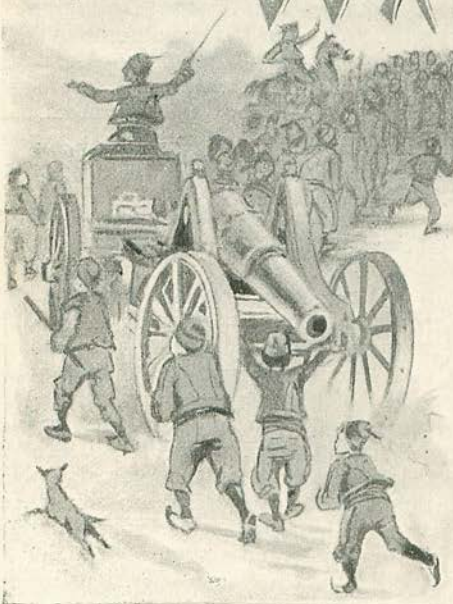


ANECDOTES OF THE WAR PATH

BY
IRVING MONTAGU



“**ONE** never can tell.” This is a world of change, and anything beyond the limits of the most fertile imagination may happen to anyone, anywhere, at any moment.

Were I a bellicose Bellamy, I might incline towards “Looking backwards” from the standpoint of a hundred years hence, and thus, posing as a special of 1991, might sigh for the shortcomings of the past, and picture myself crossing, on an aerial machine, the erst dark Continent (now lit by electric light) at a pace which would have even shattered the nerves of the driver of an old Brighton express—“a ponderous steam conveyance which, a hundred years ago, succeeded the stage coach.” Again, I might suppose myself sending sketches or despatches from remote battlefields by means of “the electric communicator,” a coil carried in one’s portmanteau, and which, by a simple mechanical arrangement—one end being secured at the office of your newspaper in Fleet-street or the Strand—unwinds as you travel, so that, wherever the fates have destined you to

go, you may be in immediate communication with the editor of the journal you represent; nay, more, the electric current passing through your pen or pencil, simultaneously producing copy or sketches with a corresponding pen or pencil at the other end. I say, were I a sort of bellicose Bellamy, I might compare the possible perfection of the future with the shortcomings of to-day; but then, you see, I’m not, and, though quite content to admit that “one never can tell,” I’m still more disposed in these “Anecdotes of the War-path,” by sticking to the practical present, to convey some idea of the doings of correspondents at the front.

To begin with, an iron constitution is the best basis on which to build up the war special, whose gifts with pen or pencil will depend entirely on the diplomacy he possesses by means of which to get to the front himself, and, at the same time, keep sufficiently in touch with the rear, to be in perpetual communication with his own headquarters at home.

I remember how one, otherwise most brilliant Special, whose talent won for him a reputation which he continues to enjoy, came utterly to grief through want of that tact which enabled others, during the siege of Plevna, to get their articles and sketches through. Between the slowly, very slowly contracting girdle of Muscovite steel which encircled that place and the Danube, there was a perfectly free communication. The historic bridge of boats was crossed without difficulty, and, Roumania being thus reached, one was in direct, uninterrupted correspondence with the street beloved of Doctor Johnson. The Special in question, however, being assured by suave, courteous, and in many cases English-speaking officers, that the Russian Bear was the soul of

honour, and the Russian field-post the most convenient mode of conveyance, put his despatches into the military post bags at Plevna. Then, "with a smile that was childlike and bland," did those Muscovite postal authorities receive them, stamp them officially—and—well, they were never seen again! Thus was a most daring Special, possessed of marvellous talent (I will not say if with pen or pencil) recalled to England, and, in that capacity, lost to the world. He lacked a diplomatic faculty, without which success is impossible to the war correspondent.

A case of a camp-kettle, too, comes vividly back to me, in which a man delayed his departure from London for three days in consequence of some fad about a peculiar commodity of this kind which was being specially made for him, and this when Europe was ablaze with war. Through that confounded camp-kettle he might lose the key to the position, yet the tinker came in *facile princeps* and that knight of the pen was nowhere. Happily, however, "fads" very seldom get to the front at all, or, if they do, change front themselves soon after their arrival.

It seems to me that the man who would win his spurs on the war-path must, by being ready to start at any moment, accept the inevitable in the light of "Kismet," and be prepared to turn circumstances, good, bad, or indifferent, to the best account possible; he will meet with fewer difficulties, and be better able to cope with those he does experience.

By the way, were you ever shadowed? The sensation, novel to begin with, is trying in the long run, and infinitely less endurable than being made prisoner of war, pure and simple.

I had this experience shortly after the entry of the Versailles troops into shattered, still burning, Paris.

My wandering propensities and the notes I from time to time made led to my being so persecuted that I would have done much to change places with Peter Schimmel, of shadowless fame. I think my nose, which, in polite society, might be called *retroussé*, must have suggested the tip-tilted organ of the typical Teuton, and that hence suspicions of fresh complications were aroused. Suffice it to say I was shadowed by a hawk-eyed, hook nosed, beetle-browed, oily-looking, parchment-faced being, who seemed, by his very pertinacity, becoming my second self. I hurried from place to

place in quest of incident, the pattering feet of my shadow—if I may so put it—announced his presence everywhere. I mounted an omnibus, and there was a double ascent up those spiral steps which led to the roof, that hawk-eyed shade was seated either by my side or with his back to me. In the evening I strolled down, say, the Boulevard des Capucines, while, with measured tread, smoking a cigarette the while, I was followed by the oily one; in short, through the many occupations of my life he was ever in my wake, till at last release came.

