

VARIOUS

BLACKWOOD'S
EDINBURGH MAGAZINE,
VOL. 65, NO. 400,
FEBRUARY, 1849

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**Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,
Vol. 65, No. 400, February, 1849**

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CAUCASUS AND THE COSSACKS

Der Kaukasus und das Land der Kosaken in den Jahren 1843 bis 1846. Von Moritz Wagner. 2 vols. Dresden und Leipzig, 1848.

A handful of men, frugal, hardy, and valiant, successfully defending their barren mountains and dearly-won independence against the reiterated assaults of a mighty neighbour, offer, apart from political considerations, a deeply interesting spectacle. When, upon a map of the world's eastern hemisphere, we behold, not far from its centre, on the confines of barbarism and civilisation, a spot, black with mountains, and marked "Circassia;" when we contrast this petty nook with the vast territory stretching from the Black Sea to the Northern Ocean, from the Baltic to Behring's Straits, we admire and wonder at the inflexible resolution and determined gallantry that have so long borne up against the aggressive ambition, iron will, and immense resources of a czar. Sixty millions against six hundred thousand – a hundred to one, a whole squadron against a single cavalier, a colossus opposed to a pigmy – these are the odds at issue. It seems impossible that such a contest can long endure. Yet it has lasted twenty years, and still the dwarf resists subjugation, and contrives, at intervals, to inflict severe punishment upon his gigantic adversary. There is something strangely exciting in the contemplation of so brave a struggle. Its interest is far superior to that of any of the "little wars" in which Europe, since 1815, has evaporated her superabundant pugnacity. African raids and Spanish skirmishes are pale affairs contrasted with the dashing onslaughts of the intrepid Circassians. And, in other respects than its heroism, this contest merits attention. As an important section of the huge mountain-dyke, opposed by nature to the south-eastern extension of the Russian empire, Circassia is not to be overlooked. On the rugged peaks and in the deep valleys of the Caucasus, her fearless warriors stand, the vedettes of southern Asia, a living barrier to the forward flight of the double eagle.

Matters of pressing interest, nearer home, have diverted public attention from the warlike Circassians, whose independent spirit and unflinching bravery deserves better than even temporary oblivion. Not in our day only have they distinguished themselves in freedom's fight. Surrounded by powerful and encroaching potentates, their history, for the last five hundred years, records constant struggles against oppression. Often conquered, they never were fully subdued. Their obscure chronicles are illumined by flashes of patriotism and heroic courage. Early in the fifteenth century, they conquered their freedom from the Georgian yoke. Then came long wars with the Tartars, who could hardly, perhaps, be considered the aggressors, the Circassians having overstepped their mountain limits, and spread over the plains adjacent to the Sea of Azov. In 1555, the Russian grand-duke, Ivan Vasilivitch, pressed forward to Tarki upon the Caspian, where he placed a garrison. A Circassian tribe submitted to him; he married the daughter of one of their princes, and assisted them against the Tartars. But after a while the Russians withdrew their succour; and the Circassians, driven back to the river Kuban, their natural boundary to the north-west, paid tribute to the Tartars, till the commencement of the eighteenth century, when a decisive victory liberated them. Meanwhile Russia strode steadily southwards, reached the Kuban in the west, whilst, in the east, Tarki and Derbent fell, in 1722, into the hands of Peter the Great. The fort of Swiatoi-Krest, built by the conqueror, was soon afterwards retaken by a swarm of fanatical mountaineers from the eastern Caucasus. It is now about seventy years since Russian and Circassian first crossed swords in serious warfare. A fanatic

dervise, who called himself Sheikh Mansour, preached a religious war against the Muscovites; but, although followed with enthusiasm, his success was not great, and at last he was captured and sent prisoner into the interior of Russia. With his fall the furious zeal of the Caucasians subsided for a while. But the Turks, who viewed Circassia as their main bulwark against the rapidly increasing power of their dangerous northern neighbour, made friends of the mountaineers, and stirred them up against Russia. The fortified town of Anapa, on the north-west coast of Circassia, became the focus of the intercourse between the Porte and its new allies. The creed of Mahomet was actively propagated amongst the Circassians, whose relations with Turkey grew more and more intimate, and in the year 1824 several tribes took oath of allegiance to the sultan. In 1829, during the war between Russia and Turkey, Anapa, which had more than once changed hands in the course of previous contests, was taken by the former power, to whom, by the treaty of Adrianople, its possession, and that of the other Turkish posts on the same coast, was finally conceded. Hence the chief claim of Russia upon Circassia – although Circassia had never belonged to the Turks, nor been occupied by them; and from that period dates the war that has elicited from Russia so great a display of force against an apparently feeble, but in reality formidable antagonist – an antagonist who has hitherto baffled her best generals, and picked troops, and most skilful strategists.

The tribes of the Caucasus may be comprehended, for the sake of simplicity, under two denominations: the Tcherkesses or Circassians, in the west, and the Tshetshens in the east. In loose newspaper statements, and in the garbled reports of the war which remote position, Russian jealousy, and the peculiarly inaccessible character of the Caucasians, suffer to reach us, even this broad distinction is frequently disregarded.[A] It is nevertheless important, at least in a physiological point of view; and, even as regards the resistance offered to Russia, there are differences between the Eastern and the Western Caucasians. The military tactics of both are much alike, but the character of the war varies. On the banks of the Kuban, and on the Euxine shores, the strife has never been so desperate, and so dangerous for the Russians, as in Daghestan, Lesghistan, and the land of the Tshetshens. The Abchasians, Mingrelians, and other Circassian tribes, dwelling on the southern slopes of Caucasus, and on the margin of the Black Sea, are of more peaceable and passive character than their brethren to the North and East. The Tshetshens, by far the most warlike and enterprising of the Caucasians, have had the ablest leaders, and have at all times been stimulated by fierce religious zeal. As far back as 1745, Russian missionaries were sent to the tribe of the Osseti, who had relapsed from Christianity to the heathen creed of their forefathers. Every Osset who presented himself at the baptismal font received a silver cross and a new shirt. The bait brought thousands of the mountaineers to the Russian priests, who contented themselves with the outward and visible sign of conversion. These propagandist attempts enraged the Mahomedan tribes, and then it was that they thronged around Sheikh Mansour, as they have done in our day (in 1830) around that strange fanatic Chasi-Mollah, when in his turn he preached a holy war against the Russian. In the latter year, General Paskewitch had just been called away to Poland, and his successor, Baron Rosen, found all Daghestan in an uproar. He immediately opened the campaign, but met a strenuous resistance, and suffered heavy loss. The defence of the village of Hermentschuk, held against him, in the year 1832, by 3000 Tshetshens, was an extraordinary example of heroism. When the Russian infantry forced their way into the place with the bayonet, a portion of the garrison shut themselves up in a fortified house, and made it good against overwhelming numbers, singing passages from the Koran amidst a storm of bombs and grapeshot. At last the building took fire, and its undaunted defenders, the sacred verses still upon their lips, found death in the flames. In an equally desperate defence of the fortified village of Himri, Chasi-Mollah met his death, falling in the very breach, bleeding from many wounds. The chief who succeeded him was less venerated and less energetic, and for a few years the Tshetshens remained tolerably quiet, but without a thought of submission. Nevertheless the Russians flattered themselves that the worst was past; that the death of the mad dervish was an irreparable loss to the mountaineers. They were mistaken. Out of his most ardent adherents Chasi-Mollah had formed a sort

of sacred band, whom he called Murides, gloomy fanatics, half warriors, half priests. They composed his body-guard, were unwearied in preaching up the fight for the Prophet's faith, and in battle devoted themselves to death with a heroism that has never been surpassed. From these, within a short time of their first leader's death, Chamyl, the present renowned chief of the Tshetshens, soon stood forth pre-eminent, and the Murides followed him to the field with the same enthusiasm and valour they had shown under his predecessor. He did not prove less worthy of guiding them; and the Russians were compelled to confess, that it was easier for the Tshetshens to find an able leader than for them to find a general able to beat him. And victories over the restless and enterprising Caucasians were of little profit, even when obtained. For the most part, they only served to fill the Russian hospitals, and to procure the officers those ribbons and distinctions they so greedily covet, and which, in that service, are so liberally bestowed.¹ Thus, in 1845, Count Woronzoff made a most daring expedition into the heart of Daghestan. He found the villages empty and in flames, lost three thousand men, amongst them many brave and valuable officers, and marched back again, strewing the path with wounded, for whom the means of transport (the horses of the Cossack cavalry) were quite insufficient. With great difficulty, and protected by a column that went out to meet them, the Russians regained their lines, harassed to the last by the fierce Caucasians. This affair was called a victory, and Count Woronzoff was made a prince. Two more such victories would have reduced his expeditionary column to a single battalion. Chamyl, who had cannonaded the Russians with their own artillery, captured in former actions, possibly considered himself equally entitled to triumph, as he slowly retreated, after following up the foe nearly to the gates of their fortresses, into the recesses of his native valleys.²

The interior of Circassia is still an unknown land. The investigations of Messrs Bell, Longworth, Stewart, and others, who of late years have visited and written about the country, were confined to small districts, and cramped by the jealousy of the natives. Mr Bell, who made the longest residence, was treated more like a prisoner than a guest. Other foreigners find a worse reception still. Even the Poles, who desert from the Russian army, are made slaves of by the Circassians, and so severely treated that they are often glad to return to their colours, and endure the flogging that there awaits them. The only European who, having penetrated into the interior, has again seen his own country, is the Russian Baron Turnau, an aide-de-camp of General Gurko; but the circumstances of his abode in Circassia were too painful and peculiar to allow opportunity for observation. They are well told by Dr Wagner.

¹ "It must be admitted that Russian officers are second to those of no other nation, in thirst for distinction, and in honourable ambition, to awaken and stimulate which, innumerable means are employed. In no other army are the rewards for those officers who distinguish themselves in the field of so many kinds, and so lavishly dealt out. There are all manner of medals and marks for good service – crosses and stars of Saints George, Stanislaus, Vladimir, Andrew, Anna, and other holy personages; some with crowns, some with diamonds, peculiar distinctions on the epaulets and uniforms, &c. &c. I was once in a distinguished society, composed almost entirely of officers of the army of the Caucasus. Not finding very much amusement, I had the patience to count all the orders and decorations in the room, and found that upon the breasts of the thirty-five military guests, there glittered more than two hundred stars, crosses, and medals; on some of the generals' coats were more orders than buttons. As it usually happens, the desire for these distinctions increases with their possession. The Russian who has obtained a medal leaves no stone unturned to get a knight's cross, and when the cross is at his button-hole, he is ravenous for the glittering star, and ready to make any sacrifice to obtain it." —*Der Kaukasus*, &c., vol. ii. p. 98.

² "Amongst the Caucasian tribes, the interest of Europe has attached itself especially to the Circassians, because they are regarded (in Urquhart's words) 'as the only people, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, ever ready to revenge an injury and retort a menace proceeding from the Czar of the Muscovites.' Urquhart's opinion, which is shared by the great majority of the European public, is not quite correct, the Circassians not being the only combatants against Russia. Indeed it so happens that, for the last four years, they have kept tolerably quiet in their mountains, contenting themselves with small forays into the Cossack country on the Kuban; whilst the warlike Tshetshens in the eastern Caucasus, their chief, Chamyl, at their head, have given the Russian army much more to do. But, in the absence of official intelligence, and of regular newspaper information concerning the events of the war, people in Europe have got accustomed to admire and praise the Circassians as the only defenders of Caucasian freedom against Russian aggression; and even in St Petersburg the intelligent public hold the famous Chamyl to be chief of the Circassians, with whom he has nothing whatever to do." —*Der Kaukasus*, &c., vol. ii. p. 22-3.

"By the Emperor's command, Russian officers acquainted with the language are sent, from time to time, as spies into Circassia,³— partly to make topographical surveys of districts previously unknown; partly to ascertain the numbers, mode of life, and disposition of those tribes with whom no intercourse is kept up. These missions are extremely dangerous, and seldom succeed. Shortly before my arrival at Terek, four Russian staff-officers were sent as spies to various parts of Lesghistan. They assumed the Caucasian garb, and were attended by natives in Russian pay. Only one of them ever returned; the three others were recognised and murdered. Baron Turnau prepared himself long beforehand for his dangerous mission. He gave his complexion a brownish tint, and to his beard the form affected by the aborigines. He also tried to learn the language of the Ubiches, but, finding the harsh pronunciation of certain words quite unattainable, he agreed with his guide to pass for deaf and dumb during his stay in the country. In this guise he set out upon his perilous journey, and for several days wandered undetected from tribe to tribe. But one of the *works* (nobles) under whose roof he passed a night, conceived suspicions, and threatened the guide, who betrayed his employer's secret. The baron was kept prisoner, and the Ubiches demanded a cap-full of silver for his ransom from the Russian commandant of Fort Ardlar. When this officer declared himself ready to pay, they increased their demand to a bushel of silver rubles. The commandant referred the matter to Baron Rosen, then commander-in-chief of the army of the Caucasus; the baron reported it to St Petersburg, and the Emperor consented to pay the heavy ransom. But Rosen represented it to him as more for the Russian interest to leave Turnau for a while in the hands of the Ubiches; for, in the first place, the payment of so large a sum was a bad precedent, likely to encourage the mountaineers to renew the extortion, instead of contenting themselves, as they previously had done, with a few hundred rubles; and, secondly, as a prisoner, Baron Turnau would perhaps have opportunities of gathering valuable information concerning a country and people of whom little or nothing was known. The unfortunate young officer was cruelly sacrificed to these considerations, and passed a long winter in terrible captivity, tortured by frost and hunger, compelled, as a slave, to the severest labour, and often greatly ill-treated. Several attempts at flight failed; and at last the chief, in whose hands he was, confined him in a cage half-buried in the ground, and withal so narrow that its inmate could neither stand upright nor lie at length."

