means ship a barrel, if you touch at Passages in the Water Wagtail. Mr Q – conducted us to his private apartment, where we found a substantial breakfast awaiting us. I walked into the balcony, which looked towards the water; took a view of the men in the boats. All had their knives out, each sat in an attitude of his own, the cider evidently gave general satisfaction, the prog was rapidly disappearing, and the subject of conversation was twofold – the race, already accomplished, from the frigate to the jetty; and the race, soon to come off, from the jetty to the frigate. "My friend" stood at my elbow, saw me laughing at Jack, laughed himself – laughed heartily. "When will you come and look at the pony?" said he. Mr Q – summoned us to breakfast.

Breakfast over, the lieutenant and his aide-de-camp took their leave. I went to look after my baggage, of which "my friend" had taken charge in the hurry of landing, promising to see it stowed with the treasure, where it would be under a guard. There was the guard, and there was the treasure; but there, was not my baggage. Found him – demanded an explanation. "Why, to tell the truth, the working party being there, he had embraced the opportunity, and had sent off my things at once to his own billet. We might as well go there at once. Could look at the pony by the way." Just as we started, my commanding officer called after me, "Mr Y – , I shall want you to give me a few particulars respecting the treasure. You may as well do so before going out. Then you may consider yourself at liberty for the rest of the day." I accompanied him into a small room, on the door of which was wafered "Private." "My friend" waited outside, in the street.

"Did you send any message to that gentleman last night," said Mr Q – , "when the boat came ashore from the frigate?"

"None whatever, sir. I didn't even know he was at Passages."

"Wasn't he aware that you were coming from Lisbon?"

"I don't see how he could be, sir. For it wasn't mentioned there till the day before I sailed; and of course no intelligence could have come in that time by land."

"Then he didn't meet you this morning by appointment?"

"Certainly not, sir. The meeting was quite casual."

"Casual? He was waiting about here for an hour before you landed; running into the office, out of the office, poking his nose into every corner – couldn't think what he wanted. Oh, I suppose he must have fallen in with the second lieutenant yesterday evening. That's how he heard of you, no doubt. Old cronies, I suppose."

"Not at all, sir. We met twice at Lisbon. That's all that I ever saw of him, till this morning."

"Indeed! Well, he seems very attentive. Does he appear to have any object? What was he saying to you in the balcony?"

"Said something about a pony he wants to sell. That was all, sir."

"Oh!" said Mr Q – . The "oh" came out something like a groan a yard long, first forte, then minuendo, with the forefinger applied laterally to the apex of the nose, and one eye sapiently half-closed. "Ay, ay; I see. That's what he's after, no doubt; he wants you to buy Sancho. Well, perhaps you can't do better. I know the pony well. Doubt whether you'll find anything else to suit you in all Passages. A mule, indeed, would answer your purpose better; but the price of mules is enormous. Have you drawn your allowance for a horse?" "No, sir. As I came by water, and dollars are cumbersome, I thought it best to defer that till I reached Passages."

"Oh, very well; it's all right, then. Mr Y – , I feel it my duty to say this to you; let me know before you close the bargain. Till then, the eighty dollars are as well in my hands as in yours. Horses will soon be dog-cheap. Few to be had in Spain for love or money; lots, though, in France. Once at headquarters, you may mount yourself *ad libitum*; and the pony will do well enough to carry you up. Well, Mr Y – , with regard to quarters, the town is so full, I was thinking we must try and accommodate you here. But as Mr what's-his-name has made the offer, I feel it my duty to say this to you – you had better accept it."

"Will you look at the invoice of the treasure, now, sir? Or shall I bring it to-morrow?"

"Show it me now. Any gold?"

"All silver, sir; dollars, half-dollars, and quarters."

"What's this? Eight bags of a thousand, halves; twelve bags, quarters; five bags, small mixed. Why, it will take us an age to count it all."

"My fingers were sore with counting, before I left Lisbon, sir."

"Yes; and they must be sore again, before you leave Passages. Glad to find you have had practice, though. Shouldn't mind the dollars: a middling hand, you know, can count his thirty thousand a-day; but that small mixed takes no end of time. Well, Mr Y – , I feel it my duty to say this to you – hold yourself in readiness to start for headquarters, in charge of treasure, this day week at latest. If I can get you off a day or two earlier, all the better. But the money must be counted; the boxes must be looked to and repaired. And then the mules – why, you'll want sixty at least. Let me see. Nearer eighty, unless I can take part of the silver, and give you doubloons. Well, I'll see old Capsicum in the course of the morning, and ascertain what mules he can let me have. Be here to-morrow at ten, and then I shall be able to tell you more about it."

Delighted to hear once more the name of Capsicum, and doubting whether to call on him, or wait till we met, I was leaving the room to rejoin "my friend" in the street, when Mr Q – called me back.

"Of course, you know, Mr Y – ," said he, "I have no wish to interfere with a fair bargain. Make your own agreement for the pony. I have nothing to say against the party who wishes to sell, and would be the last man to disparage a gentleman attached to any department of the British army. Only I feel it my duty to say this to you – keep your weather-eye open. Good morning."