I was arrested and taken before the Commissary of Police, when it was discovered I had been mistaken for somebody else, and, with many apologies and regrets that I was *not* the rogue I might have been, I was released, my shadow being "unhooked," so to speak. And now, oddly enough, I had a morbid satisfaction in remembering the wild-goose chases I had taken that Government spy—up one street, down another, away into the suburbs of Paris, back to its centre, only to repeat the dose when I had time, till, more attenuated and cadaverous than ever, that hawk-eyed minion of the law could barely drag one leg after another. Strange as it may seem, when rid of him, I missed him, missed him awfully, I assure you; feeling quite lonely and incomplete without him, and should have been almost pleased to have had him tacked on again.



"A SUBSTANTIAL SHADOW"

Those Parisian shadows suggest to me a strange shadow pantomime I once saw in Spain, during the Carlist campaign, at an engagement at Behobie. The fighting began at about five in the morning in a dense white fog, when the Carlists made a desperate effort to take that small town from an inferior but unflinching force. The effect was, on approaching the scene, most ludicrous. In the first place, one was strangely impressed by mingled sounds as of the barking of dogs and the quacking of ducks, which turned out to be only terms of derision which each side was hurling at the other. Then, on coming closer still, the shadow pantomime of which I have spoken presented itself, just for all the world like mimic war on a white sheet, till, the veil of fog lifting, fighting—literally to the knife—presented itself in all its terrible reality. Under cover of that fog the Carlist hordes had come down from their Pyrenean retreats without the aid of those arranged ruses which the armies of all nations have so often to fall back upon. Amongst these is the common one, when wind and locality serve, of attacking under cover of the smoke of burning forests or furze bushes. One ruse during the siege of Plevna has always struck me in this connection as having been cleverly conceived.

The Turks, on the occasion of a sortie, secured as many uniforms of dead Russians as was possible. These they promptly put on, and, covering their main body, advanced *backwards*, as if retreating in good order on a strong Russian position. The Turkish officer in command—understanding the Russian tongue—gave the order to "Retire." Seeing and hearing this, the Russians, supposing it to be an unexpected retreat of their own men, made no defence, till, when too late, they discovered them to be Moslems in Muscovite garb, who, after a most sanguinary fight, succeeded in occupying the vantage point they had gained.

The eccentricities of bullets, too, are not a little interesting. There was a case in Asia Minor of a bullet which made six distinct holes of entry and exit in a man's body, without materially injuring him, before it passed away into the open. It may be explained that the man was in a kneeling position and firing at the time he was struck. This erratic ball passed first through the biceps of his right arm, between his ribs, and again through the triceps of his left arm. In Spain, also, I

remember an instance in which a bullet passed through an officer's chacot, the draught of which stunned him; he was found quite insensible, though uninjured, while that chacot had been drilled with the ball which had thus prostrated him. On two occasions I have myself had similar and most providential escapes—once at a place known as La Puncheda, on the banks of the Bidassoa, where, when sketching for *The Illustrated London News*, I was brought suddenly to the ground by a Carlist bullet, *with one leg completely shattered*, but then, you see, it was the leg of the camp stool on which I was seated; the other was when Conigsby, *The Times'* correspondent, and myself were going in a drosky in the direction of Zimnitsa, to join the Russians at Plevna.

Our route lay for some considerable distance along an exposed road by the side of the Danube, and it was then that the Turkish batteries on the opposite shore opened a deliberate fire on us with such telling effect that the back of our conveyance was considerably splintered, and a portmanteau against which I was leaning completely smashed, its contents being hardly recognisable. I am reminded, while on this subject, of how the correspondent to the *Macon journal* was once in imminent peril of being blown to atoms, a circumstance to which I was an eye-witness.

He was about to return through a huge wooden gate into a besieged Spanish town. During his absence of only about ten minutes, however, a large mortar had been put in position behind it, and a large roughly sawn aperture made. Just at the very moment of his return, it was fired, the draught sending him flying for some considerable distance!

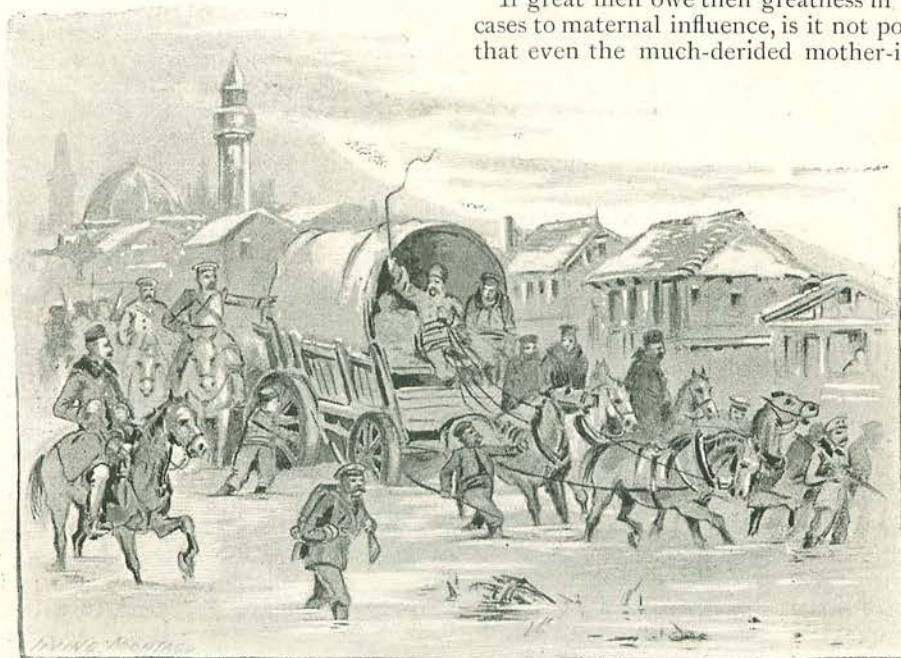
Though within a hair's breadth of death, he was happily only bruised, while thus unwittingly seeking "the bubble reputation even at the cannon's mouth." Nor are the eccentricities of shot and shell more curious than those of cold steel, the most remarkable instance which I remember being that of a Russian and a Turk, who, meeting, fought to the death with fixed bayonets in a wood in Anatolia. The fatal thrusts must have been simultaneous, the strange fact being that both stood, with their legs much apart, each with his bayonet embedded deeply in his adversary's breast, for several days, and were to be seen, still erect, in the attitude of their last terrible death-struggle.

