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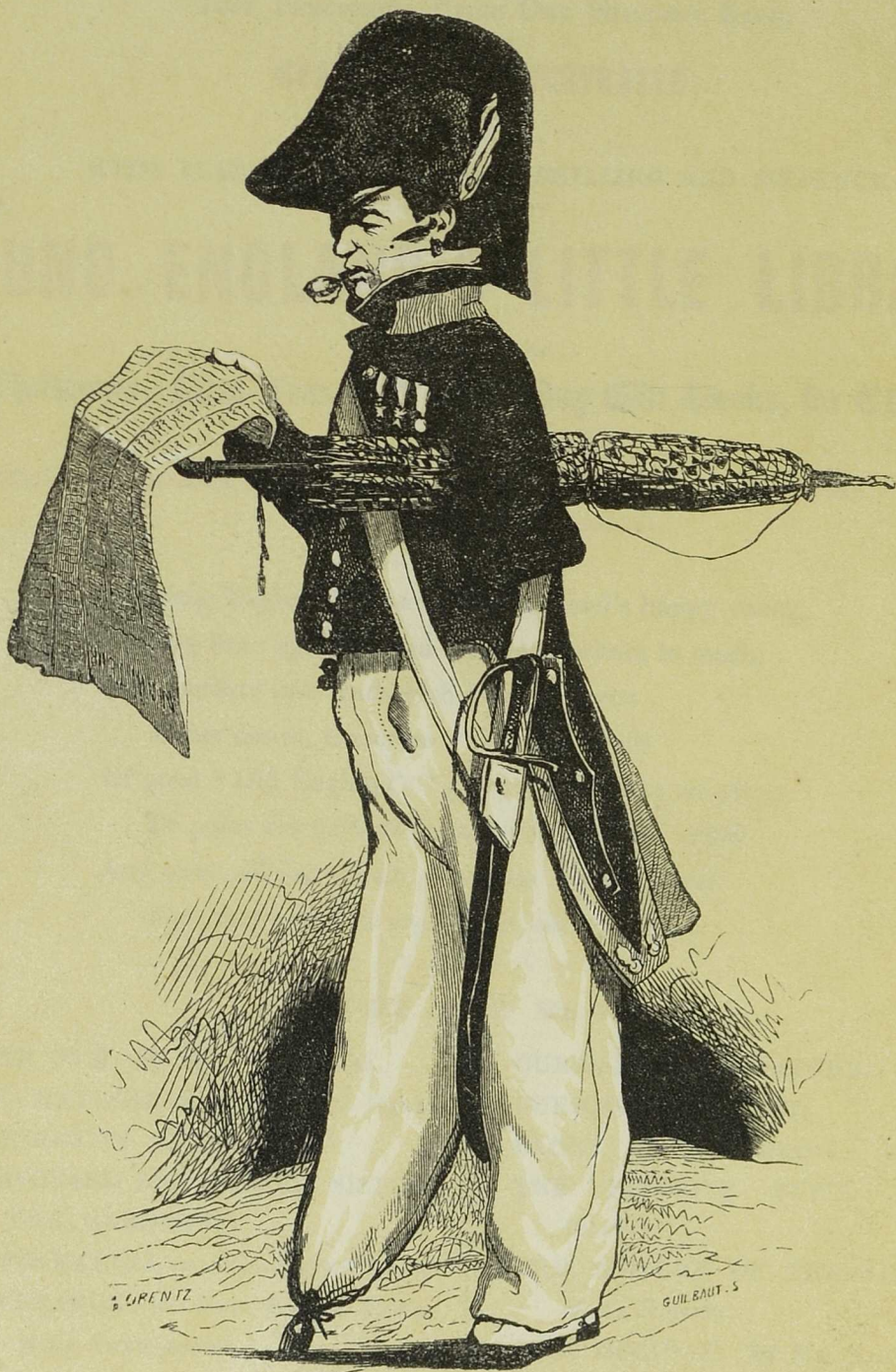
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GLORY:

A Tale of Morals drawn from History,

BY GEORGE GASPEY,

Author of the "LOLLARDS," &c.

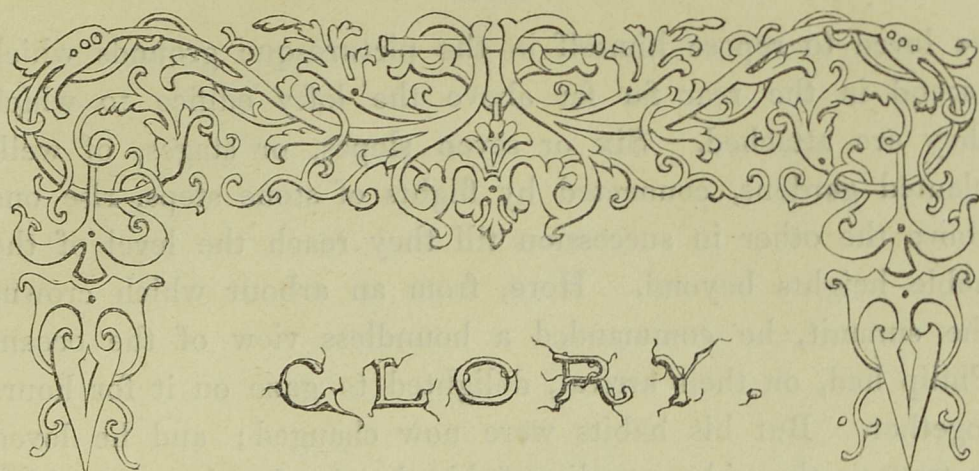
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MDCCCXLIV.