Thus immured, a prey to painful maladies, his clothes rotting on his emaciated limbs, the unhappy man moaned through his long and sleepless nights, and gave up hope of rescue. No tender-hearted Circassian maiden brought to him, as to the hero of Pushkin's well-known Caucasian poem, deliverance and love. Such luck had been that of more than one Russian captive; but poor Turnau, in his state of filth and squalor, was no very seductive object. He might have pined away his life in his cage, before Baron Rosen, or his paternal majesty the Czar, had recalled his fate to mind, but for an injury done by his merciless master to one of his domestics, who vowed revenge. Watching his opportunity, this servant, one day that the rest of the household were absent, murdered his lord, released the prisoner, tied him with thongs upon his saddle, upon which the baron, covered with sores and exhausted by illness, was unable to support himself, and galloped with him towards the frontier. In one day they rode eighty *versts*, (about fifty-four English miles,) outstripped pursuers, and reached

³ The reference in this instance is more particularly to the land of the Ubiches and Tchigetes, two tribes that abide south of Circassia Proper, and whose language differs from those of the Circassians and Abchasians, their neighbours to the north and south. The general medium of conversation amongst the various Caucasian tribes is the Turkish-Tartar dialect, current amongst most of the dwellers on the shores of the Black and Caspian Seas.

Fort Ardler. The accounts given by Baron Turnau of the land of his captivity could be but slight: he had seen little beyond his place of confinement. What he did relate was not very encouraging to Russian invasion. He depicted the country as one mass of rock and precipice, partially clothed with vast tracts of aboriginal forest, broken by deep ravines and mountain torrents, and surmounted by the huge ice-clad pinnacles of the loftiest Caucasian ridge. The villages, some of which nestle in the deep recesses of the woods, whilst others are perched upon steep crags and on the brink of giddy precipices, are universally of most difficult access.

Dr Wagner, whose extremely amusing book forms the text of this article, has never been in Circassia, although he gives us more information about it, of the sort we want, than any traveller in that singular land whose writings have come under our notice. His wanderings were under Russian guidance and escort. During them, he skirted the hostile territory on more than one side; occasionally setting a foot across the border, to the alarm of his Cossacks, whose dread by day and dreams by night were of Circassian ambuscades; he has lingered at the base of Caucasus, and has traversed its ranges – without, however, deeming it necessary to penetrate into those remote valleys, where foreigners find dubious welcome, and whence they are not always sure of exit. He has mixed much with Circassians, if he has not actually dwelt in their villages. It were tedious and unnecessary to detail his exact itinerary. He has not printed his entire journal – according to the lazy and egotistical practice of many travellers – but has taken the trouble to condense it. The essence is full of variety, anecdote and adventure, and gives a clear insight into the nature of the war. Professedly a man of science, an antiquary and a naturalist, Dr Wagner has evidently a secret hankering after matters military. He loves the sound of the drum, and willingly directs his scientific researches to countries where he is likely to smell powder. We had heard of him in the Atlas mountains, and at the siege of Constantina, before we met him risking his neck along the banks of the Kuban, and across the wild steppes of the Caucasus. He has travelled much in the East, and prepared himself for his Caucasian trip by a long stay in Turkey and in Southern Russia. Well introduced, he derived from distinguished Russian generals, intelligent civilians, and Circassian chiefs, particulars of the war more authentic than are to be obtained either from St Petersburg bulletins, or from the ordinary trans-Caucasian correspondents of German and other newspapers, many of whom are in the pay of Russia. His African reminiscences proved of great value. The officers of the army of Caucasus take the strongest interest in the contest between French and Arabs, finding in it, doubtless, points of similitude with the war in which they themselves are engaged. Amongst these officers he met, besides Russians and Germans, several naturalised Poles and Frenchmen, Flemings and Spaniards, who gave in exchange for his tales of razzias and Bedouins, details of Circassian warfare which he highly prized, as likely to be more impartial than the accounts afforded by the native Russians. His own journey to the Caucasus took place in 1843; but a subsequent correspondence with well-informed friends, on both sides the Caucasian range, enabled him to bring down his sketch of the struggle to the year 1846.

Many English writers on Circassia have been accused of an undue preference for the mountaineers, of exaggerating their good qualities, and of elevating them by invidious contrasts with the Russians. There is no ground for suspecting a German of such partiality; and Dr Wagner, whilst lauding the heroic valour and independent spirit of the Circassians – qualities which Russian authors have themselves admitted and extolled – does not forget to do justice to his Muscovite and Cossack friends, to whom he devotes a considerable portion of his book, many of his details concerning them being extremely novel and curious. He carefully studied both Cossacks and Circassians, living amongst the former and meeting thousands of the latter, who go and come freely upon Russian territory. At Ekaterinodar, the capital of the Tchernamortsy Cossacks, the Friday's market swarmed with Circassians. In Turkey, and elsewhere, Dr Wagner had met many individuals of that nation, but this was the first time he beheld them in crowds. He describes them as very handsome men, with black beards, aquiline noses, and flashing black eyes. He was struck with their lofty mien, and attributes it to their mental energy, and to a consciousness of physical strength and beauty.

"This superiority of the pure Circassian blood does not belie itself under Russian discipline, any more than it does in Mahometan lands, where, as Mamelukes in Cairo, and as pashas in Stamboul, the sons of Caucasus have ever played a prominent and distinguished part. The Turk, who by certain imposing qualities awes all other Orientals, tacitly recognises the superiority of the Circassian *ousden*, or noble. The Emperor Nicholas, who preserves so rigid a discipline in the various corps of his vast army, shows himself extraordinarily considerate towards the Circassian squadrons of his guard. Persons well versed in the military chronicles of St Petersburg relate many a characteristic trait, proving the bold stubborn spirit of these Caucasian men to be still unbroken, and showing how it more than once has so imposed upon the emperor, and even upon the grand-duke Michael, reputed the strictest disciplinarian in Russia, that they have shut their eyes even to open mutiny. At a review, where the Caucasian cavalry formally refused obedience, the emperor contented himself with sending a courteous reproof by General Benkendorf. Beside the coarse common Russians, the Circassian looks like an eagle amidst a flock of bustards. Even capital crimes are not visited upon Circassians with the same severity as upon the other subjects of the emperor. A Circassian who had struck his dagger into the heart of a hackney-coachman at St Petersburg, in requital of an insolent overcharge, was merely sent back to the Caucasus. For a like offence a Russian might reckon upon the knout, and upon banishment for life to the Siberian mines.

"Amongst the Circassians at Ekaterinodar, a *work*, or noble, of the Shapsookian tribe, was particularly remarkable for his beauty and dignity. None of the picturesque figures of Arabs and Moors furnished me by my African recollections, could bear comparison with this Caucasian eagle. I afterwards saw, in Mingrelia, a more ideal mould of feature, resembling the antique Apollo type: but there the expression was too effeminate; the heroic head of the dweller on the Kuban pleased me better. I stood a good while before the Shapsookian, as if fettered to the ground, so extraordinary was the effect of his striking beauty. What a study, I thought, for a German painter, who would in vain seek such models in Rome; or for a Vernet, whose Arabian groups prove the great power of his pencil! The Arabs, rather priestly than knightly in their aspect, produce far less effect upon the large Algerine pictures at Versailles than the Circassian warrior would do in a battle-piece by such masters as Vernet or Peter Hess. The Shapsook chief at Ekaterinodar seemed conscious of his magnificent appearance. With proud mien, and that light half-gliding gait observable in most Caucasians, he sauntered amongst the groups of Cossacks upon the market-place, casting glances of profoundest scorn upon their clumsy sheepskin-wrapped figures. His slender form and small foot, the grace and elegance of his person and carriage, the richness of his costume and beauty of his weapons, contrasted most advantageously with the muscular but somewhat thickset figures, and with the ugly woolly winter dress of the Tchernamortsies. By help of a Cossack I made his acquaintance, and got into conversation. His name was Chora-Beg, and he dwelt at a hamlet thirty versts south of Ekaterinodar."

Chora-Beg wondered greatly that his new acquaintance was neither Russian nor English. He had heard vaguely that there was a third Christian nation, which, under Sultan Bunapart, had made war upon the Padisha of the Russians, but he had no notion of such a people as the Germans. He greatly admired Dr Wagner's rifle, but rather doubted its carrying farther than a smooth bore, and allowed free inspection of his own arms, consisting of pistols and dagger, and of the famous *shaska*— a long heavy cavalry sabre, slightly curved, with hilt of silver and ivory. At the doctor's request he drew

this weapon from the scabbard, and cut twice or thrice at the empty air, his dark eyes flashing as he did so. "How many Russians has that sabre sent to their account?" asked the inquisitive Doctor. The Circassian's intelligent countenance assumed an expression hard to interpret, but in which his interlocutor thought he distinguished a gleam of scorn, and a shade of suspicion. "It was long," he replied, "since his tribe had taken the field against the Russians. Since the deaf general (Sass) had left the land of the Cossacks, peace had reigned between Muscovite and Shapsookian. Individuals of his tribe had certainly been known to join bands from the mountains, and to cross the Kuban with arms in hand." And as Chora-Beg spoke, the expression of his proud eye belied his pacific pretensions.

The general Sass above-named commanded for several years on the line of the Kuban, and is the only Russian general who has understood the mountain warfare, and proved himself a match for the Circassians at their own game of ambushes and surprises. His tactics were those of the Spanish guerilla leaders. Lavish in his payment of spies, he was always accurately informed of the musters and projects of the Circassians; whilst he kept his own plans so secret, that his personal staff often knew nothing of an intended expedition until the call to "boot and saddle" sounded. His raids were accomplished, under guidance of his well-paid scouts, with such rapidity and local knowledge that the mountaineers rarely had time to assemble in force, pursue the retiring column, and revenge their burnt vilages and ravished cattle. But one day the report spread on the lines of the Kuban that the general was dangerously ill; shortly afterwards it became known that the physicians had given him up; and finally his death was announced, and bewailed by the whole army of the Caucasus. The consternation of the Cossacks, accustomed, under his command, to victory and rich booty, was as great as the exultation of the mountaineers. Hundreds of these visited the Russian territory, to witness the interment of their dreaded foe. A magnificent coffin, with the general's cocked hat and decorations laid upon it, was deposited in the earth amidst the mournful sounds of minute guns and muffled drums. With joyful hearts the Circassians returned to their mountains, to tell what they had seen, and to congratulate each other at the prospect of tranquillity for themselves, and safety to their flocks and herds. But upon the second night after Sass's funeral, a strong Russian column crossed the Kuban, and the dead general suddenly appeared at the head of his trusty lancers, who greeted with wild hurrahs their leader's resurrection. Several large *auls* (villages) whose inhabitants were sound asleep, unsuspecting of surprise, were destroyed, vast droves of cattle were carried off, and a host of prisoners made. This ingenious and successful stratagem is still cited with admiration on the banks of the Kuban. Notwithstanding his able generalship, Sass was removed from his command when in full career of success. All his military services could not shield him from the consequences of St Petersburg intrigues and trumped-up accusations. None of his successors have equalled him. General Willaminoff was a man of big words rather than of great deeds. In his bombastic and blasphemous proclamation of the 28th May 1837, he informed the Circassians that "If the heavens should fall, Russia could prop them with her bayonets;" following up this startling assertion with the declaration that "there are but two powers in existence – God in heaven, and the emperor upon earth!"⁴ The Circassians laughed at this rhodomontade, and returned a firm and becoming answer. There were but few of them, they said – but, with God's blessing, they would hold their own, and fight to the very last man: and to prove themselves as good as their word, they soon afterwards made fierce assaults upon the line of forts built by the Russians upon the shores of the Black Sea. In 1840 four of these were taken, but the triumph cost the victors so much blood as to disgust them for some time with attacking stone walls, behind which the Russians, perhaps the best defensive combatants in the world, fight like lions. Indeed, the Circassians would hardly have proved victorious, had not the garrisons been enfeebled by disease. During the five winter months, the rations of the troops employed upon this service are usually salt, and the consequences are scurvy and fever. Informed by Polish deserters of the bad condition of the garrisons, the Circassians held a great council in the mountains, and it

⁴ Longworth's *Circassia*, vol. i. p. 1589.

was decided to take the forts with the sabre, without firing a shot. It is an old Caucasian custom, that, upon suchlike perilous undertakings, a chosen band of enthusiastic warriors devote themselves to death, binding themselves by a solemn oath not to turn their backs upon the enemy. Ever in the van, their example gives courage to the timid; and their friends are bound in honour to revenge their death. With these fanatics have the Circassian and Tshetshen chiefs achieved their greatest victories over the Russians.