But it's not with men alone that the wanderer on the war-path is in touch. His faithful ally, the horse, has a share of his sympathy, specially if in the course of his peregrinations he waded through the mud to headquarters in Bulgaria in 1877. Facts are stubborn things, and, when I say it was a matter of statistics that twenty-two thousand draught and other horses alone fell between Sistova and Plevna from the combined effect of fatigue and mud, it will be seen that "going to the front" is as difficult as getting to the rear—touching which,

times of that muddy deluge. In some cases, reaching as it did to our own horses' girths, we came to a standstill altogether, and it was only after hiring at enormous cost many others, to which we sometimes added oxen, that we could plough our way through it at all to some more elevated spot, with the prospect on our arrival of descending into an equally deep and depressing slough of despond within the next five minutes on the other side.

Did it ever strike you that the mother-in-law is often a much-misunderstood and under-valued individual?

If great men owe their greatness in many cases to maternal influence, is it not possible that even the much-derided mother-in-law



"GOING TO THE FRONT."

by the way, I may on another occasion have something interesting to say.

Mud! why, we were in a very sea of mud; it found its way over the tops of our jack-boots till it saturated our socks, this always happening when, and it was often, we dismounted to lend a hand at the spokes of our supply waggon, from the bottom of which came many-coloured streams of half-diluted coffee, weak tea, and moist, very moist sugar. Crimean mud is historic, yet one who had gone through that campaign and who was with me in Bulgaria assured me we ran it very close.

Dead horses were to be seen here, there, and everywhere, some having died in the most grotesque attitudes, and all the vic-

may sometimes have had hers, too, on the destinies of mankind? Yet, it would seem in Servia—at least, when I was there, during that short but sharp campaign—that the mother-in-law was at a greater discount than here. And this is my reason—not a bad one, I take it—for coming to that conclusion. One morning, when in Belgrade, I saw a sturdy Serb being roughly hustled off to prison. Inquiring the cause, I found he had been condemned for the murder of his mother-in-law to five years' penal servitude, but that his conduct had been so exemplary that he had for some weeks been out on a sort of Servian ticket-of-leave. When I saw him, however, he had just committed an offence beside which

the "ineffectual fire" of murder paled—he had stolen a leaden spoon from an ice-shop, and for this theft he was promptly executed the following morning—by which, I take it, leaden spoons must have been very scarce in Belgrade at that time, and mothers-in-law very plentiful.

Looking from that capital, which, picturesque in itself, is picturesquely situated at the juncture of the Trave and the Danube, the panorama presented of the shores of Hungary is most inviting, and at the time of which I am writing its effectiveness was added to by a large encampment of Pharaoh Nepeks—Hungarian gipsies. Ever on the alert for subjects for my pencil, I was not long before I chartered a small boat, and joined those wanderers, with whose brethren I had for-gathered in many countries, and concerning whom I had written much and made innumerable sketches, and by whom I had always been received as a "Romany rye."

This, however, was my first acquaintance with the Pharaoh Nepeks, of whose hospitality I cannot speak too highly. It appeared, however, that I had arrived at the moment of a political crisis. What the particular disagreement may have been—not understanding Romany sufficiently—I am unable to say. I only know that I had not been there many hours before a wordy warfare led to blows, and that encampment of about seven or eight hundred gipsies was at desperate logger-heads. Indeed, I have only on one occasion seen more frantic hand-to-hand fighting at close quarters in actual war.

Rushing on each other with long-bladed knives, they fought with a skill which must

have been begotten of long practice, and terrible were the wounds which were presently inflicted; in fact, the matter was looked on as so serious that troops from the Hungarian garrison of Semlin, hard by, were sent to put a stop to the disturbance. This at once caused a diversion. Whatever their intestine troubles may have been, they were one against the invaders of their camp.

It was at this moment, fired by the wildest enthusiasm, that a perfectly bewitching gipsy girl rushed forward and led her tribe against the common enemy. Bayonets, however, if sometimes brittle, are often stubborn things, and the steadily advancing lines of Hungarian troops quieted at last those desperate Nepeks; not, however, before many were severely wounded and numbers of prisoners taken, amongst whom I found myself being hurried off to a guard tent, much to my annoyance, since night was approaching, and I wanted to get

back to Belgrade before sundown. That annoyance, however, was short-lived, since I found myself placed in the same tent as that lovely young gipsy girl, to whom I had lost my all-too-susceptible heart an hour ago; indeed, then it was that I made the rough sketch which illustrates this article. Her chiselled features, the wildfire in her sloe-black eyes, her dishevelled hair, and the coins and beads with which those locks were interwoven, her torn green velvet bodice and coarse salmon-coloured



"A NEPEK BEAUTY."

skirt are all as vividly before me now as then. Nor did she seem averse to my companionship, especially when she found I could make myself understood through the medium of two languages—that of Romany,

which is, of course, common to gipsies of all nationalities, and that of the eye, which is common to humanity at large. Indeed, when, later on, we were liberated, my freedom came all too soon. I had been made captive by one who now had to return to her kinsfolk, while I, in melancholy mood, was pulled across "the Danube's blue waters" in the direction of Belgrade, casting, as I did so, many furtive glances behind at my fair fellow-prisoner, who, with several others, was waving me adieux from the shore; and I think, if I remember rightly, in my dreams that night, coils of dishevelled raven hair and sloe-black eyes played a conspicuous part.