"How have you been occupied all this forenoon?" inquired Monsieur Le Blanc of his son Philip, as the latter came running into the garden of the Hotel de l'Europe, at Boulogne, after an absence of some hours.

"I have been playing at soldiers, sir."

"So I supposed. I approve of your taking healthful exercise, and do not object to your acquiring a knowledge of military evolutions, but I fear you now give them too much of your attention."

"Can you deem, sir," replied Philip, "too much time likely to be spent on a pursuit so ennobling as arms? Think, sir, to what it leads—to greatness, renown, and glory."

"Do not suffer yourself to be led away by high-sounding names: your sport of playing at soldiers is growing into a passion. When we first came here to pass a few weeks, at the close of the summer, you were delighted to join me in my walks; but now you are frequently away half the day."

Monsieur Le Blanc had some cause for complaint. Having established himself at the hotel which has been mentioned,

he loved to repose himself in the picturesque grounds which ascend in the rear far far above the lofty edifice to which they are attached. Six or seven slopes, or stages, of well-planted gardens, connected by flights of stone steps, rise one above the other in succession till they reach the level of the noble heights beyond. Here, from an arbour which crowns the summit, he commanded a boundless view of the ocean. Philip had, on their arrival, delighted to gaze on it for hours together. But his habits were now changed; and he loved to traverse the wide-spreading fields that border the road which passes along the lofty ridge behind the hotel; and frequently his rambles extended to Bonaparte's column. To him it was deeply interesting to stand on that spot, from which Napoleon had proudly threatened that his conquering legions should cross the sea, to chastise the arrogance of haughty England. Sometimes he passed, by a circuitous route, to the upper town, and made his way to the noble and commodious square called *Les Tintilleries*. There he witnessed the exercises of the military; and Pierre Marcel, Louis de Clermont, and several other youths—whose parents, like Monsieur Le Blanc, had sought Boulogne for a little relaxation from the cares of business—engaged him day after day in the manner described.

He was, however, unconscious of deserving reproof. "Indeed, sir," said he, "I would not waste my hours: the object I have in view is a noble one. I hope and trust you will not blame me when I say, I covet to stand forth the avenger of my country's wrongs, to tread the tented field, and march to battle with "Young France."

"Very serious consideration, Philip, ought to precede such a decision," Monsieur Le Blanc gravely answered.



While he spoke, he looked inquiringly from the arbour in which they conversed, and his eyes seemed to rest on a man with a wooden leg, wearing a cocked hat, with a sword by his side, who was slowly ascending the lower slopes of the garden.

"Who is this man?" Philip inquired: "he looks at us as if we were known to him. He seems to make signs to us."

"He does," replied Monsieur Le Blanc. "You have met some of your school-fellows in Boulogne, and I have most unexpectedly stumbled on one of mine. Louis Fitz-James, who has fixed your attention, is an old soldier, a sergeant; and, as you dream of nothing but war and victory, I have asked him to attend and recount, for your entertainment, some of the scenes in which he has acted a part."

By this time the sergeant had joined them.

"I ought," said Monsieur Le Blanc, "to have come down to you, instead of allowing you to climb up to me."

"A soldier must not complain of a fatiguing march," was the veteran's answer; "but I should not be sorry if I had another leg to perform it with."

Invited by Monsieur Le Blanc, he took his seat between the father and son. Friendly greetings were exchanged, and Fitz-James wanted little pressing to enter on that narrative which the senior Le Blanc wished his son to hear. With brief preface, the veteran commenced his story.

"My father was a respectable tradesman at Abbeville; and when I was a boy, he brought me to see the camp at Boulogne. The great Napoleon was then about to invade England; and I only lamented that I was too young to enter the ranks with those who expected shortly to be quartered

at Dover. In a few years, however, I became tall enough to make one of a regiment of grenadiers; and it was in vain that my parent laboured to turn my thoughts to business. I sighed for fame: in comparison with the pursuit of that, a tranquil home had no charms for me.

“My regiment went to Spain. That was a proud day on which we started for the Peninsula. Several companies were forwarded by the diligences; and never shall I forget how joyously we passed along, pleased with our situation at the moment, and anticipating that we should soon feast our eyes on scenes of higher interest beyond the Pyrenees. I shared in several of the victories which threw new lustre on the French name. I will not go over the details of these, which are similar to many others of which you have read, but will offer some account of the far-famed siege of Badajos, where, though the result disappointed our just hopes, the daring and heroism of the French commanded universal admiration.

“Ciudad Rodrigo having fallen, the English general, Wellington, declared that Badajos should share the same fate. Now, our commander, Philippon, was determined to foil him. The English speedily commenced their work, and, to own the truth, with great spirit. We kept up a constant fire upon them in their trenches; and the weather so far favoured us, that, owing to the continual heavy rains, the besiegers were obliged to labour day and night, up to their knees in water. We made several sallies, and killed a good many, but still the works advanced. Batteries were established; and at length a practicable breach was made—that is, a portion of the wall was beaten down by the enemy’s shot—and



we expected that they would lose no time in attempting to rush in upon us, and take the city by storm.