When it was decided to attack the forts, several hundred Shapsookians, including gray-haired old men and youths of tender age, swore to conquer or to die. They kept their word. At the fort of Michailoff, which made the most obstinate defence, the ditch was filled with their corpses. The conduct of the garrison was truly heroic. Of five hundred men, only one third were fit for duty; the others were in hospital, or on the sick-list. But no sooner did the Circassian war-cry rend the air than the sufferers forgot their pains; the fever-stricken left their beds, and crawled to the walls. Their commandant called upon them to shed their last drop of blood for their emperor; their old *papa* exhorted them, as Christians, to fight to the death against the unbelieving horde. But numbers prevailed: after a valiant defence, the Russians retreated, fighting, to the innermost enclosures of the fortress. Their chief demanded a volunteer to blow up the fort when farther resistance should become impossible. A soldier stepped forward, took a lighted match, and entered the powder magazine. The last defences were stormed, the Circassians shouted victory. Then came the explosion. Most of the buildings were overthrown, and hundreds of maimed carcasses scattered in all directions. Eleven Russians escaped with life, were dragged off to the mountains, and subsequently ransomed, and from them the details of this bloody fight were obtained.

The capture of these forts spread discouragement and consternation in the ranks of the Russian army. The emperor was furious, and General Rajewski, then commander-in-chief on the Circassian frontier, was superseded. This officer, who at the tender age of twelve was present with his father at the battle of Borodino, and who has since distinguished himself in the Turkish and Persian wars, was reputed an able general, but was reproached with sleeping too much, and with being too fond of botany. His enemies went so far as to accuse him of making military expeditions into the mountains, with the sole view of adding rare Caucasian plants to his *herbarium*, and of procuring seeds for his garden. General Aurep, who succeeded him, undertook little beyond reconnoissances, always attended with very heavy loss; and the Circassians remained upon the defensive until the year 1843, when the example of the Tshetshens, who about that time obtained signal advantages over the Russians, roused the martial ardour of the chivalrous Circassians, and spurred them to fresh hostilities. But the war at the western extremity of Caucasus never assumed the importance of that in Daghestan and the country of the Tshetshens.

From the straits of Zabache to the frontier of Guria, the Russians possess seventeen *Kreposts*, or fortified posts, only a few of which deserve the name of regular fortresses, or could resist a regular army provided with artillery. To mountaineers, however, whose sole weapons are shaska and musket, even earthen parapets and shallow ditches are serious obstacles when well manned and resolutely defended. The object of erecting this line of forts was to cut off the communication by sea between Turkey and the Caucasian tribes. It was thought that, when the import of arms and munitions of war from Turkey was thus checked, the independent mountain tribes would soon be subjugated. The hope was not realised, and the expensive maintenance of 15,000 to 20,000 men in the fortresses of the Black Sea has but little improved the position of the Russians in the Caucasus. The Caucasians have never lacked arms, and with money they can always get powder, even from the Cossacks of the Kuban. In another respect, however, these forts have done them much harm, and thence it arises that, since their erection, and the cession of Anapa to Russia, the war has assumed so bitter a character. So long as Anapa was Turkish, the export of slaves, and the import of powder, found no hindrance. The needy Circassian noble, whose rude mountains supply him but sparingly with daily bread, obtained, by the sale of slaves, means of satisfying his warlike and ostentatious

tastes – of procuring rich clothes, costly weapons, and ammunition for war and for the chase. In a moral point of view, all slave traffic is of course odious and reprehensible, but that of Circassia differed from other commerce of the kind, in so far that all parties were benefited by, and consenting to, the contract. The Turks obtained from Caucasus handsomer and healthier wives than those born in the harem; and the Circassian beauties were delighted to exchange the poverty and toil of their father's mountain huts for the luxurious *farniente* of the seraglio, of whose wonders and delights their ears were regaled, from childhood upwards, with the most glowing descriptions. The trade, although greatly impeded and very hazardous, still goes on. Small Turkish craft creep up to the coast, cautiously evading the Russian cruisers, enter creeks and inlets, and are dragged by the Circassians high and dry upon the beach, there to remain till the negotiation for their live cargo is completed, an operation that generally takes a few weeks. The women sold are the daughters of serfs and freedmen: rarely does a *work* consent to dispose of his sister or daughter, although the case does sometimes occur. But, whilst the sale goes on, the slave-ships are anything but secure. It is a small matter to have escaped the Russian frigates and steamers. Each of the Kreposts possesses a little squadron of row-boats, manned with Cossacks, who pull along the coast in search of Turkish vessels. If they detect one, they land in the night, and endeavour to set fire to it, before the mountaineers can come to the assistance of the crew. The Turks, who live in profound terror of these Cossack coast-guards, resort to every possible expedient to escape their observation; often covering their vessels with dry leaves and boughs, and tying fir branches to the masts, that the scouts may take them for trees. If they are captured at sea by the cruisers, the crew are sent to hard labour in Siberia, and the Circassian girls are married to Cossacks, or divided as handmaidens amongst the Russian staff officers. From thirty to forty slaves compose the usual cargo of each of these vessels, which are so small that the poor creatures are packed almost like herrings in a barrel. But they patiently endure the misery of the voyage, in anticipation of the honeyed existence of the harem. It is calculated that one vessel out of six is taken or lost. In the winter of 1843-4, eight-and-twenty ships left the coast of Asia Minor for that of Caucasia. Twenty-three safely returned, three were burned by the Russians, and two swallowed by the waves.

A Turkish captain at Sinope told Dr Wagner the following interesting anecdote, illustrating Circassian hatred of the Russians: – "A few years ago a slave-ship sprang a leak out at sea, just as a Russian steamer passed in the distance. The Turkish slave-dealer, who preferred even the chill blasts of Siberia to a grave in deep water, made signals of distress, and the steamer came up in time to rescue the ship and its living cargo from destruction. But so deeply is hatred of Russia implanted in every Circassian heart, that the spirit of the girls revolted at the thought of becoming the helpmates of gray-coated soldiers, instead of sharing the sumptuous couch of a Turkish pasha. They had bid adieu to their native mountains with little emotion, but as the Russian ship approached they set up terrible and despairing screams. Some sprang headlong into the sea; others drove their knives into their hearts: – to these heroines death was preferable to the bridal-bed of a detested Muscovite. The survivors were taken to Anapa, and married to Cossacks, or given to officers as servants." Nearly every Austrian or Turkish steamboat that makes, in the winter months, the voyage from Trebizond to Constantinople, has a number of Circassian girls on board. Dr Wagner made the passage in an Austrian steamer with several dozens of these willing slaves, chiefly mere children, twelve or thirteen years old, with interesting countenances and dark wild eyes, but very pale and thin – with the exception of two, who were some years older, far better dressed, and carefully veiled. To this favoured pair the slave-dealer paid particular attention, and frequently brought them coffee. Dr Wagner got into conversation with this man, who was richly dressed in furs and silks, and who, despite his vile profession, had the manners of a gentleman. The two coffee-drinkers were daughters of noblemen, he said, with fine rosy cheeks, and in better condition than the others, consequently worth more money at Constantinople. For the handsomest he hoped to obtain 30,000 piastres, and for the other 20,000 – about £250 and £170. The herd of young creatures he spoke of with contempt, and should think himself lucky to get 2000 piastres for them all round. He further informed the doctor that, although the slave-trade

was more dangerous and difficult since the Russian occupation of the Caucasian coast, it was also far more profitable. Formerly, when Greek and Armenian women were brought in crowds to the Constantinople market, the most beautiful Circassians were not worth more than 10,000 piastres; but now a rosy, well-fed, fifteen-year-old slave is hardly to be had under 40,000 piastres.

The Tshetshen successes, already referred to as having at the close of 1842 stirred into flame and action, by the force of example, the smouldering but still ardent embers of Circassian hatred to Russia, are described with remarkable spirit by Dr Wagner, in the chapter entitled "Caucasian War-Scenes," – episodes taken down by him from the lips of eye-witnesses, and of sharers in the sanguinary conflicts described. This graphic chapter at once familiarises the reader with the Caucasian war, with which he thenceforward feels as well acquainted as with our wars in India, the French contest in Africa, or with any other series of combats, of whose nature and progress minute information has been regularly received. The first event described is the storming of Aculcho, in the summer of 1839. It is always a great point with guerilla generals, and with leaders of mountain warfare, to have a centre of operations – a strong post, whither they can retreat after a reverse, with the confidence that the enemy will hesitate before attacking them there. In Spain, Cabrera had Morella, the Count d'Espagne had Berga, the Navarrese viewed Estella as their citadel. In the eastern Caucasus, Chasi-Mollah had Himri, and preferred falling in its defence to abandoning his stronghold; his successor, Chamyl, who surpasses him in talent for war and organisation, established his headquarters at Aculcho, a sort of eagle's nest on the river Koisu, whither his escorts brought him intelligence of each movement of Russian troops, and whence he swooped, like the bird whose eyrie he occupied, upon the convoys traversing the steppe of the Terek. Here he planned expeditions and surprises, and kept a store of arms and ammunition; and this fort General Grabbe, who commanded in 1839 the Russian forces in eastern Caucasus, and who was always a strong advocate of the offensive system, obtained permission from St Petersburg to attack. General Golowin, commander-in-chief of the whole army of the Caucasus, and then resident at Teflis, approved the enterprise, whose ultimate results cost both generals their command. The taking of Aculcho itself was of little moment; there was no intention of placing a Russian garrison there; but the double end to be obtained was to capture Chamyl, and to intimidate the Tshetshens, by proving to them that no part of their mountains, however difficult of access and bravely defended, was beyond the reach of Russian valour and resources. Their submission, at least nominal and temporary, was the result hoped for.

Nature has done much for the fortification of Aculcho. Imagine a hill of sand-stone, nearly surrounded by a loop of the river Koisu – a miniature peninsula, in short, connected with the continent by a narrow neck of land – provided with three natural terraces, accessible only by a small rocky path, whose entrance is fortified and defended by 500 resolute Tshetshen warriors. A few artificial parapets and intrenchments, some stone huts, and several excavations in the sand rock, where the besieged found shelter from shot and shell, complete the picture of the place before which Grabbe and his column sat down. At first they hoped to reduce it by artillery, and bombs and congreve rockets were poured upon the fortress, destroying huts and parapets, but doing little harm to the Tshetshens, who lay close as conies in their burrows, and watched their opportunity to send well-aimed bullets into the Russian camp. From time to time, one of the fanatical Murides, of whom the garrison was chiefly composed, impatient that the foe delayed an assault, rushed headlong down from the rock, his shaska in his right hand, his pistol in his left, his dagger between his teeth; causing a momentary panic among the Cossacks, who were prepared for the whistling of bullets, but not for the sudden appearance of a foaming demon armed *cap-à-pie*, who generally, before they could use their bayonets, avenged in advance his own certain death by the slaughter of several of his foes, whilst his comrades on the rock applauded and rejoiced at the heroic self-sacrifice. The first attempt to storm was costly to the besiegers. Of fifteen hundred men who ascended the narrow path, only a hundred and fifty survived. The Tshetshens maintained such a well-directed platoon fire, that not a Russian set foot on the second terrace. The foremost men, mown down by the bullets of the besieged, fell

back upon their comrades, and precipitated them from the rock. General Grabbe, undismayed by his heavy loss, ordered a second and a third assault; the three cost two thousand men, but the lower and middle terraces were taken. The defence of the upper one was desperate, and the Russians might have been compelled to turn the siege into a blockade, but for the imprudence of some of the garrison, who, anxious to ascertain the proceedings of the enemy's engineers – then hard at work at a mine under the hill – ventured too far from their defences, and were attacked by a Russian battalion. The Tshetshens fled; but, swift of foot though they were, the most active of the Russians attained the topmost terrace with them. A hand-to-hand fight ensued, more battalions came up, and Aculcho was taken. The victors, furious at their losses, and at the long resistance opposed to them, (this was the 22d August,) raged like tigers amongst the unfortunate little band of mountaineers; some Tshetshen women, who took up arms at this last extremity, were slaughtered with their husbands. At last the bloody work was apparently at an end, and search ensued amongst the dead for the body of Chamyl. It was nowhere to be found. At last the discovery was made that a few of the garrison had taken refuge in holes in the side of the rock, looking over the river. No path led to these cavities; the only way to get at them was to lower men by ropes from the crag above. In this manner the surviving Tshetshens were attacked; quarter was neither asked nor given. The hole in which Chamyl himself was hidden held out the longest. Escape seemed, however, impossible; the rock was surrounded; the banks of the river were lined with soldiers; Grabbe's main object was the capture of Chamyl. At this critical moment the handful of Tshetshens still alive gave an example of heroic devotion. They knew that their leader's death would be a heavy loss to their country, and they resolved to sacrifice themselves to save him. With a few beams and planks, that chanced to be in the cave, they constructed a sort of raft. This they launched upon the Koisu, and floated with it down the stream, amidst a storm of Russian lead. The Russian general doubted not that Chamyl was on the raft, and ordered every exertion to kill or take him. Whilst the Cossacks spurred their horses into the river, and the infantry hurried along the bank, following the raft, a man sprang out of the hole into the Koisu, swam vigorously across the stream, landed at an unguarded spot, and gained the mountains unhurt. This man was Chamyl, who alone escaped with life from the bloody rock of Aculcho. His deliverance passed for miraculous amongst the enthusiastic mountaineers, with whom his influence, from that day forward, increased tenfold. Grabbe was furious; Chamyl's head was worth more than the heads of all the garrison: three thousand Russians had been sacrificed for the possession of a crag not worth the keeping.