Should you ever be called upon to assist at an operation on the leg of a fellow-creature under circumstances in which chloroform is not obtainable, insist on holding the wounded or otherwise affected limb. I speak advisedly, since I recall, while writing, a little incident which happened to me in the hospital at Belgrade on the occasion of my bringing to that place several men who had been wounded at Delegrad and Alixentz. One of these had to go through the painful process of probing for a bullet, which had taken up its quarters somewhere in the calf of his *left* leg.

"Hold his *right* leg, Montagu," said Dr. McKeller, the head of the medical staff (than whom there was never a more brilliant Britisher on the war-path); "hold on to the right, and we'll look after the left." There was a merry twinkle in his eye which, at the time, I only attributed to his natural good humour.

Directly the probe made itself felt, that right leg was drawn up till the knee almost touched the nose of the patient, when, the pain becoming unbearable, that leg, to which I was still clinging, shot out straight, and, striking me in the chest, sent me, like a pellet from a catapult, flying across the ward, greatly to the merriment of the assembled doctors and nurses. Never, I say, under any circumstances, unless you are a Hercules, undertake, unaided, to hold — *the other* leg.

In these rambling reminiscences I wish rather to give to the reader a rough *résumé* of some few of my experiences than make any attempt at an abbreviated story of my life. Thus it is I pass in rapid review such incidents as in accidental succession present themselves. Indeed, as I write, I am reminded, by the snarls and contention for a bone of several dogs in the street below, of the Fosse Commune at Erzeroum, a deep entrenchment across which those who would from any point enter that grimy Oriental city have to pass on rough wooden bridges.

There must be some Eastern sentiment which necessitates the



"WAR, PESTILENCE, AND FAMINE."

Turks of Anatolia being more or less in touch with the dead—otherwise why those mangy man-eaters (no, not tigers, but half savage dogs) which prowl about o' nights in the by-ways of Erzeroum, or scratch up in the graveyards, as they too often do, all that remains of poor humanity, which, in this part of the world, is but thinly and lightly covered with mother earth? The backs of these scavengers, raw, and sometimes bleeding, tell too plainly the nature of their calling, since they suffer from a peculiar scurvy so induced. When the commissariat is low, they go further afield, even to that cordon of corruption outside the place, where vultures, hawks, owls, and other birds of prey fight or forgather with wolves and such like four-footed adventurers, and where, though metaphorically the man-eater takes a back seat, he still picks up some loathsome trifles—the *menu* is not perhaps so choice as in his own graveyards, but the supply is plentiful enough in all conscience—everything corruptible, from a dead cat to a dead camel, finding a last resting-place somewhere within that seething circle.

Hark! Do you hear the thunder of the guns in the *Devé Boyun* Pass yonder? Do you see the smoke mingling with the fleeting clouds in the far distance? How complete a picture this—could you see it as I do now in my mind's eye—of "war, pestilence, and famine!"

It's a far cry from Anatolia to Bulgaria, from Erzeroum to the Russian lines round about Plevna; but such a flight to pen and pencil on the plains of paperland is nothing. Thus do we now, on the wings of fancy, find ourselves at Porodim, in the Cossack camp, during Osman Pasha's stubborn resistance—where Conigsby, of *The Times*, and McGahan, of *The Daily News*, and many others, including myself, were later on

sending home news or sketches, and awaiting developments.

Not unlike a sack of potatoes on legs, your average Cossack, when he has dismounted, has more the clumsiness of the clown than the cut of the crack cavalry soldier about him, while his peculiar aversion to water at once negatives any notion of personal smartness, from a European point of view. On the other hand, put him in the stirrups, mount him with all his paraphernalia on his shaggy little steed, and he will ride, if need be, "through fire, and—if quite unavoidable—water," too, if it be only the will of the Czar.

It's a beautiful, nay, touching sight to see the Cossack of the Don at the first streak of early dawn on commissariat duty. As an explorer and discoverer of dainties in obscure hen-roosts, he stands—save for Reynard himself—alone; seldom returning without bringing in trophies on his lance-head which will give a zest to the Major's breakfast—or—his own.

One morning at Porodim several correspondents and myself were making desperate efforts to break the ice with a view to something like a lame apology for the homely tub. At length, having succeeded in doing so, we commenced our ablutions, and soon

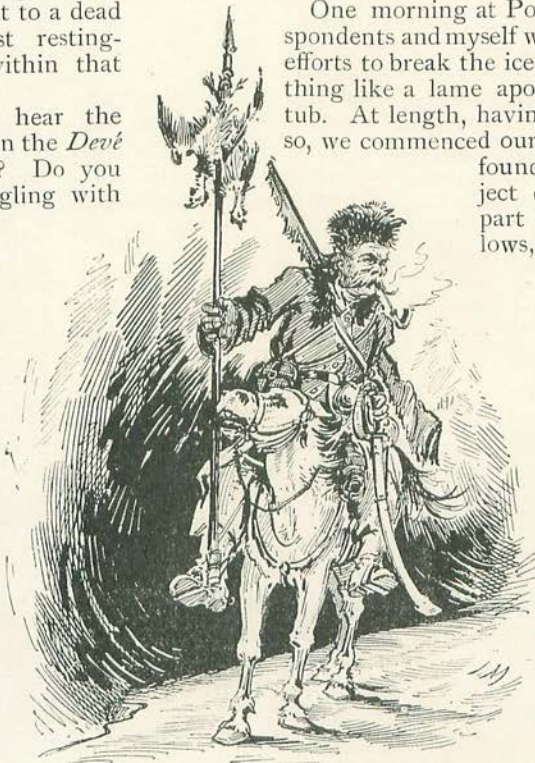
found ourselves the subject of comment on the part of several burly fellows, who seemed quite entertained at our proceedings.

"Wonderful!" said a Cossack Corporal, turning to my interpreter Nicholoff. "Wonderful! Englishmen, are they? Why, they wash in the winter time!"