“ We were not kept long in suspense. One awfully dark night everything in the vicinity of the fortress was remarkably still. ‘The English do not mean to pay us a visit to-night,’ was the remark of some of our men. ‘No,’ was the mirthful reply. ‘They have no fancy for a hot supper.’ I was then on duty, and looking listlessly over the ramparts, when all of a sudden up went a fire-ball. It had been let off by our wary commander; it exploded, and burnt brilliantly in the air. All eyes were fixed on it for a moment, and only for a moment, for by the light which it gave forth, we were enabled to see what was of infinite more importance, the British army silently advancing to attack the place. They passed the narrow bridge over the Rivilas in single files, with the exception of those, not a few, whom our musket-balls arrested in their march. The fire-ball had shewed them their path, and they pressed forward with increased speed. Hand-grenades, bags of gun-powder, shells, and huge stones were hurled from the wall on the enemy; and many a mother had to mourn that the son who entered that ditch never left it alive. Our guns thundered at them, then the powder-bags and the shells exploded, and those who escaped the balls were in numerous instances suffocated by the smoke in which they found themselves enveloped. Forward they came, and at length reached the principal gap in our works. Then commenced a scene of murderous strife, such as had rarely been witnessed in modern warfare. Each of our soldiers was provided with four muskets, and, besides the usual ball-cartridge, they were charged with a wooden cylinder, stuck round with small pieces of lead, which, in the

discharge, were scattered like hail, inflicting disabling wounds, where they did not cause instantaneous death. As fast as one was fired it was snatched away to be reloaded; while the marksman, that not an instant should be lost, pulled the trigger of another. Thus an incessant stream of bullets was poured through the breach, and when the assailants who escaped, almost by a miracle, our fatal aim, pressed towards the opening, they trod on loose planks, studded with spikes, which tilted up and turned over on the foremost men, and threw them on their comrades, who, exasperated at the annoyance, pushed their own men angrily forward, and with savage cries and horrid oaths still endeavoured to advance.

“But this was not all. General Philippon, determined to neglect nothing that might ensure the defeat of the English, had caused a range of sharp sword blades to be fixed in heavy beams of timber, and these were laid across the ruins, so that when the first ranks had got there, they saw that to proceed was certain destruction. The poor fellows in front were well aware of the peril, but those behind allowed no pause. Eager to get out of the reach of our shot, they urged their companions headlong forward against the glittering sword-blades. Hundreds fell, and still no progress was made. The English were confounded, while the defenders of the bastion called La Trinidad, where I was engaged, enjoyed their distress, and some of us who had learned their language called scornfully to them—‘Come on Mr. Jean Bull. Why don’t you walk in to Badajos? Are you going to take it? Don’t you wish you may get it?’

“And thus we were engaged for hours. By midnight we calculated that more than two thousand of the enemy had

fallen. We had no thought of giving in, when news was brought to us that the castle which commanded a great portion of the tower had been carried. This, of course, dispirited us all. General Philippon attempted to retake it; but the attack did not succeed. He was obliged to retire into Fort Christoval; the enemy now rushed in on all sides, and on the following morning Badajos, reduced to a heap of ruins, surrendered.

“The scenes which preceded the capture of the city were awful; but, if possible, those which followed that event were still more so. The conduct of the English was so fierce, so cruel and rapacious, that it tarnished the laurels they had won. Truth, however, demands that I should tell you it was not to the conquerors of Badajos, that all the horrors witnessed in those sad days ought to be ascribed. Portuguese vagabonds, who had had nothing to do with the storming, entered the city to plunder; and many Spaniards even, in the confusion that prevailed, joined to attack the property of their countrymen. The shopkeepers were turned out of their houses; English soldiers took their places, and began to sell the goods they found for any prices they could obtain. Then came another party and turned out the first, in order to act the same part: and, in more than one case, I saw a second set expelled, in their turn, by a third, or by the first returning with a strong re-inforcement, to resume the thievish trade.”

“And was this the conduct of the British?” inquired Philip. “Could they act so meanly in the hour of victory?”

“Yes!” replied the veteran; “but such things are not uncommon where a city is taken by storm.”

“Plunder,” said Monsiuer Le Blanc, “is, I believe, in

all armies, the order of the day in such cases; and the hope of pillage is the great incentive which a prudent commander holds out to animate his followers in the race for glory."

"Never," proceeded the soldier—"never can I forget what I then witnessed. The goldsmiths' and watchmakers' shops were first visited; but every house of respectable exterior was entered. If the least resistance was offered, the defender of his home was shot or bayoneted. I saw an elderly man lying on the ground: he was fast bleeding to death: his wife and daughter wept over him, but he begged of them to leave him. 'Go!' he cried: 'I could have wished that my dying eyes should be closed by your dear hands, but not now—not now! Fly, if you love me; fly, or you will share my fate, or worse! In mercy leave me, I implore it.' Then rushed some of the Englishmen out of the house, and sprang at the women, just as a drover, or, rather, a drover's dog, would at a sheep. Their shrieks rung sadly on the ear of the dying man, and they were carried off towards the enemy's camp.