After the fall of Aculcho, Chamyl's head-quarters were at the village of Dargo, in the mountain region south of the Russian fort of Girselaul, and thence he carried on the war with great vigour, surprising fortified posts, cutting off convoys, and sweeping the plain with his horsemen. Generals Grabbe and Golowin could not agree about the mode of operations. The former was for taking the offensive; the latter advocated the defensive and blockade system. Grabbe went to St Petersburg to plead in person for his plan, obtained a favourable hearing, and the emperor sent Prince Tchernicheff, the minister at war, to visit both flanks of the Caucasus. Before the prince reached the left wing of the line of operations, Grabbe resolved to surprise him with a brilliant achievement; and on the 29th May 1842, he marched from Girselaul with thirteen battalions, a small escort of mounted Cossacks, and a train of mountain artillery, to attack Dargo. The route was through forests, and along paths tangled with wild flowers and creeping plants, through which the heavy Russian infantry, encumbered with eight days' rations and sixty rounds of ball-cartridge, made but slow and painful progress. The first day's march was accomplished without fighting; only here and there the slender active form of a mountaineer was descried, as he peered between the trees at the long column of bayonets, and vanished as soon as he was observed. After midnight the dance began. The troops had eaten their rations, and were comfortably bivouacked, when they were assailed by a sharp fire from an invisible foe, to which they replied in the direction of the flashes. This skirmishing lasted all night; few were killed on either side, but the whole Russian division were deprived of sleep, and wearied for the next day's march. At daybreak the enemy retired; but at noon, when passing through a forest defile,

the column was again assailed, and soon the horses, and a few light carts accompanying it, were insufficient to convey the wounded. The staff urged the general to retrace his steps, but Grabbe was bent on welcoming Tchernicheff with a triumphant bulletin. Another sleepless bivouac – another fagging day, more skirmishing. At last, when within sight of the fortified village of Dargo, the loss of the column was so heavy, and its situation so critical, that a retreat was ordered. The daring and fury of the Tshetshens now knew no bounds; they assailed the troops sabre in hand, captured baggage and wounded, and at night prowled round the camp, like wolves round a dying soldier. On the 1st June, the fight recommenced. The valour displayed by the mountaineers was admitted by the Russians to be extraordinary, as was also their skill in wielding the terrible shaska. They made a fierce attack on the centre of the column – cut down the artillery-men and captured six guns. The Russians, who throughout the whole of this trying expedition did their duty as good and brave soldiers, were furious at the loss of their artillery, and by a desperate charge retook five pieces, the sixth being relinquished only because its carriage was broken. Upon the last day of the retreat, Chamyl came up with his horsemen. Had he been able to get these together two days sooner, it is doubtful whether any portion of the column would have escaped. As it was, the Russians lost nearly two thousand men; the weary and dispirited survivors re-entering Girselaul with downcast mien. Preparations had been made to celebrate their triumph, and, to add to their general's mortification, Tchernicheff was awaiting their arrival. On the prince's return to St Petersburg, both Grabbe and Golowin were removed from their commands.

Against this same Tshetshen fortress of Dargo, Count Woronzoff's expedition (already referred to) was made, in July 1845. A capital account of the affair is given in a letter from a Russian officer engaged, printed in Dr Wagner's book. Dargo had become an important place. Chamyl had established large stores there, and had built a mosque, to which came pilgrims from the remotest villages of Daghestan and Lesghistan, partly to pray, partly to see the dreaded chief – equally renowned as warrior and priest – and to give him information concerning the state of the country, and the movements of the Russians. Less vigorously opposed than Grabbe, and his measures better taken, Woronzoff reached Dargo with moderate loss. "The village," says the Russian officer: "was situated on the slope of a mountain, at the brink of a ravine, and consisted of sixty to seventy small stone-houses, and of a few larger buildings, where the stones were joined with mortar, instead of being merely superimposed, as is usually the case in Caucasian dwellings. One of these buildings had several irregular towers, of some apparent antiquity. When we approached, a thick smoke burst from them. Chamyl had ordered everything to be set on fire that could not be carried away. One must confess that, in this fierce determination of the enemy to refuse submission – to defend, foot by foot, the territory of his forefathers, and to leave to the Russians no other trophies than ashes and smoking ruins – there is a certain wild grandeur which extorts admiration, even though the hostile chief be no better than a fanatical barbarian." This reminds us of the words of the Circassian chief Mansour: – "When Turkey and England abandon us," he said, to Bell of the 'Vixen,' – "when all our powers of resistance are exhausted, we will burn our houses, and our goods, strangle our wives and our children, and retreat to our highest rocks, there to die, fighting to the very last man." "The greatest difficulty," said General Neidhardt to Dr Wagner, who was a frequent visitor at the house of that distinguished officer, "with which we have to contend, is the unappeasable, deep-rooted, ineradicable hatred cherished by all the mountaineers against the Russians. For this we know no cure; every form of severity and of kindness has been tried in turn, with equal ill-success." Valour and patriotism are nearly the only good qualities the Caucasians can boast. They are cruel, and for the most part faithless, especially the Tshetshens, and Dr Wagner warns us against crediting the exaggerated accounts frequently given of their many virtues. The Circassians are said to respect their plighted word, but there are many exceptions. General Neidhardt told Dr Wagner an anecdote of a Circassian, who presented himself before the commandant of one of the Black Sea fortresses, and offered to communicate most important intelligence, on condition of a certain reward. The reward

was promised. Then said the Circassian, – "To-morrow after sunset, your fort will be assailed by thousands of my countrymen." The informer was retained, whilst Cossacks and riflemen were sent out, and it proved that he had spoken the truth. The enemy, finding the garrison on their guard, retired after a short skirmish. The Circassian received his recompense, which he took without a word of thanks, and left the fortress. Without the walls, he met an unarmed soldier; hatred of the Russians, and thirst of blood, again got the ascendancy: he shot the soldier dead, and scampered off to the mountains.

Chamyl did not long remain indebted to the Russians for their visit to Dargo. His reputation of sanctity and valour enabled him to unite under his orders many tribes habitually hostile to each other, and which previously had fought each "on its own hook." Of these tribes he formed a powerful league; and in May 1846 he burst into Cabardia at the head of twenty thousand mountaineers, four thousand of whom were horsemen. Formidable though this force was, the venture was one of extreme temerity. He left behind him a double line of Russian camps and forts, and two rivers, then at the flood, and difficult to pass. With an undisciplined and heterogeneous army, without artillery or regular commissariat, this daring chief threw himself into a flat country, unfavourable to guerilla warfare; slipping through the Russian posts, marching more than four hundred miles, and utterly disregarding the danger he was in from a well-equipped army of upwards of seventy thousand men, to say nothing of the numerous military population of the Cossack settlements on the Terek and Sundscha, and of the fact that the Cabardians, long submissive to Russia, were more likely to arm in defence of their rulers than to favour the mountaineers. Shepherds and dwellers in the plain, and far less warlike than the other Circassian tribes, they never were able to make head against the Russians; and had remained indifferent to all the incentives of Tshetshen fanatics and propagandists. For years past, Chamyl had threatened them with a visit; but nevertheless, his sudden appearance greatly surprised and confounded both them and the Russian general, who had just concentrated all his movable columns, with a view to an expedition, relying overmuch upon his lines of forts and blockhouses. The Tshetshen raid was more daring, and at least as successful, as Abd-el-Kader's celebrated foray in the Metidja, in the year 1839. Chamyl addressed to the Cabardians a thundering proclamation, full of quotations from the Koran, and denouncing vengeance on them if they did not flock to the banner of the Prophet. The unlucky keepers of sheep found themselves between the devil and the deep sea. From terror rather than sympathy, a large number of villages declared for Chamyl, whose wild hordes burned and plundered the property of all who adhered to the Russians; leaving, like a swarm of locusts, desolation in their track. When the Cossacks began to gather, and the Russian generals to manœuvre, Chamyl, who knew he could not contend in the plain with disciplined and superior forces, and whose retreat by the road he came was already cut off, traversed Great and Little Cabardia, burning and destroying as he went; dashed through the Cossack colonies to the south of Ekaterinograd, and regained his mountains in safety – dragging with him booty, prisoners, and Cabardian recruits. These latter, who had joined through fear of Chamyl, remained with him through fear of the Russians. By this foray, whose apparent great rashness was justified by its complete success, Chamyl enriched his people, strengthened his army, and greatly weakened the confidence of the tribes of the plain in the efficacy of Russian protection. As usual, in cases of disaster, the Russians kept the affair as quiet as they could; but the truth could not be concealed from those most concerned, and murmurs of dismay ran along the exposed line fringing the Muscovite and Circassian territories.

The Russian army of the Caucasus reckoned, in 1843, about eighty thousand men, exclusive of thirty-five thousand who had little to do with the war, but were more especially employed in watching the extensive line of Turkish and Persian frontier, and in endeavouring to exclude contraband goods and Asiatic epidemics. But the severe fighting that occurred in 1842 and 1843, showed the necessity of an increase of force. Subsequent events have not admitted of a reduction in the Caucasian establishment; and we are probably very near the mark, in estimating the troops occupying the various forts and camps on the Black Sea, and the lines of the rivers, (Terek, Kuban, Koisu, &c.) at about

one hundred thousand men – not at all too many to guard so extensive a line, against so active and enterprising a foe. The Russian ranks are constantly thinned by destructive fevers, which, in bad years, have been known to carry off as much as a sixth of the Caucasian army. At a review at Vladikawkas, Dr Wagner was struck by the powerful build of the Russian foot-soldiers – broad-shouldered, broad-faced Slavonians, with enormous mustaches, drilled to automatical perfection. In point of bone and limb, every man of them was a grenadier. In a bayonet charge, such infantry are formidable opponents. Ségur mentions that, on the battle-field of Borodino, the nation of the stripped bodies was easily known – the muscle and size of the Russians contrasting with the slighter frames of French and Germans. "You may kill the Russians, but you will hardly make them run," was a saying of Frederick the Great; and certainly Seidlitz, who scattered the French so briskly at Rossbach, had to sweat blood before he overcame the Russians at Zorndorf. Those survivors of Napoleon's famous Guard who fought in the drawn battle of Eylau, will bear witness to the stubborn resistance and bull-dog qualities of the Muscovite. But the grenadier stature, and the immobility under fire – admirable qualities on a plain, and against regular troops – avail little in the Caucasus. The burly Russian pants and perspires up the hills, which the light-footed chamois-like Circassians and Tshetshens ascend at a run. The mountaineers understand their advantages, and decline standing still in the plain to be charged by a line of bayonets. They dance round the heavy Russian, who, with his well-stuffed knapsack and long greatcoat, can barely turn on his heel fast enough to face them. They catch him out skirmishing, and slaughter him in detail. "One might suppose," said a foreigner in the Russian service to Dr Wagner, "that the musket and bayonet of the Russian soldier would be too much, in single combat, for the sabre and dagger of the Tshetshen. The contrary is the case. Amongst the dead, slain in hand-to-hand encounter, there are usually a third more Russians than Caucasians. Strange to say, too, the Russian soldier, who in the serried ranks of his battalion meets death with wonderful firmness, and who has shown the utmost valour in contests with European, Turkish, and Persian armies, often betrays timidity in the Caucasian war, and retreats from the outposts to the column, in spite of the heavy punishment he thereby incurs. I myself was exposed, during the murderous fight near Ischkeri (Dargo,) in 1842, to considerable danger, because, having gone to the assistance of a skirmisher, who was sharply engaged with a Tshetshen, the skirmisher ran, leaving me to fight it out alone." This shyness of Russian soldiers in single fight and irregular warfare, is not inexplicable. They have no chance of promotion, no honourable stimulus: food and brandy, discipline and dread of the lash, convert them from serfs into soldiers. As bits of a machine, they are admirable when united, but asunder they are mere screws and bolts. Fanatic zeal, bitter hatred, and thirst of blood, animate the Caucasian, who, trained to arms from his boyhood, and ignorant of drill, relies only upon his keen shaska, and upon the Prophet's protection.