While on the subject of Cossacks, several odd incidents present themselves:

The Times correspondent and myself having one day secured (no matter how) a fowl, promptly proceeded to

pluck, cook, cut up and—but no, I mustn't put the cart before the horse—we were interrupted in our arrangements for the mid-



"TIT-BITS AT THE FRONT."

day meal by the passing of a number of ox-teams, taking supplies of all kinds to the front, which were driven by Cossack camp followers. One of these, allowing his oxen to continue the even tenor of their way, stopped for a moment to take in the situation. Our preparations evidently amused him, and we, noting his interest in our movements—more especially, *The Times* correspondent—indulged in a certain amount of Anglo-Saxon badinage, at which that Cossack seemed to wonder more vaguely than before, till my companion felt it quite safe to say—in the vulgar vernacular, holding up at the same time *his* half of that mutilated fowl before the burly bullock driver—"There now, I dare say you'd make small bones of that if you could get it, wouldn't you?"

In an instant the Cossack had seized the dainty morsel in his grimy grip; the next it was quite beyond reclaim between his teeth, and then, to our utter astonishment, in unmistakable North Country dialect he said:—

"Wull, p'raps I shall, now I've got 'un; I'm a Yarkshermun, I am." And with this, munching to his infinite satisfaction that drum-stick as he went, he turned on his heel and rejoined his oxen.

On inquiry we found him to be a Yorkshire ne'er-do-weel, who, after many vicissitudes, had somehow enlisted in the Cossack contingent.

Before the siege was over, however, we had more than forgiven the unexpected appropriation of the succulent drum-stick.

One night—one of the most severe of that terrible winter—when such little wood as was obtainable was almost too damp to ignite, myself and several other correspondents were sitting in sorry plight round an apology for a camp fire, half frozen, and utterly demoralised, in a condition, in fact, of benumbed misery, which I at least have never before or since experienced. Save for the lurid glare of Plevna, like a smouldering volcano in the distance, and the tread now and again of a sentry in the crisp snow, we might

have been, as indeed we in some senses were, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Presently, however, a sound broke the stillness of the night—a sound which caused our hearts to throb, and circulated anew the blood in our half-frozen veins, a sound which spoke to each of "England, home, and beauty," of a welcome in store for us in the old country, of hopes realised, and promises fulfilled—that sound took the form of music, and probably the most acceptable form music, at such a moment, could take; for, proceeding from a rough reed pipe, there floated across to us on the cold night air the welcome old strains of "Home, sweet home:" sympathetically, exquisitely rendered, it seemed literally to resuscitate us. Yes, indeed, we had each of us something to live for, much to be thankful for, and when afterwards we ascertained the player to have been none other than our Yorkshire Cossack, it was pleasant to reflect that if he had once played the dickens with our dinner he had more than recompensed us with "Home, sweet home."

Although we were sometimes in such sorry plight as I've referred to, Conigsby was well pleased to mix with the Muscovites; he had previously been accredited to the Turks, and at Philippopolis, Adrianople, and elsewhere, had been frequently warned that the strong Russian bias of his letters to *The Times* boded him no good; indeed,

that "a cup of black coffee," as poison is politely termed by the Moslems, was in active preparation for him.

Loth to accept these hints, it's more than probable he would never have come to Plevna at all, had not a very forcible argument been presented to him. It happened thus:—The representative of Printing House-square—quite innocent of coming events—rose one morning rather earlier than usual. His room seeming unusually dark, he proceeded at once to draw up the blind, when, to his intense horror, he suddenly found himself face to face with a corpse—the corpse of a Bulgarian



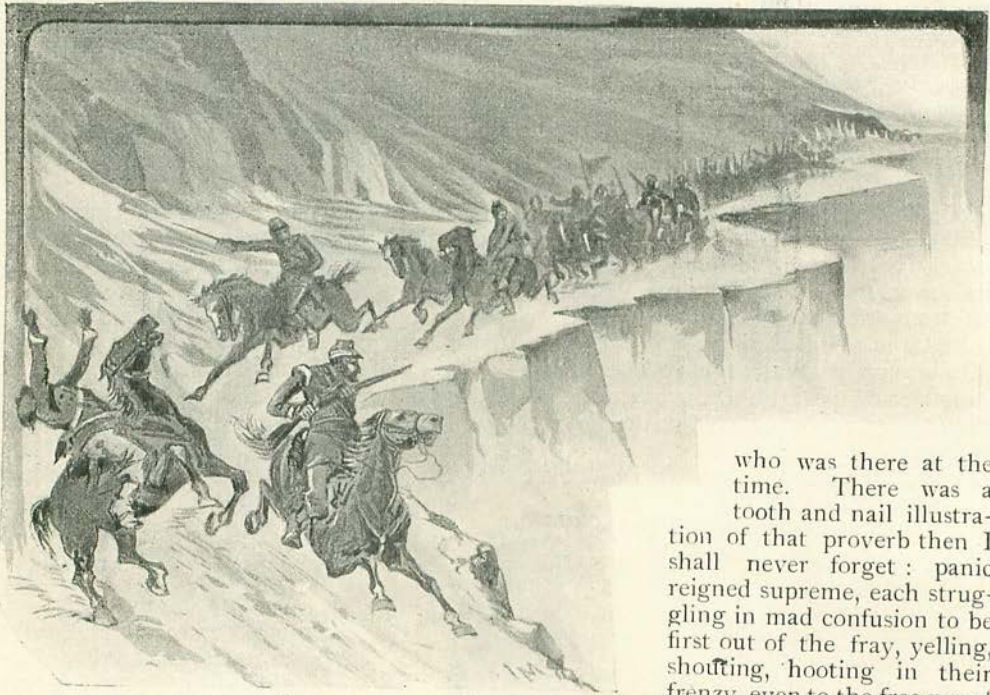
"HOME, SWEET HOME."

traitor — which, during the night, had been hoisted by means of pulleys outside his bedroom window. The Turks, to say the least of it, had a design on his appetite for breakfast. This gentle reminder was sufficient for him; he quite understood now how matters stood, and so exchanged as soon as possible to the Russian lines.