"You may have read, that the pirates of antiquity were accustomed to enter towns where they were not expected, seize the young females, and carry them off for sale elsewhere, as merchandise. This unholy commerce was witnessed at Badajos. Women were sold like cattle: their tears and their distress laughed at by the grim purchaser and the ruffian seller. On all sides the supplicating voices of the sufferers were heard, but the ferocity of the victors nothing could restrain. Girls that I had met, but a short time before, laughing, in health and in the bloom of beauty, I now encountered the very picture of misery: their garments torn—their faces pale—their hair disordered—all told but too plainly, that the gallant

English, in the day of their triumph, forgot that they were men."

"Monsters!" exclaimed Philip.

"Votaries of glory!" said Monsieur Le Blanc.

"I will not attempt," Fitz-James resumed, "to tell of all the revolting scenes, of which I was the forced spectator, in the three mournful days that succeeded. From the first the English had betaken themselves to strong liquors, and their rage and violence made them appear more like demons than mortals. Their officers, who felt scandalised by their monstrous doings, attempted, but in vain, to restore order. In more than one case, for their humane interference, they were murdered by those they had been used to command. What a monster is the human being when inflamed by drink: all his fiercer passions are unchained; and he not only affronts religion, but even disdains the controul of reason!

"One body of troops was marched into the city, to compel the banditti—I can give them no better name—to pause. They advanced in good order; but when they saw their fellows engaged in pillage, they fell out of their ranks, and heightened the confusion which prevailed by joining in the general uproar.

"At length those fearful instruments of punishment, the triangles and the gallows, were set up in the market-place. Some of the most outrageous offenders were flogged, and one or two, I have heard, were hanged; but that I did not see.

"The worst was over; but mournful was the scene which followed. Females, who had concealed themselves, or been detained from their friends, now re-appeared. They asked for fathers and brothers who were no longer in existence; or, if they had the good fortune to find them again, tears of

bitter anguish and regret told more than volumes could have related, of the grief they had known, of the anguish which they had endured."

"Enough—enough of Badajos," said Monsieur Le Blanc. "What you have heard, Philip, will perhaps suffice to teach you that war is an evil—that it is not that which should be coveted, however brilliantly alluring its trophies may appear to a youthful eye."

"But, national honour, sir, think of that!" said Philip.

"I do," replied the father; "and am very much tempted to identify it with national happiness. A great nation, where all the useful arts are successfully cultivated, has more to gain from science than from battles. War, at the end of a quarter of a century, left France weak and humbled; peace, during a quarter of a century, has rendered her mighty, and placed her among the greatest nations of the earth."

"Nay," said the invalid, "all I have told of Badajos, though shocking, falls short of what I have witnessed elsewhere. It was my lot to serve in the grand army, when Napoleon invaded Russia; for you must know, the English were so busy in looking after booty, that they somewhat neglected their prisoners. I took advantage of this; and when, as I have told, the disorders had risen to such a pitch that Lord Wellington flogged some of his men, and threatened others with a halter, I managed to make my escape. At nightfall I picked up a red jacket, which had belonged to an English soldier who had fallen. I passed near the English camp without being challenged. It had been reported that the Duke of Dalmatia was coming from Seville to retake Badajos, and I determined to try to meet him, though I did not know a step of the way.

“I had made a bundle of my own coat, and filled my pockets with bread, before I left the town. As soon as I believed myself secure from observation, I began to run in the direction which, from some information afforded by a Spanish peasant, I concluded was that in which Soult would march to avenge the disgrace which had fallen on the eagles of France. All night long I continued to journey, and it was not till daylight returned, that I ventured to lie down in a thicket to get a little rest. I had fortunately been able to slake my thirst as I advanced; and having eaten a crust, I stretched myself out and soon fell asleep. It was about noon when I awoke; and, as I thought it would be losing too much time to remain in the wood where I was till it should be dark, on I determined to go. To avoid being seen, this period of the day was perhaps the best for me, as the heat was so great, being a fine day, that but few people were stirring. So I marched forward as fast as I well could.

“My road lay through a valley, enclosed between huge mountains. Their savage grandeur, which presented huge masses of a reddish-coloured stone, irregularly piled on each other, and seemed almost to reach the sky, and in some places shrouded the valley below in darkness, I contemplated with awe. A lonely directing stone at their enormous bases, announcing how many leagues it was thence to some distant town, was often the only evidence afforded, save, indeed, a rude and imperfect effort at levelling part of the road, that ever a human being had visited that spot.

“It was the next day but one after I commenced my flight, and in the afternoon, when I was beginning to think myself secure, that a musket-shot whizzed by me. I heard

English voices, thought I had been fired at, and expected the next moment would bring me a fatal message. There was a stream of water on my left hand: I dashed through it, and crouched down behind a fragment of a rock, jutting out at the foot of an enormous pile, which, on that side, it was impossible to ascend. I heard other shots, but the sound was evidently retiring; and it was only a sporting party, which had fallen in with some wild pigs or birds, that had disturbed me. Satisfied that I was in no immediate danger, after about half an hour, I ventured to start from my hiding-place. That moment a piercing shriek rang in my ear: I looked, to ascertain from whom it came, and saw an elderly female. On my offering to approach her the shriek was renewed, and she attempted to fly: it immediately struck me that I was mistaken, from the red coat I wore, for an English soldier. By assuming an air of commiseration, I partly succeeded in dismissing her apprehensions, and stepping respectfully up to her, I apologised for my intrusion, when I recognised her countenance as one I had recently seen: it was no other than the poor lady I had beheld weeping over her dying husband at Badajos.