Presuming Dr Wagner's statement of Russian rations to be correct, it is a puzzle how the soldier preserves the condition of his thews and sinews. The daily allowance consists of three pounds of bread, black as a coal; a water-soup, in which three pounds of bacon are cut up for every two hundred and fifty men; a ration of *wodka*, or bad brandy, and once a-week a small piece of meat. The pay is nine rubles a-year, (about one-third of a penny *per diem*,) out of which the unfortunate private has to purchase his stock, cap, soap, blacking, salt, &c., &c. Any surplus he is allowed to expend upon his amusement. "Our soldiers are obliged to steal a little," said a German officer in the Russian service to Dr Wagner; "their pay will not purchase soap and blacking; and if their shirts are not clean, and their shoes polished, the stick is their portion." "Stealing a little," in one way or other, is no uncommon practice in Russia, even amongst more highly placed personages than the soldiers. Officials of all kinds, both civil and military, particularly those of the middle and lower ranks, are prone to peculation. Dr Wagner was deafened with the complaints that from all sides met his ear. "Ah! if the emperor knew it!" was the usual cry. The subjects of Nicholas have strong faith in his justice. It is well remembered in the Caucasus, especially by the army, how one day, at Teflis, the emperor, upon parade, in full view of mob and soldiers, tore, with his own hand, the golden insignia of a general's

rank from the coat of Prince Dadian, denounced to him as enriching himself at his men's expense. For several years afterwards, the prince carried the musket, and wore the coarse gray coat of a private sentinel. The officers pitied him, although his condemnation was just. "*Il faut profiter d'une bonne place,*" is their current maxim. The soldiers rejoiced; but in secret; for such rejoicings are not always safe. A sentence often recoils unpleasantly upon the accuser. Dr Wagner gives sundry examples. A major in Sewastopol fell in love with a sergeant's wife; and as she disregarded his addresses, he persecuted her and her husband at every opportunity. In despair, the sergeant at last complained to the general commanding. He was listened to; an investigation ensued; the major was superseded; and from his successor the sergeant received five hundred lashes, under pretence of his having left his regiment without permission when he went to lodge his charge. Corporal punishment, of frequent application, at the mere caprice of their superiors, to Russian serfs and soldiers, is inflicted with sticks or rods, the knout being reserved for very grave offences, such as murder, rebellion, &c., and preceding banishment to Siberia, should the sufferer survive. Dr Wagner's description of this dreadful punishment is horribly vivid. Few criminals are sentenced to more than twenty-five lashes, and less than twenty often kill. Running the gauntlet through three thousand men is the usual punishment of deserters; and this would usually be a sentence of death but for the compassion of the officers, who hint to their companies to strike lightly. If the sufferer faints, and is declared by the surgeon unable to receive all his punishment, he gets the remainder at some future time. "Take him down" is a phrase unknown in the Russian service, until the offender has received the last lash of his sentence.

Severity is doubtless necessary in an army composed like that of Russia. Two-thirds of the soldiers are serfs, whose masters, being allowed to send what men they please – so long as they make up their quota – naturally contribute the greatest scamps and idlers upon their estates. The army in Russia is what the galleys are in France, and the hulks in England – a punishment for an infinity of offences. An official embezzles funds – to the army with him; a Jew is caught smuggling – off with him to the ranks; a Tartar cattle-stealer, a vagrant gipsy, an Armenian trader convicted of fraud, a Petersburg coachman who has run over a pedestrian – all food for powder – gray coats and bayonets for them all. Jews abound in the Russian army, being subjected to a severe conscription in Poland and southern Russia. They submit with exemplary patience to the hardships of the service, and to the taunts of their Russian comrades. Poles are of course numerous in the ranks, but they are less enduring than the Israelite, and often desert to the Circassians, who make them work as servants, or sell them as slaves to the Turks. No race are too unmilitary in their nature to be ground into soldiers by the mill of Russian discipline. Besides Jews, gipsies and Armenians figure on the muster-roll. It must have been a queer day for the ragged Zingaro, when the Russian sergeant first stepped into his smoky tent, bade him clip his elf locks, wash his grimy countenance, and follow to the field. For him the pomp of war had no seductions; he would far rather have stuck to his den and vermin, and to his meal of roast rats and hedgehogs. But military discipline works miracles. The slouching filthy vagabond of yesterday now stands erect as if he had swallowed his ramrod, his shoes a brilliant jet, his buttons sparkling in the sun – a soldier from toe to top-knot.

The right bank of the Kuban, from the Sea of Azov to the mouth of the Laba, (a tributary of the former stream,) is peopled with Tchernamortsy Cossacks, who furnish ten regiments, each of a thousand horsemen, for the defence of their lands and families. These cavalry carry a musket, slung on the back, and a long red lance: their dress is a sheepskin jacket, except on state occasions, when they sport uniform. They are much less feared by the Circassians than are the Cossacks of the Line, who wear the Circassian dress, carry sabres instead of lances, and are more valiant, active and skilful, than their Tchernamortsy neighbours. The Cossacks of the Caucasian Line dwell on the banks of the Kuban and Terek, form a military colony of about fifty thousand souls, and keep six thousand horsemen ready for the field. There is a mixture of Circassian blood in their veins, and they are first-rate fighting men. Their villages are exposed to frequent attacks from the mountaineers; but when these are not exceedingly rapid in collecting their booty, and effecting their retreat, the Cossacks

assemble, and a desperate fight ensues. When the combatants are numerically matched, the equality of arms, horses, and skill renders the issue very doubtful. The Tchernamortsies and Don Cossacks are less able to cope with the Circassians. In a *mêlée* their lances are inferior to the shaska. The rival claims of lance and sabre have often been discussed; many trials of their respective merits have been made in English, French, and German riding-schools; and much ink has been shed on the subject. Unquestionably the lance has done good service, and in certain circumstances is a terrible arm. "At the battle of Dresden," Marshal Marmont tells us, "the Austrian infantry were repeatedly assailed by the French cuirassiers, whom they as often beat back, although the rain prevented their firing, and the bayonet was their sole defence. But fifty lancers of Latour-Maubourg's escort at once broke their ranks." Had the cuirassiers had lances, their first charge, Marmont plausibly enough asserts, would have sufficed. This leads to another question, often mooted – whether the lance be properly a light or a heavy cavalry weapon. When used to break infantry, weight of man and horse might be an advantage; but in pursuit, where – especially in rugged and mountainous countries – the lance is found particularly useful, the preference is obviously for the swift steed and light cavalier. In the irregular cavalry combats on the Caucasian line, the sabre carries the day. Unless the Don Cossack's first lance-thrust settles his adversary, (which is rarely the case,) the next instant the adroit Circassian is within his guard, and then the betting is ten to one on Caucasus. Moreover, the Don Cossacks, brought from afar to wage a perilous and profitless war, are unwilling combatants. They find blows more plentiful than booty, and approve themselves arrant thieves and shy fighters. Relieved every two or three years, they have scarcely time to get broken in to the peculiar mode of warfare. The Cossacks of the Line are the flower of the hundred thousand wild warriors scattered over the steppes of Southern Russia, and ready, at one man's word, to vault into the saddle. Their gallant feats are numerous. In 1843, during Dr Wagner's visit, three thousand Circassians dashed across the Kuban, near the fortified village of Ustlaba. A dense fog hid them from the Russian vedettes. Suddenly fifty Cossacks of the Line, the escort of a gun, found themselves face to face with the mountaineers. The mist was so thick that the horses' heads almost touched before either party perceived the other. Flight was impossible, but the Cossacks fought like fiends. Forty-seven met a soldier's death; only three were captured, and accompanied the cannon across the river, by which road the Circassians at once retreated, having taken the brave detachment for the advanced guard of a strong force.

The word Kasak, Kosak, or Kossack, variously interpreted by Klaproth and other etymologists as robber, volunteer, daredevil, &c., conveys to civilised ears rude and inelegant associations. Paris has not yet forgotten the uncouth hordes, wrapped in sheepskins and overrun with vermin, who, in the hour of her humiliation, startled her streets, and made her dandies shriek for their smelling-bottles. Not that Paris saw the worst of them. Some of the Uralian bears, centaurs of the steppes, Calibans on horseback, were never allowed to pass the Russian frontier. Their emperor appreciated their good qualities, but left them at home. Since then, a change has occurred. Civilisation has made huge strides north-eastward. Near Fanagoria, Dr Wagner passed a pleasant evening with a Cossack officer, a prime fellow, with all unquenchable thirst for toddy, and an inexhaustible store of information. He had made the campaigns against the French; had evidently been bred a savage, or little better; but had acquired, during his long military career, knowledge of the world and a certain degree of polish. Amongst other interesting matters, he gave a sketch of his grandfather, a bloodthirsty old warrior and image-worshipper, the scourge of his Nogay neighbours, and a great slayer of the Turk; who in 1812, at the mature age of ninety, had responded to Czar Alexander's summons to fight for "faith and fatherland," and had taken the field under Platoff, at the head of thirteen sons and threescore grandsons. Whilst the Cossack major told the history of the "Demon of the Steppes," as his ferocious ancestor was called, his son, a gay lieutenant in the Cossacks of the Guard, entered the apartment. This young gentleman, slender, handsome, with well-cut uniform, graceful manners, and well-waxed mustaches, declined the punch, "having got used at St Petersburg to tea and champagne." He brought intelligence of promotions and decorations, of high play at Tcherkask, (the capital of the Don-Cossacks' country,)

and of the establishment at Toganrog of a French *restaurateur*, who retailed *Veuve Clicquot's* genuine champagne at four silver rubles a bottle. He was fascinated by the French actresses at St Petersburg, and enthusiastic in praise of Taglioni, then displaying her legs and graces in the Russian metropolis. Dr Wagner left the symposium with a vivid impression of the contrast between the bearded barbarian of 1812 and the dapper guardsman of thirty years later; and with the full conviction that the next Russian emperor who makes an inroad into civilised Europe, will have no occasion to be ashamed of his Cossacks, even though his route should lead him to the polite capital of the French republic.

THE CAXTONS. – PART X

CHAPTER XLVI

My uncle's conjecture as to the parentage of Francis Vivian seemed to me a positive discovery. Nothing more likely than that this wilful boy had formed some headstrong attachment which no father would sanction, and so, thwarted and irritated, thrown himself on the world. Such an explanation was the more agreeable to me, as it cleared up all that had appeared more discreditable in the mystery that surrounded Vivian. I could never bear to think that he had done anything mean and criminal, however I might believe he had been rash and faulty. It was natural that the unfriended wanderer should have been thrown into a society, the equivocal character of which had failed to revolt the audacity of an inquisitive mind and adventurous temper; but it was natural, also, that the habits of gentle birth, and that silent education which English gentlemen commonly receive from their very cradle, should have preserved his honour, at least, intact through all. Certainly the pride, the notions, the very faults of the wellborn had remained in full force – why not the better qualities, however smothered for the time? I felt thankful for the thought that Vivian was returning to an element in which he might repurify his mind, – refit himself for that sphere to which he belonged; – thankful that we might yet meet, and our present half intimacy mature, perhaps, into healthful friendship.

It was with such thoughts that I took up my hat the next morning to seek Vivian, and judge if we had gained the right clue, when we were startled by what was a rare sound at our door – the postman's knock. My father was at the Museum; my mother in high conference, or close preparation for our approaching departure, with Mrs Primmins; Roland, I, and Blanche had the room to ourselves.

"The letter is not for me," said Pisistratus.

"Nor for me, I am sure," said the Captain, when the servant entered and confuted him – for the letter was for him. He took it up wonderingly and suspiciously, as Glumdalclitch took up Gulliver, or as (if naturalists) we take up an unknown creature, that we are not quite sure will not bite and sting us. Ah! it has stung or bit you, Captain Roland! for you start and change colour – you suppress a cry as you break the seal – you breathe hard as you read – and the letter seems short – but it takes time in the reading, for you go over it again and again. Then you fold it up – crumple it – thrust it into your breast pocket – and look round like a man waking from a dream. Is it a dream of pain, or of pleasure? Verily, I cannot guess, for nothing is on that eagle face either of pain or pleasure, but rather of fear, agitation, bewilderment. Yet the eyes are bright, too, and there is a smile on that iron lip.

My uncle looked round, I say, and called hastily for his cane and his hat, and then began buttoning his coat across his broad breast, though the day was hot enough to have unbuttoned every breast in the tropics.

"You are not going out, uncle?"

"Yes, yes."

"But are you strong enough yet? Let me go with you?"

"No, sir; no. Blanche, come here." He took the child in his arms, surveyed her wistfully, and kissed her. "You have never given me pain, Blanche: say, 'God bless and prosper you, father!'"

"God bless and prosper my dear, dear papa!" said Blanche, putting her little hands together, as if in prayer.

"There – that should bring me luck, Blanche," said the Captain, gaily, and setting her down. Then seizing his cane from the servant, and putting on his hat with a determined air, he walked stoutly forth; and I saw him, from the window, march along the streets as cheerfully as if he had been besieging Badajoz.

"God prosper thee, too!" said I, involuntarily.

And Blanche took hold of my hand, and said in her prettiest way, (and her pretty ways were many), "I wish you would come with us, cousin Sisty, and help me to love papa. Poor papa! he wants us both – he wants all the love we can give him!"

"That he does, my dear Blanche; and I think it a great mistake that we don't all live together. Your papa ought not to go to that tower of his, at the world's end, but come to our snug, pretty house, with a garden full of flowers, for you to be Queen of the May – from May to November; – to say nothing of a duck that is more sagacious than any creature in the Fables I gave you the other day."

Blanche laughed and clapped her hands – "Oh, that would be so nice! but," – and she stopped gravely, and added, "but then, you see, there would not be the tower to love papa; and I am sure that the tower must love him very much, for he loves it dearly."

It was my turn to laugh now. "I see how it is, you little witch," said I; "you would coax us to come and live with you and the owls! With all my heart, so far as I am concerned."

"Sisty," said Blanche, with an appalling solemnity on her face, "do you know what I've been thinking?"