His successor, whose views, alas! were also Russophile, sent only a limited number of despatches to *The Times*. It was *café noir* that did it. I think he was buried at Scutari.

I have heard it remarked by some stay-

know what fear is." Let him, as soon as occasion serves, take a dose of ignominious retreat—*one* dose before bedtime will be found quite sufficient. Let him experience a retreat, say, down a rugged mountain defile in Spain, with the enemy in comparatively close proximity on a parallel ridge, a deep gorge between them, pouring in a deadly fire on retreating artillery and cavalry. This I experienced once not far from San Sebastian. "Everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." I cite the apt quotation of my old friend Edmund O'Donovan, of *The Daily News*,



"A RETREAT IN SPAIN."

at-home critics of war that they "don't know what fear is," that they are, in other words, ready-made heroes for whom there is, unfortunately, no scope. To such I would recommend some of the minor emergencies of a campaign as tests worth trying. Personally, I am quite willing to confess to having experienced at times painfully unpleasant qualms, and fully believe that to do so is only human. Overcoming fear is declared by some to be heroic, and individual acts of unselfish bravery under such circumstances cannot certainly be too generously commended; but defend me from the untried swash-buckler who "doesn't

who was there at the time. There was a tooth and nail illustration of that proverb then I shall never forget: panic reigned supreme, each struggling in mad confusion to be first out of the fray, yelling, shouting, hooting in their frenzy, even to the free use of the butt ends of carbines and revolvers, anything, in short,

to clear the way for that best beloved and all-important "Number One."

It's astonishing, isn't it, with what jealous care poor humanity looks after number one, even though life be at a discount, as it was during the siege of Plevna, when one morning Conigsby and myself sallied forth in opposite directions in quest of material for our respective papers? Each in turn, though separated by some miles, found himself under a withering fire from Turkish rifle pits, and later on each found himself hastening for the kindly protection of the same advanced Russian earthworks.

"This, Montagu," said Conigsby, "is an

incident which should not be overlooked. A sceptical world will never believe it—yet stay—unless—oh, yes, I have it. You do a picture for *The Illustrated News* representing our noble selves, specially your humble servant, you know, as we now are in the forefront of the fighting, while I write up the occurrence in *The Times*. Such corroborative evidence, which is, moreover, absolutely true, will place our zeal beyond question, and show the reading and picture-loving public that life at the front is not all ‘beer and skittles.’”

That day is particularly marked on my memory as having been one of exceptional interest, incident, and hard work, terminating in a night made almost unbearable by the howling of wolves and the neighing of terror-stricken horses. With this—“An Attack on the Encampment of *The Times* and *Illustrated London News*,” forming a subject for the pages of that journal—and with Conigsby’s version of the experience (it may be taken with several grains of salt), which he gave at a Press dinner on our return, I will bring this chapter of accidents and incidents to a close.

“Never, gentlemen,” said he, “never on any account go to the front with a war artist. They are dangerous individuals, I assure you. Most of you will remember a certain illustration of Montagu’s in which our camp was represented as being attacked by wolves; but you don’t, I think, know the true story concerning it.

“One night, wearied beyond measure with a long day at the front, I was striving in vain to sleep through a medley of sounds in which the short, quick, raspy barking of wolves, and shouts of men striving to

pacify scared horses, combined to make night hideous, when, unable to stand it any longer, I rushed into Montagu’s tent—for, without enlisting his aid, I felt apoplexy must be the end of it—and aroused him.

“Montagu, my dear fellow, do you hear those wolves? They are simply unbearable. I have tried every expedient but one—it’s our last resource. If there’s one thing in this world more than another calculated to scare wolves it will be one of your pictures for *The Illustrated London News*! Whereupon I seized one of his latest productions, and, rushing out, faced those fiery invaders.

“The result was instantaneous. With a fearfully prolonged yelp they scuttled off helter-skelter to the hills, where they were very soon lost to sight.

“But, remember, I have already warned you against going to the front with a war artist, and would ask you now to listen to Montagu’s terrible retaliation. Goodness knows, I am loth enough to admit it.

“Those wolves came back again, and then it was that he, rushing into my tent, said that lunacy, ay, raving madness, stared him in the face, unless the last die were cast—if that wouldn’t settle them, nothing would. With this he grasped a half-finished article of mine to *The Times*, and

confronting those wolves, read aloud to that astonished pack the first short paragraph. Then it was that, utterly panic-stricken, they fled, howling in wild confusion, to the Balcans, and I understand they have been scarce in Bulgaria ever since. Who, after this, will question for one moment the far-reaching influence of the British press?”

(To be continued.)



A NECDOTES

OF THE WAR-PATH BY IRVING MONTAGU



II.

AROTID arteries and jugular veins were of no more concern to

Mehemet Ben Ali than the laws of *Meum and Tuum*, yet he was true to the core when it served his own interests, and invaluable to us in the capacity of Postmaster-General when on the war-path in Asia Minor. The fact was, Ben had had his critical eye on the messengers we sent to the rear with despatches for some considerable time, as recent experiences proved.

Not long since, our faithful Johannes, the driver of the ramshackle *areba*, or native cart, which contained our supplies, had been attacked when on a foraging expedition in quest of black bread, and very roughly treated. As a representative of English pashas, he was supposed to be a man of more substance than he turned out to be when his pockets were rifled by a detachment of four burly brigands who had been sent out by the wily Ben to intercept him. On his joining us, there could be little doubt that he really had suffered considerably at their hands, having been unmercifully cudgelled as a poverty-stricken knave who was not (happily for himself)

worth powder and shot. But is such treatment peculiar to semi-barbarous latitudes? Isn't it a crime in the most cultured centres to be "hard up"? Johannes combined the devotion of a Sancho Panza with the swash-bucklerism of a Falstaff; his unseen adventures were marvellous. When driving in advance, he had several times done

prodigies of valour; just before our arrival, against great odds, too, to save our stores. He was generally sheathing his yatagan on our approach, and apparently in a state of considerable excitement. He was, however, honesty itself in its broadest sense, and the fact of his having returned on that particular occasion *sans* almost everything, and severely knocked about into the bargain, was sufficient evidence of the maltreatment he had received. No; mulching oneself into something like a jelly, is not a likely or pleasant way of producing evidence of an experience. Johannes had been an unmistakable victim.