“I told you that she had been snatched away from her expiring husband by some ruffianly marauders: it gave me pleasure to find that she was not in their hands. Having mentioned to her what I had seen—‘By what happy chance, madame,’ said I, ‘did you escape from the English camp? Your daughter, I hope, is safe?’ ‘*Safe!*’ she repeated, in a tone that thrilled me, and with a deep sigh; ‘yes, she is *safe!*’ And then she pointed to a low tent further on among some brush-wood, which I had not before noticed; and there,

on the cold ground, with nothing but an old cloak spread out as a couch, I saw the unhappy fair one. The hardships she had known were too much for her delicate frame; and though one man, more compassionate than the rest of his fellows, had enabled them to get away from the English, the sufferings she had experienced, and the terror which oppressed her, lest their retreat should be discovered, crushed the last spark of life, and she had that hour expired.

“I condoled with the mourner. She knew that her husband was no more; and I had the sad satisfaction of informing her that his remains had been decently consigned to the earth: I—it was all my pity could accomplish—had assisted in making his grave. She told me she had found means of communicating to some friends where she had concealed herself, and they proposed, on the next day, removing her to the home from which she had been so rudely expelled.

“I bade the sufferer farewell, after consoling her as far as this could be done by soothing language. My red coat I now discarded, having first emptied the pockets of the bread which I had carried in them, and which had been spoiled by the water when I leaped in the stream: that which was in my French jacket, and which I had held over my head while swimming, was fortunately uninjured. With a view of drying my clothes, I ran as fast as I could, and, fearful of the consequences of pausing while any of the enemy were so near, I again—though by this time I had become sore-footed, and was very weary—continued to walk on during the night; but, with every exertion to which I was now equal, I made but little progress. From want of rest and needful refreshment my strength began rapidly to fail; and when the sun had

risen, looking on a little hillock which two tall poplars seemed like sentinels to guard, I threw myself down with a sort of reckless resignation, hardly caring whether I should ever rise again or not, or whether I should be recaptured by the English.

“I soon slept, but not soundly. From extreme fatigue, I felt uneasy sensations: I fancied—perhaps I may say I dreamed—that I was awake. After an hour or two, I thought something moved near me, and started up, but saw nothing. Feeling myself hungry, I put my hand in my pocket for a piece of bread: there was none there. An examination of another pocket horrified me with the same result. While I was asleep, a rat, or some other animal, had eaten all my provisions, and gnawed a hole in one of my pockets. This fretted me, but there was no help for it. Sleep was again fast stealing over me—my eyes were just closing—when the trampling of horses caused me to start from my green couch. Where I was I could be seen from the road: it was, however, too late to retreat, for the horsemen were close at hand. They came in sight before I had time to conceal myself, and I instantly saw they were two French foragers. I was not long in making them know who I was, and how I came there. One of them, taking me up behind him, without further adventure I soon found myself in the Duke of Dalmatia’s camp.

“We were now marched into Andalusia. I should have admired the bold romantic scenery which everywhere met the eye, but that the presence of imminent danger forbade us to gaze on it. The guerrillas were scattered about in all directions: behind a rock, in the centre of a bush, and by the side of a tree, they were constantly found; and a deadly bullet



laid many a comrade low, before he had the slightest intimation of immediate danger. No regular army opposed us as we advanced; but small hosts of these desperate men met us in every march, with a priest among them, displaying a crucifix, urging them on, in the name of the Saviour of man, to destroy the invaders of Spain. We were thus cut off in detail, without a struggle, and without glory."

"The glory, Fitz-James, in this case," interrupted Monsieur Le Blanc, "I think belonged to your assailants. They, animated by a sacred love of their native land, though inferior in number, still gallantly made war on your formidable masses, in defence of their homes and the venerated altars of their God. To fight and to die in such a cause I own *is* glory."

"I now proceed," the soldier went on, "to speak of the war with Russia. It followed immediately after what I have been telling. I was suddenly ordered home, and as suddenly ordered abroad again. Never in this world did a more gallant host meet the eye than was presented by the four hundred thousand warriors, whom Napoleon led to battle against the generals of the Emperor Alexander. As they moved forward, all was joy and confidence, and gay anticipations of victory.

"It was on the 23d of June, 1812, that our army passed the river Niemen. The invasion was commenced by a few sappers crossing it in a boat. One armed Cossack appeared to receive them. He inquired, with an air of surprise, who we were, and what we wanted? The answer was, that we were Frenchmen, and came to make war upon his emperor. He retired into the woods, and two or three muskets were fired after him in token of hostility.

"The Russians did not at first oppose our progress; they

retreated, and we advanced to Smolensko, which the enemy on withdrawing had fired. As often as we fought, the arms of France were triumphant. At Valantina we gained a great victory; but the Russian emperor manifested no disposition to treat, and it was announced to us that we must advance to Moscow to conquer peace.