"My friend" and I walked off together to the stable. His Portuguese servant, Antonio, was in attendance, led out the pony, walked him, trotted him, led him in again. The pony, I thought, was a respectable pony enough; not in bad condition, neither; rather small, though, for a rider six feet high. His legs, supple, well-turned, and slender, were decidedly Spanish. But the barrel, round, bulging, and disproportionably large; the hum-drum, steady, *business-like* pace; the tail, long, thick, and coarse the drooping neck, the great hairy ears, the heavy head, the lifeless eye, and the dull, unmeaning cast of countenance, betokened rather a Gallic origin. I declined giving an immediate answer as to purchasing. "My friend," with a laugh, said I was quite right; and we walked off together to his billet. "Very dull place, this Passages," said he. "Shall be happy to go with you across the harbour, and show you the market. By the bye, of course, before you leave, you'll take a view of St Sebastian. There stands the poor old town, all knocked to smash, just as it remained after the siege. If you wish to form a conception of the tremendous effect of cannon-balls, ride over by all means. You may get there in less than half-an-hour, upon the pony."

We now reached "my friend's" quarters, which consisted of one long, narrow room, with a couple of windows at the end nearest the street, and a couple of alcoves at the other, each alcove containing a very humble bed. As to the windows, you are not to understand by the term window, bless your heart, anything in the shape of glass, sashes, or window-frame; but simply a stone opening in the stone wall, with nothing to keep out the wind and rain, but a pair of old clumsy shutters, which were far from shutting hermetically. The whole furniture of the apartment consisted of a ship's stove, borrowed from one of the transports in the harbour; a door laid on two trestles, to serve as a table; and, on each side of the said table, a bench. Yet often, when the troops were engaged in active service, such accommodations as ours would have been deemed a luxury; and many a wrangle arose for far worse quarters. I noticed that the trestles and benches, which consisted of rough deal, hastily knocked together, looked new. This "my friend" explained, by informing me that the captain of the transport had lent him his carpenter. Having seen to my baggage, which was all right, and ascertained that we had four hours to dinner, I took the first opportunity of cutting my stick, having inwardly formed my determination to be off at once on foot, and take a view of St Sebastian. Six or seven months had now elapsed since St Sebastian was stormed and taken by the British and Portuguese forces.

Less than an hour's walk brought me to the scene of that fierce, and, for a period, doubtful conflict. The road was closed up by hills, which afforded no opportunity for a prospect; and not a soul did I meet in the whole distance. All at once I came in sight of the battered and demolished fortress. Imagine a town knocked to pieces. Imagine this town suddenly presenting itself to your view. The road unexpectedly opened upon a sandy plain, on which rose a few eminences, called the Chofres, that had afforded a position for some of the breaching batteries of the besiegers; at the extremity of this plain ran the river Urumea, discharging itself into the sea; and on an isthmus, beyond the river, stood St Sebastian. It stood like a city in the desert. All was solitude and desolation. The town, though it had contained many thousand inhabitants, at this moment afforded no visible indication of human residence. It was not forsaken; yet nothing could I discover of the tokens which usually indicate life and activity as we approach the abodes of men – on the road, neither vehicles, nor cattle, nor human beings. I was alone, and the city was solitary. No; here, at my feet, upon the sandy plain, was a memorial, at least, of man and of his doings. A rise in the level had been washed down at its edge by the rains of winter; and, projecting from the crumbling bank, appeared the bleached and ghastly remains of a human being; doubtless one out of the multitudes who, having fallen in the siege, had been consigned to a shallow and hasty grave. I will not deny that the sight arrested my steps. Remember, it was the first victim of war I had ever looked upon. Nay, more; it invested the whole panorama with a new character. I stood, as it were, surveying a vast cemetery, the soil now concealing in its bosom the multitudes who, not long before, had drenched its surface with their blood. Entering the town, I did indeed see before me, as "my friend" had said, "the tremendous effect of cannon-balls." Yet that was not the whole: destruction appeared in a threefold aspect. The batteries had knocked houses and defences into rubbish and dust; the mines had torn up the works from their foundations; and a general conflagration had ravaged the whole town. The scene was sombre and oppressive. War had now advanced his pavilion into other lands; but here had left in charge two vast and hideous sentinels – Desolation and Silence! I passed through some of the principal streets, in which the fallen stones had been piled on each side, to make a thoroughfare; and walked along the ramparts, where some of the dead were still visible, partially covered by fragments of the ruined masonry. No living creature did I encounter, save one, a miserable object, a soldier in the Spanish uniform, apparently an invalid, recovering from wounds or sickness. On my approaching him, he appeared unwilling to speak or be spoken to. Nor is it difficult to explain why a Spaniard, meeting an Englishman on the walls of St Sebastian, should feel little disposed for conversation. And so I visited the place, inspected the fortifications, and returned to Passages, without exchanging a word with any one.

"My friend," in honour of my arrival, had invited a brace of dinner-guests: one, like myself, a clerk of the military chest, the other a young hospital mate. Our dinner was excellent; Irish stew, a

Passages hare, and an enormous omelet, all cooked by Antonio; capital draught cider; with the cheese, two bottles of English porter as a particular treat; and Andalusian wine *ad libitum*.