"Not I, miss – what? – something very deep, I can see – very horrible, indeed, I fear, you look so serious."

"Why, I've been thinking," continued Blanche, not relaxing a muscle, and without the least bit of a blush – "I've been thinking that I'll be your little wife; and then, of course, we shall all live together."

Blanche did not blush, but I did. "Ask me that ten years hence, if you dare, you impudent little thing; and now, run away to Mrs Primmins, and tell her to keep you out of mischief, for I must say good-morning."

But Blanche did not run away, and her dignity seemed exceedingly hurt at my mode of taking her alarming proposition, for she retired into a corner pouting, and sate down with great majesty. So there I left her, and went my way to Vivian. He was out; but, seeing books on his table, and having nothing to do, I resolved to wait for his return. I had enough of my father in me to turn at once to the books for company; and, by the side of some graver works which I had recommended, I found certain novels in French, that Vivian had got from a circulating library. I had a curiosity to read these – for, except the old classic novels of France, this mighty branch of its popular literature was then new to me. I soon got interested, but what an interest! – the interest that a nightmare might excite, if one caught it out of one's sleep, and set to work to examine it. By the side of what dazzling shrewdness, what deep knowledge of those holes and corners in the human system, of which Goethe must have spoken when he said somewhere – (if I recollect right, and don't misquote him, which I'll not answer for) – "There is something in every man's heart which, if we could know, would make us hate him," – by the side of all this, and of much more that showed prodigious boldness and energy of intellect, what strange exaggeration – what mock nobility of sentiment – what inconceivable perversion of reasoning – what damnable demoralisation! I hate the cant of charging works of fiction with the accusation – often unjust and shallow – that they interest us in vice, or palliate crime, because the author truly shows what virtues may entangle themselves with vices; or commands our compassion, and awes our pride, by teaching us how men deceive and bewitch themselves into guilt. Such painting belongs to the dark truth of all tragedy, from Sophocles to Shakspeare. No; this is not what shocked me in those books – it was not the interesting me in vice, for I felt no interest in it at all; it was the insisting that vice is something uncommonly noble – it was the portrait of some coldblooded adultress, whom the author or authoress chooses to call *pauvre Ange!* (poor angel!); – it was some scoundrel who dupes, cheats, and murders under cover of a duel, in which he is a second St George; who does not instruct us by showing through what metaphysical process he became a scoundrel, but who is continually forced upon us as a very favourable specimen of mankind; – it was the view of society altogether, painted in colours so hideous that, if true, instead of a revolution, it would draw down a deluge; – it was the hatred, carefully instilled, of the poor against the rich – it was the war breathed between

class and class – it was that envy of all superiorities, which loves to show itself by allowing virtue only to a blouse, and asserting that a man must be a rogue if he belong to that rank of society in which, from the very gifts of education, from the necessary associations of circumstances, roguery is the last thing probable or natural. It was all this, and things a thousand times worse, that set my head in a whirl, as hour after hour slipped on, and I still gazed, spell-bound, on these Chimeras and Typhons – these symbols of the Destroying Principle. "Poor Vivian!" said I, as I rose at last, "if thou redest these books with pleasure, or from habit, no wonder that thou seemest to me so obtuse about right and wrong, and to have a great cavity where thy brain should have the bump of 'conscientiousness' in full salience!"

Nevertheless, to do those demoniacs justice, I had got through time imperceptibly by their pestilent help; and I was startled to see, by my watch, how late it was. I had just resolved to leave a line, fixing an appointment for the morrow, and so depart, when I heard Vivian's knock – a knock that had great character in it – haughty, impatient, irregular; not a neat, symmetrical, harmonious, unpretending knock, but a knock that seemed to set the whole house and street at defiance: it was a knock bullying – a knock ostentatious – a knock irritating and offensive – "impiger" and "iracundus."

But the step that came up the stairs did not suit the knock: it was a step light, yet firm – slow, yet elastic.

The maid-servant who had opened the door had, no doubt, informed Vivian of my visit, for he did not seem surprised to see me; but he cast that hurried, suspicious look round the room which a man is apt to cast when he has left his papers about, and finds some idler, on whose trustworthiness he by no means depends, seated in the midst of the unguarded secrets. The look was not flattering; but my conscience was so unrepachable that I laid all the blame upon the general suspiciousness of Vivian's character.

"Three hours, at least, have I been here!" said I, maliciously.

"Three hours!" – again the look.

"And this is the worst secret I have discovered," – and I pointed to those literary Manicheans.

"Oh!" said he carelessly, "French novels! – I don't wonder you stayed so long. I can't read your English novels – flat and insipid: there are truth and life here."

"Truth and life!" cried I, every hair on my head erect with astonishment – "then hurrah for falsehood and death!"

"They don't please you; no accounting for tastes."

"I beg your pardon – I account for yours, if you really take for truth and life monsters so nefast and flagitious. For heaven's sake, my dear fellow, don't suppose that any man could get on in England – get anywhere but to the Old Bailey or Norfolk Island, if he squared his conduct to such topsy-turvy notions of the world as I find here."

"How many years are you my senior," asked Vivian sneeringly, "that you should play the mentor, and correct my ignorance of the world?"

"Vivian, it is not age and experience that speak here, it is something far wiser than they – the instinct of a man's heart, and a gentleman's honour."

"Well, well," said Vivian, rather discomposed, "let the poor books alone; you know my creed – that books influence us little one way or the other."

"By the great Egyptian library, and the soul of Diodorus, I wish you could hear my father upon that point! Come," added I, with sublime compassion – "come, it is not too late – do let me introduce you to my father. I will consent to read French novels all my life, if a single chat with Austin Caxton does not send you home with a happier face and a lighter heart. Come, let me take you back to dine with us to-day."

"I cannot," said Vivian with some confusion – "I cannot, for this day I leave London. Some other time perhaps – for," he added, but not heartily, "we may meet again."

"I hope so," said I, wringing his hand, "and that is likely, – since, in spite of yourself, I have guessed your secret – your birth and parentage."

"How!" cried Vivian, turning pale, and gnawing his lip – "what do you mean? – speak."

"Well, then, are you not the lost, runaway son of Colonel Vivian? Come, say the truth; let us be confidants."

Vivian threw off a succession of his abrupt sighs; and then, seating himself, leant his face on the table, confused, no doubt, to find himself discovered.

"You are near the mark," said he at last, "but do not ask me farther yet. Some day," he cried impetuously, and springing suddenly to his feet – "some day you shall know all: yes; some day, if I live, when that name shall be high in the world; yes, when the world is at my feet!" He stretched his right hand as if to grasp the space, and his whole face was lighted with a fierce enthusiasm. The glow died away, and with a slight return of his scornful smile, he said – "Dreams yet; dreams! And now, look at this paper." And he drew out a memorandum, scrawled over with figures.

"This, I think, is my pecuniary debt to you; in a few days, I shall discharge it. Give me your address."

"Oh!" said I, pained, "can you speak to me of money, Vivian?"

"It is one of those instincts of honour you cite so often," answered he, colouring. "Pardon me."

"That is my address," said I, stooping to write, to conceal my wounded feelings. "You will avail yourself of it, I hope, often, and tell me that you are well and happy."

"When I am happy, you shall know."

"You do not require any introduction to Trevanion?"

Vivian hesitated: "No, I think not. If ever I do, I will write for it."

I took up my hat, and was about to go – for I was still chilled and mortified – when, as if by an irresistible impulse, Vivian came to me hastily, flung his arms round my neck, and kissed me as a boy kisses his brother.

"Bear with me!" he cried in a faltering voice: "I did not think to love any one as you have made me love you, though sadly against the grain. If you are not my good angel, it is that nature and habit are too strong for you. Certainly, some day we shall meet again. I shall have time, in the meanwhile, to see if the world can be indeed 'mine oyster, which I with sword can open.' I would be *aut Cæsar aut nullus*! Very little other Latin know I to quote from! If Cæsar, men will forgive me all the means to the end; if *nullus*, London has a river, and in every street one may buy a cord!"

"Vivian! Vivian!"

"Now go, my dear friend, while my heart is softened – go, before I shock you with some return of the native Adam. Go – go!"

And taking me gently by the arm, Francis Vivian drew me from the room, and, re-entering, locked his door.

Ah! if I could have left him Robert Hall, instead of those execrable Typhons! But would that medicine have suited his case, or must grim Experience write sterner recipes with her iron hand?

CHAPTER XLVII

When I got back, just in time for dinner, Roland had not returned, nor did he return till late in the evening. All our eyes were directed towards him, as we rose with one accord to give him welcome; but his face was like a mask – it was locked, and rigid, and unreadable.

Shutting the door carefully after him, he came to the hearth, stood on it, upright and calm, for a few moments, and then asked —

"Has Blanche gone to bed?"

"Yes," said my mother, "but not to sleep, I am sure; she made me promise to tell her when you came back."

Roland's brow relaxed.

"To-morrow, sister," said he slowly, "will you see that she has the proper mourning made for her? My son is dead."

"Dead!" we cried with one voice, and surrounding him with one impulse.

"Dead! impossible – you could not say it so calmly. Dead! – how do you know? You may be deceived. Who told you? – why do you think so?"

"I have seen his remains," said my uncle, with the same gloomy calm. "We will all mourn for him. Pisistratus, you are heir to my name now, as to your father's. Good-night; excuse me, all – all you dear and kind ones; I am worn out."

Roland lighted his candle and went away, leaving us thunderstruck; but he came back again – looked round – took up his book, open in the favourite passage – nodded again, and again vanished. We looked at each other, as if we had seen a ghost. Then my father rose and went out of the room, and remained in Roland's till the night was wellnigh gone. We sat up – my mother and I – till he returned. His benign face looked profoundly sad.

"How is it, sir Can you tell us more?"

My father shook his head.

"Roland prays that you may preserve the same forbearance you have shown hitherto, and never mention his son's name to him. Peace be to the living, as to the dead. Kitty, this changes our plans; we must all go to Cumberland – we cannot leave Roland thus!"

"Poor, poor Roland!" said my mother, through her tears. "And to think that father and son were not reconciled. But Roland forgives him now – oh, yes! *now!*"

"It is not Roland we can censure," said my father, almost fiercely; "it is – but enough. We must hurry out of town as soon as we can: Roland will recover in the native air of his old ruins."

We went up to bed mournfully.

"And so," thought I, "ends one grand object of my life! – I had hoped to have brought those two together. But, alas! what peacemaker like the grave!"

CHAPTER XLVIII

My uncle did not leave his room for three days, but he was much closeted with a lawyer; and my father dropped some words which seemed to imply that the deceased had incurred debts, and that the poor Captain was making some charge on his small property. As Roland had said that he had seen the remains of his son, I took it at first for granted that we should attend a funeral, but no word of this was said. On the fourth day, Roland, in deep mourning, entered a hackney coach with the lawyer, and was absent about two hours. I did not doubt that he had thus quietly fulfilled the last mournful offices. On his return, he shut himself up again for the rest of the day, and would not see even my father. But the next morning he made his appearance as usual, and I even thought that he seemed more cheerful than I had yet known him – whether he played a part, or whether the worst was now over, and the grave was less cruel than uncertainty. On the following day, we all set out for Cumberland.

In the interval, Uncle Jack had been almost constantly at the house, and, to do him justice, he had seemed unaffectedly shocked at the calamity that had befallen Roland. There was, indeed, no want of heart in Uncle Jack, whenever you went straight at it; but it was hard to find if you took a circuitous route towards it through the pockets. The worthy speculator had indeed much business to transact with my father before we left town. The *Anti-Publisher Society* had been set up, and it was through the obstetric aid of that fraternity that the Great Book was to be ushered into the world. The new journal, the *Literary Times*, was also far advanced – not yet out, but my father was fairly in for it. There were preparations for its debut on a vast scale, and two or three gentlemen in black – one of whom looked like a lawyer, and another like a printer, and a third uncommonly like a Jew – called twice, with papers of a very formidable aspect. All these preliminaries settled, the last thing I heard Uncle Jack say, with a slap on my father's back, was, "Fame and fortune both made now! – you may go to sleep in safety, for you leave me wide awake. Jack Tibbets never sleeps!"

I had thought it strange that, since my abrupt exodus from Trevanion's house, no notice had been taken of any of us by himself or Lady Ellinor. But on the very eve of our departure, came a kind note from Trevanion to me, dated from his favourite country seat, (accompanied by a present of some rare books to my father,) in which he said briefly that there had been illness in his family, which had obliged him to leave town for a change of air, but that Lady Ellinor expected to call on my mother the next week. He had found amongst his books some curious works of the Middle Ages, amongst others a complete set of Cardan, which he knew my father would like to have, and so sent them. There was no allusion to what had passed between us.

In reply to this note, after due thanks on my father's part, who seized upon the Cardan (Lyons edition, 1663, ten volumes folio) as a silkworm does upon a mulberry leaf, I expressed our joint regrets that there was no hope of our seeing Lady Ellinor, as we were just leaving town. I should have added something on the loss my uncle had sustained, but my father thought that, since Roland shrank from any mention of his son, even by his nearest kindred, it would be his obvious wish not to parade his affliction beyond that circle.