“We calculated on passing the whole of the winter in that city. How we laughed at seeing the false noses and ears prepared for us to wear when the frost set in! We at length approached the ancient capital of Russia, in which we fondly hoped all our cares would, for a season, be at an end. One mighty contest took place near the village of Borodino; the slaughter was great on both sides, but the eagles of France gained new glory, and Moscow became the conquerors’ prize.

“Great was our joy at seeing ourselves masters of that far-famed seat of Imperial grandeur. Now we expected the Emperor Alexander would be glad to accept of any terms that Napoleon would deign to grant; and were only afraid that the differences would be brought to a close so soon, and cause us to lose that pleasant residence which we had almost all made up our minds to enjoy during the next four or five months. But day after day passed, and no overture was made from the enemy. Strangely menacing reports reached us. The Russian commander-in-chief, General Kutusoff, we were told, had declared that the French had done all they could, and now it was for his army to begin *their* war; and Rostopschin, the governor of Moscow, had called on the inhabitants to arm themselves with hatchets, pikes, and pitchforks, at the same time addressing to them these remarkable words: ‘We will send our French guests back to the devil, and make

them yield their souls; and we will commence our labours for reducing these perfidious men to ashes.'

"We, however, flew to the stores of brandy, and very merry we made ourselves. I cannot aver that we spared the Russians much: we were not so cruel, I should say, as the English at Badajos, but we were cruel enough.

"The Russians, as I told you, on quitting Smolensko, had set fire to it: we found the same thing had been done at Moscow, but we soon extinguished the flames. However, new fires continually broke out in various parts of the town. It was supposed that our troops had caused the mischief: we soon learnt, to our grief, that it was the Russians themselves, who thus devoted their city to the flames, in order to blast the hopes of their invaders.

"It was on the 10th of September—we had then been three days in Moscow—that vast columns of smoke were seen to rise in the air from the eastern quarter. The like was presently observed in other parts. There was a strong sulphureous smell. We were inquiring the cause, when the flames, forcing their way through everything, burst on our eyes in appalling splendour, rendering the whole city as light as day. The fire spread rapidly from street to street. We had no means of stopping it. Water was scarce; for nearly all the pumps in the city were purposely destroyed. Combustibles had been artfully disposed in various places, to spread the ruin far and wide, and sustain the all-devouring fury of the conflagration.

"It was reported to us, that malefactors in the prisons had been first made drunk, and then sent out, with flaming torches, to fire the houses of the inhabitants. These wretches were

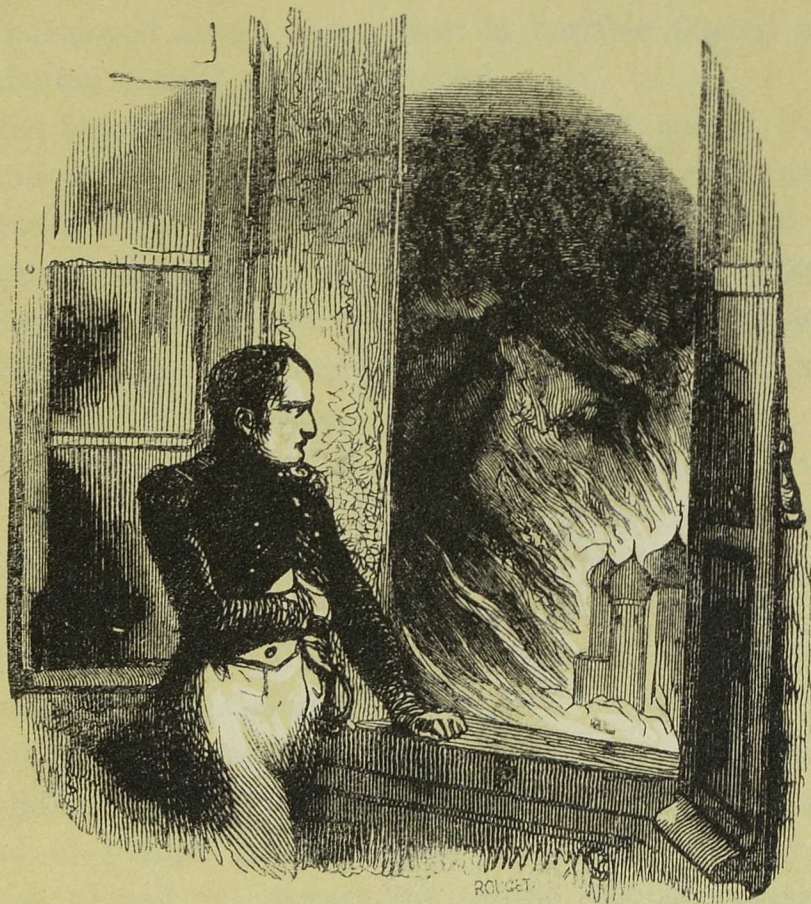
ordered to be shot, and a number of wild-looking men were accordingly put to death. I saw Napoleon, who had been called from his bed at four o'clock in the morning, to behold the progress of the flames, sadly gazing on the tremendous spectacle from the windows of the Kremlin (the palace of the Emperor of Russia) and looking as if he read in that the future fate of the grand army. The glass flew from the intense heat. He was called upon to consult his own safety by withdrawing, but he repeatedly refused, and seemed to wish to bury himself in the ruins of the city he had conquered, but found himself impotent to save. Twice had the fire assailed the Kremlin, and it was completely surrounded by burning masses, before he could be persuaded to leave it. One miserable being was found in the arsenal: he had been ordered there, by the governor, to fire the building. Brought before the Emperor, his guilt was proved to the satisfaction of his judges. Fury and disdain glared in the eyes of Napoleon: 'Miscreant!' he exclaimed, 'is it thus you make war? Such barbarian vengeance is a disgrace to humanity.' The unhappy Russian was hurried into the next court, where the grenadiers, who had seized him, buried their bayonets in his bosom."