I must here say a word on the subject of Irish stew. A standing dish at headquarters was that Irish stew. Amongst the followers of the army were a number of youths, Spanish and Portuguese, principally the latter, age from sixteen to twenty, happy, on the small consideration of a few dollars per month, to enter the service of any Senhor Inglez who would hire them. Most of the clerks attached to headquarters had a servant of this description; and as each clerk was entitled to draw double rations, the arrangement was convenient. It was the chief business of this servant, to discharge the two very congenial duties of groom and cook; and no one was eligible to the office who could not make Irish stew. "Well, Pedro, what's for dinner to-day?" – The answer was invariable, "Oirish-too." The ration beef – it was generally beef – was popped into a saucepan with anything else that came to hand – bread, onions, leeks, potatoes if you could get them, and just enough water to cover the whole; – then stewed. Whatever the ingredients, still it was "Oirish-too." Now – perhaps the idea never struck you – the true difference between English and foreign cookery is just this: in preparing butcher's meat for the table, the aim of foreign cookery is to make it tender, of English, to make it hard. And both systems equally effect their object, in spite of difficulties on each side. The butcher's meat, which you buy abroad, is tough, coarse-grained, and stringy; yet foreign cookery sends this meat to table tender. The butcher's meat which you buy in England is tender enough when it comes home; but domestic cookery sends it up hard. Don't tell me the hardness is in the meat itself. Nothing of the kind: it's altogether an achievement of the English *cuisine*. I appeal to a leg of mutton, I appeal to a beef-steak, as they usually come to table; the beef half-broiled, the mutton half-roasted. Judge for yourself. The underdone portion of each is tender; the portion that's dressed is hard. Argal, the hardness is due to the dressing, not to the meat: it is a triumph of domestic cookery. – Q.E.D. Well; if time was short – say, a meal to be prepared on coming in from a march, the rations not issued till three hours after, and Pedro ordered to "make haste, and get dinner *depressa*," – why, then, to appease the wolf in your stomach, the Irish stew was ready in no time – boiled like fury – dished up in half an hour. In that case, you got it in the genuine English style – done in a hurry: the broth watery and thin, the potatoes bullets, and the *bouilli* shrunk, indurated, screwed up into tough elasticity, by the sudden application of a strong heat, and the potent effect of hard boiling. Engage a "good plain cook" – tell her to boil a neck of mutton – that will show you what I mean. All London necks of mutton come to table crescents – regularly curled. But if, on the contrary, you were in quarters, or the troops halted a day, then you got your Irish stew after the foreign fashion. Breakfast cleared away, your horse is brought to the door, that you may ride a few miles forwards, and take a view of the operations, or ogle Soult through a telescope. Pedro then commences his culinary operations forthwith. The beef – and what-not besides – is whipped into the saucepan; the saucepan is set among the embers upon the hearth: and there it stands – not boiling – scarcely simmering – suppose we say digesting – throughout the forenoon, and till you are ready to eat. Long before dinner, savoury steams announce a normal process of the *cuisine*, a process both leisurely and effectual. At length, crowned with laurels, and, like all heroes, hungry after fighting, you return from the skirmish in front, having barely escaped a stray cannon-ball that made your horse – oh, didn't it? – spin round like a teetotum. The rich repast awaits you – the whole is turned out, and smokes upon the table – the *bouilli* is tender, the "jus" appetising and substantial, the *tout-ensemble* excellent. And if, with an eye to his own interest in the concern, Pedro has slipped in a handful or so of garlic, why, you live all day in the open air – so it doesn't much signify.

Well, so much for Irish stew. We wound up the evening with ship-biscuit and brandy-and-water – ration brandy – French – superb. What an exchange for the horrid *agoardente* of Lisbon, that excoriated your palate, indurated your gizzard, and burnt a hole in your liver! I happened to mention my morning visit to St Sebastian. All my three companions had seen St Sebastian during the siege – were present at the storming. "Sorry I was not ordered up in time," said I.

"You'll never see anything like that," said the doctor.

"Well, can't you tell me something about it?"

"No, no," replied he; "rather too late for that to-night. I must be moving."

"Come, gentlemen; mix another tumbler round," said "my friend." "If we cannot go into particulars, at least, for the satisfaction of Mr Y – , let us each relate some one incident, which we witnessed when the city was taken by storm. Come, doctor; you shall begin."

"Really," said the doctor, "it was such a scene of slaughter and confusion, I can hardly recollect anything distinctly enough to tell it. I got into the town almost immediately after the troops, to look after the wounded; just those that required to be operated on at once. Found my way into a by-street; came among some of our fellows, who were carrying on such a game, drinking, plundering, firing at the inhabitants, and I don't know what-all besides, I was glad enough to escape with my life, and got out of the place as fast as I could. Don't really remember any particular occurrence to relate. Oh, yes; just as I was coming away, I saw one old woman – beg pardon; ought to have said elderly gentlewoman – pinned to a post with a bayonet, for defending her daughter's virtue."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.