And there had been illness in Trevanion's family! On whom had it fallen? I could not rest satisfied with that general expression, and I took my answer myself to Trevanion's house, instead of sending it by the post. In reply to my inquiries, the porter said that all the family were expected at the end of the week; that he had heard both Lady Ellinor and Miss Trevanion had been rather poorly, but that they were now better. I left my note, with orders to forward it; and my wounds bled afresh as I came away.

We had the whole coach to ourselves in our journey, and a silent journey it was, till we arrived at a little town about eight miles from my uncle's residence, to which we could only get through a cross-road. My uncle insisted on preceding us that night, and, though he had written, before we started, to

announce our coming, he was fidgety lest the poor tower should not make the best figure it could; – so he went alone, and we took our ease at our inn.

Betimes the next day we hired a fly-coach – for a chaise could never have held us and my father's books – and jogged through a labyrinth of villanous lanes, which no Marshal Wade had ever reformed from their primal chaos. But poor Mrs Primmins and the canary-bird alone seemed sensible of the jolts; the former, who sate opposite to us, wedged amidst a medley of packages, all marked "care, to be kept top uppermost," (why I know not, for they were but books, and whether they lay top or bottom it could not materially affect their value,) – the former, I say, contrived to extend her arms over those *disjecta membra*, and, griping a window-sill with the right hand, and a window-sill with the left, kept her seat rampant, like the split eagle of the Austrian Empire – in fact it would be well, now-a-days, if the split eagle were as firm as Mrs Primmins! As for the canary, it never failed to respond, by an astonished chirp, to every "Gracious me!" and "Lord save us!" which the delve into a rut, or the bump out of it, sent forth from Mrs Primmins's lips, with all the emphatic dolor of thõe "Aĩ, ðĩ" in a Greek chorus.

But my father, with his broad hat over his brows, was in deep thought. The scenes of his youth were rising before him, and his memory went, smooth as a spirit's wing, over delve and bump. And my mother, who sat next him, had her arm on his shoulder, and was watching his face jealously. Did she think that, in that thoughtful face, there was regret for the old love? Blanche, who had been very sad, and had wept much and quietly since they put on her the mourning, and told her that she had no brother, (though she had no remembrance of the lost), began now to evince infantine curiosity and eagerness to catch the first peep of her father's beloved tower. And Blanche sat on my knee, and I shared her impatience. At last there came in view a church spire – a church – a plain square building near it, the parsonage, (my father's old home) – a long straggling street of cottages and rude shops, with a better kind of house here and there – and in the hinder ground, a gray deformed mass of wall and ruin, placed on one of those eminences on which the Danes loved to pitch camp or build fort, with one high, rude, Anglo-Norman tower rising from the midst. Few trees were round it, and those either poplars or firs, save, as we approached, one mighty oak – integral and unscathed. The road now wound behind the parsonage, and up a steep ascent. Such a road! – the whole parish ought to have been flogged for it! If I had sent up a road like that, even on a map, to Dr Herman, I should not have sat down in comfort for a week to come!

The fly-coach came to a full stop.

"Let us get out," cried I, opening the door and springing to the ground to set the example.

Blanche followed, and my respected parents came next. But when Mrs Primmins was about to heave herself into movement,

"*Papæ!*" said my father. "I think, Mrs Primmins, you must remain in, to keep the books steady."

"Lord love you!" cried Mrs Primmins, aghast.

"The subtraction of such a mass, or *moles*– supple and elastic as all flesh is, and fitting into the hard corners of the inert matter – such a subtraction, Mrs Primmins, would leave a vacuum which no natural system, certainly no artificial organisation, could sustain. There would be a regular dance of atoms, Mrs Primmins; my books would fly here, there, on the floor, out of the window!

"*Corporis officium est quoniam omnia deorsum.*"

The business of a body like yours, Mrs Primmins, is to press all things down – to keep them tight, as you will know one of these days – that is, if you will do me the favour to read Lucretius, and master that material philosophy, of which I may say, without flattery, my dear Mrs Primmins, that you are a living illustration."

These, the first words my father had spoken since we set out from the inn, seemed to assure my mother that she need have no apprehension as to the character of his thoughts, for her brow cleared, and she said, laughing,

"Only look at poor Primmins, and then at that hill!"

"You may subtract Primmins, if you will be answerable for the remnant, Kitty. Only, I warn you that it is against all the laws of physics."

So saying, he sprang lightly forward, and, taking hold of my arm, paused and looked round, and drew the loud free breath with which we draw native air.

"And yet," said my father, after that grateful and affectionate inspiration – "and yet, it must be owned, that a more ugly country one cannot see out of Cambridgeshire."⁵

"Nay," said I, "it is bold and large, it has a beauty of its own. Those immense, undulating, uncultivated, treeless tracks have surely their charm of wildness and solitude! And how they suit the character of the ruin! All is feudal there: I understand Roland better now."

"I hope in heaven Cardan will come to no harm!" cried my father; "he is very handsomely bound; and he fitted beautifully just into the fleshiest part of that fidgety Primmins."

Blanche, meanwhile, had run far before us, and I followed fast. There were still the remains of that deep trench (surrounding the ruins on three sides, leaving a ragged hill-top at the fourth) which made the favourite fortification of all the Teutonic tribes. A causeway, raised on brick arches, now, however, supplied the place of the drawbridge, and the outer gate was but a mass of picturesque ruin. Entering into the courtyard or bailey, the old castle mound, from which justice had been dispensed, was in full view, rising higher than the broken walls around it, and partially overgrown with brambles. And there stood, comparatively whole, the tower or keep, and from its portals emerged the veteran owner.

His ancestors might have received us in more state, but certainly they could not have given us a warmer greeting. In fact, in his own domain, Roland appeared another man. His stiffness, which was a little repulsive to those who did not understand it, was all gone. He seemed less proud, precisely because he and his pride, on that ground, were on good terms with each other. How gallantly he extended – not his arm, in our modern Jack-and-Jill sort of fashion – but his right hand, to my mother; how carefully he led her over "brake, bush, and scaur," through the low vaulted door, where a tall servant, who, it was easy to see, had been a soldier – in the precise livery, no doubt, warranted by the heraldic colours, (his stockings were red!) – stood upright as a sentry. And, coming into the hall, it looked absolutely cheerful – it took us by surprise. There was a great fire-place, and, though it was still summer, a great fire! It did not seem a bit too much, for the walls were stone, the lofty roof open to the rafters, while the windows were small and narrow, and so high and so deep sunk that one seemed in a vault. Nevertheless, I say the room looked sociable and cheerful – thanks principally to the fire, and partly to a very ingenious medley of old tapestry at one end, and matting at the other, fastened to the lower part of the walls, seconded by an arrangement of furniture which did credit to my uncle's taste for the Picturesque. After we had looked about and admired to our hearts' content, Roland took us – not up one of those noble staircases you see in the later manorial residences – but a little winding stone stair, into the rooms he had appropriated to his guests. There was first a small chamber, which he called my father's study – in truth, it would have done for any philosopher or saint who wished to shut out the world – and might have passed for the interior of such a column as Stylites inhabited; for you must have climbed a ladder to have looked out of the window, and then the vision of no short-sighted man could have got over the interval in the wall made by the narrow casement, which, after all, gave no other prospect than a Cumberland sky, with an occasional rook in it. But my father, I think I have said before, did not much care for scenery, and he looked round with great satisfaction upon the retreat assigned him.

"We can knock up shelves for your books in no time," said my uncle, rubbing his hands.

⁵ This certainly cannot be said of Cumberland generally, one of the most beautiful counties in Great Britain. But the immediate district to which Mr Caxton's exclamation refers; if not ugly, is at least savage, bare, and rude.

"It would be a charity," quoth my father, "for they have been very long in a recumbent position, and would like to stretch themselves, poor things. My dear Roland, this room is made for books – so round and so deep. I shall sit here like Truth in a well."

"And there is a room for you, sister, just out of it," said my uncle, opening a little low prison-like door into a charming room, for its window was low, and it had an iron balcony; "and out of that is the bed-room. For you, Pisistratus, my boy, I am afraid that it is soldier's quarters, indeed, with which you will have to put up. But never mind; in a day or two we shall make all worthy a general of your illustrious name – for he was a great general, Pisistratus the First – was he not, brother?"

"All tyrants are," said my father: "the knack of soldiering is indispensable to them."

"Oh, you may say what you please here!" said Roland, in high good humour, as he drew me down stairs, still apologising for my quarters, and so earnestly that I made up my mind that I was to be put into an *oubliette*. Nor were my suspicions much dispelled on seeing that we had to leave the keep, and pick our way into what seemed to me a mere heap of rubbish, on the dexter side of the court. But I was agreeably surprised to find, amidst these wrecks, a room with a noble casement commanding the whole country, and placed immediately over a plot of ground cultivated as a garden. The furniture was ample, though homely; the floors and walls well matted; and, altogether, despite the inconvenience of having to cross the courtyard to get to the rest of the house, and being wholly without the modern luxury of a bell, I thought that I could not be better lodged.

"But this is a perfect bower, my dear uncle! Depend on it, it was the bower-chamber of the Dames de Caxton – heaven rest them!"

"No," said my uncle, gravely; "I suspect it must have been the chaplain's room, for the chapel was to the right of you. An earlier chapel, indeed, formerly existed in the keep tower – for, indeed, it is scarcely a true keep without chapel, well, and hall. I can show you part of the roof of the first, and the two last are entire; the well is very curious, formed in the substance of the wall at one angle of the hall. In Charles the First's time, our ancestor lowered his only son down in a bucket, and kept him there six hours, while a Malignant mob was storming the tower. I need not say that our ancestor himself scorned to hide from such a rabble, for *he* was a grown man. The boy lived to be a sad spendthrift, and used the well for cooling his wine. He drank up a great many good acres."

"I should scratch him out of the pedigree, if I were you. But, pray, have you not discovered the proper chamber of that great Sir William, about whom my father is so shamefully sceptical?"

"To tell you a secret," answered the Captain, giving me a sly poke in the ribs, "I have put your father into it! There are the initial letters W. C. let into the cusp of the York rose, and the date, three years before the battle of Bosworth, over the chimneypiece."

I could not help joining my uncle's grim low laugh at this characteristic pleasantry; and after I had complimented him on so judicious a mode of proving his point, I asked him how he could possibly have contrived to fit up the ruin so well, especially as he had scarcely visited it since his purchase.

"Why," said he, "about twelve years ago, that poor fellow you now see as my servant, and who is gardener, bailiff, seneschal, butler, and anything else you can put him to, was sent out of the army on the invalid list. So I placed him here; and as he is a capital carpenter, and has had a very fair education, I told him what I wanted, and put by a small sum every year for repairs and furnishing. It is astonishing how little it cost me, for Bolt, poor fellow, (that is his name,) caught the right spirit of the thing, and most of the furniture, (which you see is ancient and suitable,) he picked up at different cottages and farmhouses in the neighbourhood. As it is, however, we have plenty more rooms here and there – only, of late," continued my uncle, slightly changing colour, "I had no money to spare. But come," he resumed, with an evident effort – "come and see my barrack: it is on the other side of the hall, and made out of what no doubt were the butteries."

We reached the yard, and found the fly-coach had just crawled to the door. My father's head was buried deep in the vehicle, – he was gathering up his packages, and sending out, oracle-like, various muttered objurgations and anathemas upon Mrs Primmins and her vacuum; which Mrs Primmins,

standing by, and making a lap with her apron to receive the packages and anathemas simultaneously, bore with the mildness of an angel, lifting up her eyes to heaven and murmuring something about "poor old bones." Though, as for Mrs Primmins's bones, they had been myths these twenty years, and you might as soon have found a Plesiosaurus in the fat lands of Romney Marsh as a bone amidst those layers of flesh in which my poor father thought he had so carefully cottoned up his Cardan.

Leaving these parties to adjust matters between them, we stepped under the low doorway, and entered Rowland's room. Oh, certainly Bolt *had* caught the spirit of the thing! – certainly he had penetrated down even to the very pathos that lay within the deeps of Roland's character. Buffon says "the style is the man;" there, the room was the man. That nameless, inexpressible, soldier-like, methodical neatness which belonged to Roland – that was the first thing that struck one – that was the general character of the whole. Then, in details, there, in stout oak shelves, were the books on which my father loved to jest his more imaginative brother, – there they were, Froissart, Barante, Joinville, the *Mort d'Arthur*, *Amadis of Gaul*, Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, a noble copy of Strutt's *Horda*, Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, Percy's *Reliques*, Pope's *Homer*, books on gunnery, archery, hawking, fortification – old chivalry and modern war together cheek by jowl.

Old chivalry and modern war! – look to that tilting helmet with the tall Caxton crest, and look to that trophy near it, a French cuirass – and that old banner (a knight's pennon) surmounting those crossed bayonets. And over the chimneypiece there – bright, clean, and, I warrant you, dusted daily – are Roland's own sword, his holsters, and pistols, yea, the saddle, pierced and lacerated, from which he had reeled when that leg – I gasped – I felt it all at a glance, and I stole softly to the spot, and, had Roland not been there, I could have kissed that sword as reverently as if it had been a Bayard's or a Sidney's.

My uncle was too modest to guess my emotion; he rather thought I had turned my face to conceal a smile at his vanity, and said, in a deprecating tone of apology – "It was all Bolt's doing, foolish fellow."