"That poor man was sacrificed for obeying those who had a right to command his services—for acting against the enemies of his country," Monsieur Le Blanc remarked.

"Yes, sir," replied the soldier; "but he used means shocking to humanity, to tarnish our national glory."

"Glory!" Monsieur Le Blanc thoughtfully repeated; while a glance at Philip seemed distinctly to say, "such horrors are identified with glory."

The serjeant proceeded. "A lunatic asylum was among



the buildings first destroyed. The unhappy inmates rushed into the street; and some raised horrid yells, while others lingered on the spot, laughing wildly at the progress of the flames, till it was too late to escape. Then their dreadful yells, as the burning timbers fell among them, and volumes of fire enveloped them, were heard in horrible discord above the deafening tumult which prevailed.

“The hospital of the foundlings was not spared by the conflagration. We were informed that the children above the age of twelve were sent away, but the younger ones had been left unprotected, to shift as they might. Napoleon wished to place them in safety, and the director of the establishment, who had remained at his post, was grateful for the interest thus manifested in their fate. But what could be done? The protection which he wished to extend to them could be of no avail; for if they escaped the fire, to perish from cold or hunger were the wretched alternatives before them.”

Philip breathed quickly at this part of the narrative.

“Glorious war!” Monsieur Le Blanc here interposed; “cannot spare even children.”

“Then,” Fitz-James continued—“I shudder to recal it—the building used as a military hospital, containing many thousand of French and Russians, was found burning. But I pass on: I will not picture the terrific spectacle presented, when the wounded, mutilated, and dying men, feebly tried to crawl from the all-destroying flame.”

Tears stood in Philip’s eyes. The narrator proceeded:

“Now ruin—black, hopeless ruin—descended upon us. All attempts at negotiation failed. The case of the grand army was most deplorable. We were obliged to pitch our

camp in a dreary, miry field: there, shrinking round fires, made of the furniture snatched from the houses, we sat on splendid arm-chairs, surrounded by heaps of plunder, to which many of the soldiers fondly clung, though they could neither enjoy, nor hope to preserve it. The furs of Siberia, the gold stuffs of Persia, were strewed around us. We had plates of rich china, and others of solid silver; but what had we to eat off them?—dirty black dough, baked in ashes, and scorched horseflesh! Oh! how poor were we in the midst of wealth!

“The winter set in with unwonted rigour. On the 13th of October the ground was covered with snow. Six days after, the order was given to quit that Moscow which we had so fondly desired to gain—which we had so exultingly entered. A long train of carriages and trucks, laden with provisions and valuables—still avariciously retained—preceded the army. Napoleon ordered that every carriage, his own not excepted, should take up one wounded man. Some of the vagabonds who had followed the army found it impossible to obey this order without sacrificing the property they had collected. What did the wretches do? They dropped behind the columns, and when, as they believed, safe from observation, threw the helpless sufferers into the nearest ditch. Two thousand Russian prisoners had been marched before us: the Spaniards and Portuguese, who guarded, murdered many of them. Napoleon interfered to save them, but it was only to leave them without food, to expire in the cheerless desert.

“The cold became ten times more severe than ever. An icy wind blew upon us, which almost rendered us powerless. Our helpless state made the Russians more bold: their increasing armies gathered round us. The Cossacks, a savage

race, inured to the climate, on wild nimble horses, assailed us from hour to hour. The snow fell in immense flakes: it concealed deep holes, which, as we weakly endeavoured to march on, engulfed the fainting soldier, and thousands sunk into these abysses to rise from them no more. Those who escaped the danger lost their arms, and remained defenceless. The exasperated foe came up with hundreds in this unfortunate condition. It was not enough to put them to death: they stripped the sufferers naked, amidst bursts of ferocious laughter, and left them to die a lingering death.

“We passed through wide dreary forests. Frequently we saw before us figures seated apparently at their ease, regardless of the falling snow and howling wind. Their indifference was soon explained, for, on coming up to them, we found they had been frozen to death on the spot where they had halted for momentary rest, and everlasting sleep had sealed eyes that only coveted brief repose.

“Those who preserved their arms were hardly more happy than those who lost them. The unrelenting severity of the weather froze our hands to the swords and muskets we carried. In this frightful state we approached the Berezina. Two bridges were thrown over it. A disorderly multitude attempted to pass: the Russian artillery was brought to bear on them, and killed hundreds: the passage was choked. Those whose strength remained, cut their way through their wounded comrades—through screaming women and crying children. Savage selfishness was everywhere exhibited in the most awful forms. A tempest raged; the enemy's guns continued their murderous fire; and, to add to the misery of the scene, the artillery bridge broke down. One and all then attempted to reach

the other, and the confusion became even greater than ever. Thousands were precipitated into the river, and there mothers and children, vainly striving against the masses of ice which floated on the Berezina, found, with their husbands and fathers a common grave.