We all liked him; he was a cheery soul, and generous to a fault—many faults, in fact, as one of our experiences proved. It happened in this way. We found him one morning in advance of our party, commiserating with a poor traveller who, weary and footsore, was leaning against a box-tree in a glade through which we were passing. He had already elicited from the poor wretch the rough story of his strange career, even to the fact that he was then returning by long and exhausting stages to his native village near Lake Van, which he hoped to reach before his aged *kotona* joined the *hourri*.

What he feared most was brigands ; he was in a state of abject dread of them. He had one or two little things which he valued about him, and a small amount of money as well ; and, when we came up, he was imploring Johannes to intercede for him that he might be allowed to accompany us and enjoy the protection of our escort for such time as our way lay in his direction. Seven times a day would he kiss the hems of our garments if need be, to say nothing of prostrating himself each night before the setting sun to supplicate the blessings of Allah on the kindly pashas who had afforded him this much-coveted protection.

We were quite willing he should accompany us, and, moreover, gave him the additional advantage of riding in our areba.

He would "grovel in the sand to serve us"; he would remember when in Paradise (he seemed sure of his ethereal destination) the services we had rendered him, and perpetually sing our praises.

From the point of view of futurity, our wanderer had been a good investment, and we metaphorically patted each other on the back as good Samaritans. So it was that days and nights succeeded each other in which we received ample recompense in blessings for the protection we were affording. Five days had in all passed, and night had closed in, when our fellow traveller, having shared our frugal meal, as usual, and discussed equally, as usual, our post-prandial *café noir*, was smoking his last pipe before retiring to rest, when (my dragoman translating) he volunteered the following story :—

"Once upon a time, O mighty white Pashas," he began, with a delightful Oriental vagueness as to period, "once upon a time, there dwelt at Teheran a mighty monarch and a miserable mendicant. The monarch's wealth was abundant, and the eyes of his lovely daughter Myrrah were as lode-stars in the rays of which he basked. As far as this world's possessions were concerned he had nothing left to desire, yet was he the most miserable man in all Persia ; for in his youth he had violated (no matter how) the confidence of his best friend, and now old age was creeping upon him so rapidly that he feared insufficient time for repentance would be left him.

"Now, one day while riding in the vicinity of his palace, he noticed a starving mendi-

cant lying by the wayside, and he felt that in him Allah had afforded him an opportunity for doing good as a means by which to compensate for his youthful shortcomings.

"So he bade the beggar rise and follow him. Then for his rags were substituted fine raiment, and he not only showered upon him untold wealth, but made him even the highest officer in his royal household, his Grand Vizier.

"Now, what did that Grand Vizier do ? Did he sing the praises of his deliverer from cockcrow to sundown ?

"No, he did not ; he did nothing of the kind. He added to his obligations by falling desperately in love with the king's only daughter, the princess Myrrah, whose eyes, you will remember, were as lode-stars and whose complexion blended in one the beauties of the lily and the rose, and whose lips were 'ruddier than the cherry'; and he said unto her : 'Take of thy father's jewels and gold all thou canst secure, and I also will do the same, he has enough and to spare. And, when we have gathered together all that cometh within our reach, we will journey hence together while your royal father the king sleepeth, and none shall know whither.'

"And this, O pashas, in the dead of night they did, so that when the monarch awoke in the morning he found himself, not only robbed of his most valuable worldly possessions, but, above all, discovered himself to be childless.

"'There is no gratitude in this world,' said the king. 'In striving by good deeds to erase bad ones, I have but proved that the ready-witted rogue is the winner in the long run.'

This was the strange philosophy of the wanderer's story on which I pondered when, half an hour later, all others in the khan were wrapped in slumber.

At the first grey streak of dawn I awoke, and felt, as was my custom, in my waistcoat pocket for my watch, that I might time our uprising.

It was gone ! Not the waistcoat, but the watch. The chain had been nipped by a sharp instrument, many sovereigns too had been dexterously abstracted from my gold belt.

Several other correspondents had suffered somewhat similarly. An entry must have been made in the night. We all hoped the poor stranger with his small stock of hard-earned valuables, which he cherished

so dearly, had not suffered as well. No, he had not. The spot where he had disposed himself to rest the night before, in the language of the East, "knew him not."

It had been an exit, not an entry, after all. He had, in other words, made tracks, taking with him everything he could lay hands on. We had, in short, been done to a turn by an Asiatic sharper of the first water, and it was with sickly smiles that we concurred with the moral of his story of the night before—

"There is no gratitude in this world. Ready-witted rogues generally win in the long run."

Those abundant blessings had been a bad investment after all. The poor stranger would have made an able officer in the service of Mehemet Ben Ali.

The incident, however, which decided our future action with a view to keeping in touch with the base of operations in Fleet-street was the premature return of one of our messengers who had been sent by us with sketches and despatches to Erzeroum. The story he told was a simple one.

The leathern case in which he carried our pen and pencil contributions to the London press had attracted the notice of several brigands, who had followed him into a gloomy copse; and, having first beaten him, the invariable custom of those who are too humane to kill outright, they had bound him to a tree, a helpless witness to the examination of his effects.

The manuscripts had of course no interest for them, but the sketches delighted them immensely. They literally roared when they saw themselves as others saw them.