CHAPTER XLIX

Our host regaled us with a hospitality that notably contrasted his economical thrifty habits in London. To be sure, Bolt had caught the great pike which headed the feast; and Bolt, no doubt, had helped to rear those fine chickens *ab ovo*; Bolt, I have no doubt, made that excellent Spanish omelette; and for the rest, the products of the sheepwalk and the garden came in as volunteer auxiliaries – very different from the mercenary recruits by which those metropolitan *Condottieri*, the butcher and green-grocer, hasten the ruin of that melancholy commonwealth called "genteel poverty."

Our evening passed cheerfully; and Roland, contrary to his custom, was talker in chief. It was eleven o'clock before Bolt appeared with a lantern to conduct me through the court-yard to my dormitory, among the ruins – a ceremony which, every night, shine or dark, he insisted upon punctiliously performing.

It was long before I could sleep – before I could believe that but so few days had elapsed since Roland heard of his son's death – that son whose fate had so long tortured him; and yet, never had Roland appeared so free from sorrow! Was it natural – was it effort? Several days passed before I could answer that question, and then not wholly to my satisfaction. Effort there was, or rather resolute systematic determination. At moments Roland's head drooped, his brows met, and the whole man seemed to sink. Yet these were only moments; he would rouse himself up like a dozing charger at the sound of a trumpet, and shake off the creeping weight. But, whether from the vigour of his determination, or from some aid in other trains of reflection, I could not but perceive that Roland's sadness really was less grave and bitter than it had been, or than it was natural to suppose. He seemed to transfer, daily more and more, his affections from the dead to those around him, especially to Blanche and myself. He let it be seen that he looked on me now as his lawful successor – as the future supporter of his name – he was fond of confiding to me all his little plans, and consulting me on them. He would walk with me around his domains, (of which I shall say more hereafter,) – point out, from every eminence we climbed, where the broad lands which his forefathers owned stretched away to the horizon; unfold with tender hand the mouldering pedigree, and rest lingeringly on those of his ancestors who had held martial post, or had died on the field. There was a crusader who had followed Richard to Ascalon; there was a knight who had fought at Agincourt; there was a cavalier (whose picture was still extant, with fair lovelocks) who had fallen at Worcester – no doubt the same who had cooled his son in that well which the son devoted to more agreeable associations. But of all these worthies there was none whom my uncle, perhaps from the spirit of contradiction, valued like that apocryphal Sir William: and why? – because, when the apostate Stanley turned the fortunes of the field at Bosworth, and when that cry of despair – "Treason, treason!" burst from the lips of the last Plantagenet, "amongst the faithless," this true soldier "faithful found!" had fallen in that lion-rush which Richard made at his foe. "Your father tells me that Richard was a murderer and usurper," quoth my uncle. "Sir, that might be true or not; but it was not on the field of battle that his followers were to reason on the character of the master who trusted them, especially when a legion of foreign hirelings stood opposed to them. I would not have descended from that turncoat Stanley to be lord of all the lands the Earls of Derby can boast of. Sir, in loyalty, men fight and die for a grand principle, and a lofty passion; and this brave Sir William was paying back to the last Plantagenet the benefits he had received from the first!"

"And yet it may be doubted," said I maliciously, "whether William Caxton the printer did not – " "Plague, pestilence, and fire seize William Caxton the printer, and his invention too!" cried my uncle barbarously. "When there were only a few books, at least they were good ones; and now they are so plentiful, all they do is to confound the judgment, unsettle the reason, drive the good books out of cultivation, and draw a ploughshare of innovation over every ancient landmark; seduce the women, womanize the men, upset states, thrones, and churches; rear a race of chattering, conceited,

coxcombs, who can always find books in plenty to excuse them from doing their duty; make the poor discontented, the rich crotchety and whimsical, refine away the stout old virtues into quibbles and sentiments! All imagination formerly was expended in noble action, adventure, enterprise, high deeds and aspirations; now a man can but be imaginative by feeding on the false excitement of passions he never felt, dangers he never shared; and he fritters away all there is of life to spare in him upon the fictitious love-sorrows of Bond Street and St James's. Sir, chivalry ceased when the press rose! And to fasten upon me, as a forefather, out of all men who have ever lived and sinned, the very man who has most destroyed what I most valued – who, by the Lord! with his cursed invention has wellnigh got rid of respect for forefathers altogether – is a cruelty of which my brother had never been capable, if that printer's devil had not got hold of him!"

That a man in this blessed nineteenth century should be such a Vandal! and that my uncle Roland should talk in a strain that Totila would have been ashamed of, within so short a time after my father's scientific and erudite oration on the Hygeiana of Books, was enough to make one despair of the progress of intellect and the perfectibility of our species. And I have no manner of doubt that, all the while, my uncle had a brace of books in his pockets, Robert Hall one of them! In truth, he had talked himself into a passion, and did not know what nonsense he was saying, poor man. But this explosion of Captain Roland's has shattered the thread of my matter. Pouff! I must take breath and begin again!

Yes, in spite of my sauciness, the old soldier evidently took to me more and more. And, besides our critical examination of the property and the pedigree, he carried me with him on long excursions to distant villages, where some memorial of a defunct Caxton, a coat of arms, or an epitaph on a tombstone, might be still seen. And he made me pore over topographical works and county histories, (forgetful, Goth that he was, that for those very authorities he was indebted to the repudiated printer!) to find some anecdote of his beloved dead! In truth, the county for miles round bore the *vestigia* of those old Caxtons; their handwriting was on many a broken wall. And, obscure as they all were, compared to that great operative of the Sanctuary at Westminster, whom my father clung to – still, that the yesterdays that had lighted them the way to dusty death had cast no glare on dishonoured scutcheons seemed clear, from the popular respect and traditional affection in which I found that the name was still held in hamlet and homestead. It was pleasant to see the veneration with which this small hidalgo of some three hundred a-year was held, and the patriarchal affection with which he returned it. Roland was a man who would walk into a cottage, rest his cork leg on the hearth, and talk for the hour together upon all that lay nearest to the hearts of the owners. There is a peculiar spirit of aristocracy amongst agricultural peasants: they like old names and families; they identify themselves with the honours of a house, as if of its clan. They do not care so much for wealth as townsfolk and the middle class do; they have a pity, but a respectful one, for wellborn poverty. And then this Roland, too – who would go and dine in a cook shop, and receive change for a shilling, and shun the ruinous luxury of a hack cabriolet – could be positively extravagant in his liberalities to those around him. He was altogether another being in his paternal acres. The shabby-genteel, half-pay captain, lost in the whirl of London, here luxuriated into a dignified case of manner that Chesterfield might have admired. And, if to please is the true sign of politeness, I wish you could have seen the faces that smiled upon Captain Roland, as he walked down the village, nodding from side to side.

One day a frank, hearty, old woman, who had known Roland as a boy, seeing him lean on my arm, stopped us, as she said bluffly, to take a "geud luik" at me.

Fortunately I was stalwart enough to pass muster, even in the eyes of a Cumberland matron; and, after a compliment at which Roland seemed much pleased, she said to me, but pointing to the Captain —

"Hegh, sir, now you ha the bra time before you; you maun een try and be as geud as *he*. And if life last, ye wull too – for there never waur a bad ane of that stock. Wi' heads kindly stup'd to the

least, and lifted manfu' oop to the heighest – that ye all war' sin ye came from the Ark. Blessins on the ould name – though little pelf goes with it – it sounds on the peur man's ear like a bit o' gould!"

"Do you not see now," said Roland, as we turned away, "what we owe to a name, and what to our forefathers? – do you not see why the remotest ancestor has a right to our respect and consideration – for he was a parent? 'Honour your parents' – the law does not say, 'Honour your children!' If a child disgrace us, and the dead, and the sanctity of this great heritage of their virtues —*the name*; – if he does – " Roland stopped short, and added fervently, "But you are my heir now – I have no fear! What matters one foolish old man's sorrow? – the name, that property of generations, is saved, thank Heaven – the name!"

Now the riddle was solved, and I understood why, amidst all his natural grief for a son's loss, that proud father was consoled. For he was less himself a father than a son – son to the long dead. From every grave, where a progenitor slept, he had heard a parent's voice. He could bear to be bereaved, if the forefathers were not dishonoured. Roland was more than half a Roman – the son might still cling to his household affections, but the *lares* were a part of his religion.

CHAPTER I

But I ought to be hard at work, preparing myself for Cambridge. The deuce! – how can I? The point in academical education on which I require most preparation is Greek composition. I come to my father, who, one might think, was at home enough in this. But rare indeed is it to find a great scholar who is a good teacher.

My dear father! if one is content to take you in your own way, there never was a more admirable instructor for the heart, the head, the principles, or the tastes – in your own way, when you have discovered that there is some one sore to be healed – one defect to be repaired; and you have rubbed your spectacles, and got your hand fairly into that recess between your frill and your waistcoat. But to go to you, cut and dry, monotonously, regularly – book and exercise in hand – to see the mournful patience with which you tear yourself from that great volume of Cardan in the very honeymoon of possession – and then to note those mild eyebrows gradually distend themselves into perplexed diagonals, over some false quantity or some barbarous collocation – till there steal forth that horrible "Papæ!" which means more on your lips than I am sure it ever did when Latin was a live language, and "Papæ!" a natural and unpedantic ejaculation! – no, I would sooner blunder through the dark by myself a thousand times, than light my rush-light at the lamp of that Phlegethonian "Papæ!"

And then my father would wisely and kindly, but wondrous slowly, erase three-fourths of one's pet verses, and intercalate others that one saw were exquisite, but could not exactly see why. And then one asked why; and my father shook his head in despair, and said – "But you ought to *feel* why!"

In short, scholarship to him was like poetry: he could no more teach it you than Pindar could have taught you how to make an ode. You breathed the aroma, but you could no more seize and analyse it, than, with the opening of your naked hand, you could carry off the scent of a rose. I soon left my father in peace to Cardan, and to the Great Book, which last, by the way, advanced but slowly. For Uncle Jack had now insisted on its being published in quarto, with illustrative plates; and those plates took an immense time, and were to cost an immense sum – but that cost was the affair of the Anti-Publisher Society. But how can I settle to work by myself? No sooner have I got into my room – *penitus ab orbe divisus*, as I rashly think – than there is a tap at the door. Now, it is my mother, who is benevolently engaged upon making curtains to all the windows, (a trifling superfluity that Bolt had forgotten or disdained,) and who wants to know how the draperies are fashioned at Mr Trevanion's: a pretence to have me near her, and see with her own eyes that I am not fretting; – the moment she hears I have shut myself up in my room, she is sure that it is for sorrow. Now it is Bolt, who is making book-shelves for my father, and desires to consult me at every turn, especially as I have given him a Gothic design, which pleases him hugely. Now it is Blanche, whom, in an evil hour, I undertook to teach to draw, and who comes in on tiptoe, vowing she'll not disturb me, and sits so quiet that she fidgets me out of all patience. Now, and much more often, it is the Captain, who wants me to walk, to ride, to fish. And, by St Hubert! (saint of the chase,) bright August comes – and there is moor-game on those barren wolds – and my uncle has given me the gun he shot with at my age – single-barrelled, flint lock – but you would not have laughed at it if you had seen the strange feats it did in Roland's hands – while in mine, I could always lay the blame on the flint lock! Time, in short, passed rapidly; and if Roland and I had our dark hours, we chased them away before they could settle – shot them on the wing as they got up.

Then, too, though the immediate scenery around my uncle's was so bleak and desolate, the country within a few miles was so full of objects of interest – of landscapes so poetically grand or lovely; and occasionally we coaxed my father from the Cardan, and spent whole days by the margin of some glorious lake.

Amongst these excursions, I made one by myself to that house in which my father had known the bliss and the pangs of that stern first love that still left its scars fresh on my own memory. The

house, large and imposing, was shut up – the Trevanions had not been there for years – the pleasure-grounds had been contracted into the smallest possible space. There was no positive decay or ruin – that Trevanion would never have allowed; but there was the dreary look of absenteeism everywhere. I penetrated into the house with the help of my card and half-a-crown. I saw that memorable boudoir – I could fancy the very spot in which my father had heard the sentence that had changed the current of his life. And when I returned home, I looked with new tenderness on my father's placid brow – and blessed anew that tender helpmate, who, in her patient love, had chased from it every shadow.

I had received one letter from Vivian a few days after our arrival. It had been redirected from my father's house, at which I had given him my address. It was short, but seemed cheerful. He said, that he believed he had at last hit on the right way, and should keep to it – that he and the world were better friends than they had been – and that the only way to keep friends with the world was to treat it as a tamed tiger, and have one hand on a crow-bar while one fondled the beast with the other. He enclosed me a bank-note which somewhat more than covered his debt to me, and bade me pay him the surplus when he should claim it as a millionaire. He gave me no address in his letter, but it bore the post-mark of Godalming. I had the impertinent curiosity to look into an old topographical work upon Surrey, and in a supplemental itinerary I found this passage, "To the left of the beech-wood, three miles from Godalming, you catch a glimpse of the elegant seat of Francis Vivian, Esq." To judge by the date of the work, the said Francis Vivian might be the grandfather of my friend, his namesake. There could no longer be any doubt as to the parentage of this prodigal son.

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