“I cannot remember all the sickening scenes which shocked the eye in our disastrous progress. Many were crushed to death by the carriages of the artillery, and others, seeing it was in vain to attempt the passage, threw themselves on the ground, to await the arrival of the revengeful foe in despair; while cries of frantic rage and fearful execrations burst from others who vainly endeavoured to struggle with their fate.

“Amidst this dreary chaos, this frightful union of sin and misery, one melancholy incident I recal with pleasure. I have mentioned women and children being present at the passage of the Berezina. How to account for it I scarcely know; but in almost every scene of fearful disorder they are found, as if their attendance was absolutely necessary to complete the horror of the scene. On the troubled bosom of the waters, amidst the masses of ice which floated on the sullen wave, a little boat was seen, in which a female appeared with her two children. The mother feebly strove to direct its course. For a moment she seemed likely to succeed in her design of crossing, when some of the strugglers above fell, if not on it, close to the boat, and in a moment it was upset, and forced under the ice. Sad was the cry of the sinking mother, nor less thrilling the comparatively feeble voices of the children; but it was momentary. Two of the sufferers vanished, and were silent for ever. The third was about to disappear, when an artilleryman who was on the bridge

threw himself headlong into the stream and saved the little boy, the last of the trio, from instant death. The child, frightened, called wildly for its mother, but she was no more. Then did I hear, in the midst of the deafening uproar, the bluff, sympathising voice of the artilleryman, telling the child 'not to cry for his mother, for in him he should find a father,' and he carried the little fellow off in his arms."

"A noble fellow!" exclaimed father and son together.

"Yes," continued M. Le Blanc, "here we both recognise what deserves to be regarded as true glory."

"But," said the serjeant, "I am too garrulous; I weary you. Let me only say, the horrors on which I have briefly touched were, if possible, exceeded by the spectacle presented on the following morning. Then it became necessary, as the Russians were rapidly advancing in great strength, to burn the bridge. This effectually precluded many thousands from attempting to escape. Some were seen wandering in helpless, desolate groups on the margin of the Berezina; others attempted to swim over, and some rushing into the flames, in the next moment sprang into the water, passing in agony from existence by the combined influence of frost and fire.

"I had succeeded in getting over the bridge, and still retained my strength, when a shot took off my leg, just below the knee. I thought then my last hour had arrived, but it so chanced that the Russians, weary of shedding blood by the time they came to the spot where I had laid down to die, either spared me, or mistook me, in the confusion which prevailed, for one of themselves. I was carried into the nearest hospital; and after enduring much from cold, neglect, and want of food, at last returned as you see."

Fitz-James paused, but, the next moment, added—"In my time I have seen enough of war; while I remain on earth, may that scourge of humanity revisit it no more!"

"The wish becomes you. It has been yours to see what war really is. Would all "Young France" could hear your words. You have followed one of the most renowned conquerors that ever desolated the world, and shared in his triumphs."

"Yes," Fitz-James interrupted "I have; and most humiliating is the retrospect. I cannot say,—

‘In equal paths our guilt and glory ran.’

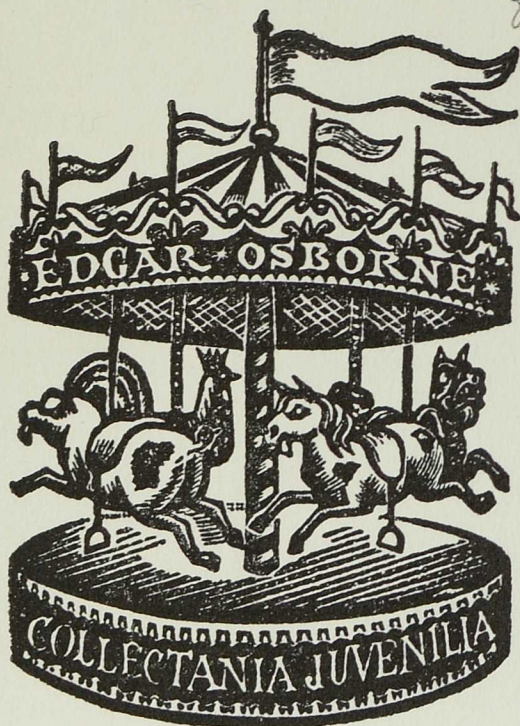
for sorry I am to confess that shame and crime follow every triumph, and truly nobly was it said by the British hero, Wellington—"I consider a victory the greatest calamity in the world, except a defeat."

"Your ideas," said Monsieur Le Blanc, "concur with mine. Too often have mankind been misled by a name. We read in Scripture, that in heaven GLORY is associated, in the angels' song, with 'peace on earth and good-will to men.' There may be cases where duty commands us to wield the sword, but let us be content to wait till the necessity arises, and not madly pant to destroy our brothers, for all the honour men can bestow."

Philip bowed assent to the principle laid down, and though he did not wholly renounce the exercises of the Tintilleries, he was content from that day forward to bend his thoughts to other than military pursuits, and to different scenes from those which he had thus been taught were inseparable from GLORY!

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