Having formed a hanging committee, they disposed of a batch of these drawings

on the surrounding forest trees. A sylvan exhibition of black and white sketches, to "a private view" of which they now left our scared servant.

Later on they returned, bringing with them many others, amongst whom they were ultimately divided with a general good humour which was so catching that they unanimously agreed to let the messenger who had been the innocent means of so much amusement go free, and thus it was that he had been able to again join us.

Happily for us, this discovery was made so early that it did not materially affect us, and served as a wholesome hint that, under certain circumstances, when not in touch

with the regular army, and sometimes even then, we must avail ourselves of "our friend, the enemy," in other words of these very brigands themselves. Williams, my Levantine interpreter, was on all such critical occasions invaluable, and we now at once consulted him.

There were, he told us, many villages *en route* known by the natives to be chiefly occupied by desperadoes of the highway, whose propensi-

ties, bloodthirsty enough when in the open, were mild and lamblike at home to all passing strangers who claimed their hospitalities. Once within the limits and your protection was assured till your departure, when, becoming again public property, you were attacked with all possible precipitancy, lest some other gang secured you who had not extended to you any hospitalities at all.

To one of several such remote villages I would refer. Our approach had evidently not been expected, or we should probably have been intercepted. We were in fact palavering with several of the villagers before the chief, or headman, of the place



A HANGING COMMITTEE.

was well aware of our arrival. He was a venerable rogue, with a merry twinkle in his eye; nature had designed him for a *very* low comedian, but, fate having ordained otherwise, he was the leading spirit of that little community of cut-throats.

The village, however, was "ours," and they, the inhabitants, were "our veriest slaves."

Immediately the women had been accommodated elsewhere, we should have "the best khan in the place." In vain did we protest that we wouldn't for the world disturb the ladies. They were bundled off *instantly*, and we were ushered, still on horseback, into a huge stable, one portion of which was divided off into stalls where

Having been supplied plentifully with youart (a sort of rank curds and whey) and pelaff (a concoction of rice and the fat obtained from the pendulous tails of Asiatic sheep), we wrapped ourselves snugly up in our many wraps, lit our pipes, and calmly awaited what "Kismet" had in store for us.

Presently the rude door of the place was thrown wide open and a chilly gust of wind careered through the khan, bearing with it a volume of smoke from our primitive fire-place to be circulated in a sort of sooty cloudland above the rafters, chimneys being unknown in this happy valley.

Was it a funeral procession, or what?

The measured tread of many feet was



AN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

sheep, goats, oxen, and several very faded-looking horses were indiscriminately huddled together, while the smaller division of the place was devoted to the accommodation of poor humanity.

Several bewrinkled old hags, who were understood to be proof against our blandishments, had been allowed to remain to satisfy, later on, the curiosity of their fairer sisters.

The night was cold, and the wood fire which burned brightly in a convenient corner came as a welcome invitation to make ourselves as comfortable as we could under the circumstances, which, it is needless to say, we at once proceeded to do.

to be heard without: first a beturbaned native entered, who, walking majestically to where I was seated, presented me with much solemnity with a flint stone, upon which, salaaming, he left the khan, to be succeeded by another and yet another, till some twelve or fourteen villagers had thus paraded before us, each bringing unconsidered trifles as presents for the white pashas. Broken bits of rusty flint-locks, bunches of leaves, old horseshoes, anything, in short, to convey an impression of kindly welcome and suggest future bucksheesh.

These presentations were hardly concluded when the clatter of horses' hoofs outside suggested the return from one of

their raids of a small party of marauders who, the next moment, had ridden into the khan and dismounted. First and foremost amongst these was Mehemet Ben Ali, whose glorious indifference with regard to carotid arteries and jugular veins was spoken of at the commencement of this article.

We joined the amused throng in the village later on, who gathered round those swarthy exhibitors of our effects, as they held up, one after another, our effects for inspection—a comb causing much amusement, its use, with that of a hair brush, requiring considerable explanation. I distinctly remember, too, a necktie, the band of which fastened with a patent clasp and an ominous click, which at once associated itself in their minds with the click of a pistol, and it was quite ludicrous to see how suddenly it was dropped by the first, and how carefully it was avoided by the rest of those who were examining the contents of our saddle bags. Soap, again, was more than once supposed to be eatable, and its use for washing purposes, when explained, was only half believed, its colour happening to be pink and white, suggesting to them some form of Rahat Lakoum, they evidently thought we were trying to save oursweetstuff. Every-

thing, however, was returned to us, pilfering being only practised *without* the village lines, once having left which we were open to attack at any moment from our late entertainers, who now followed to waylay us.

I was so pleased with Mehemet Ben Ali's superior intelligence that I consulted Williams with a view to explaining to him our desire to keep up a direct communication with Erzeroum and thus with Trebizond on the coast, the latter part of the postal communication being covered by Tatas, or native footmen, generally some six or eight in number, who carry their letters and parcels in the saddlebags of the mules or horses they ride, and who are always accom-

panied by an armed escort of zapteahs. Thus, if once we could deposit our supplies of sketches and MS. with the British Consul at Erzeroum, all would go well.

It has been seen that ordinary messengers between the villages at which—when not sleeping in the open—we put up, and that place were invariably waylaid, so we further explained how utterly valueless to anyone, save our own people in England, were the despatches we sent; while, on the other hand, if we could once obtain an assurance of their safe delivery, we would reward Mehemet personally to a considerable extent, and he could pay his hirelings as he thought fit. Thus would he make

more by the transaction in a week than he would perhaps make by the uncertain profession of brigandage in six months.

Ready-witted Ben saw at a glance that in this case honesty was the best policy, and thus it was that, not only there, but elsewhere, we were able to keep up direct communication with the rear, which would have been otherwise impossible. Every short cut through the mountains was known to these fellows, who thus circumvented the regular troops who sometimes were despatched in small bodies in search of them. This they did

in the most marvellous way, always managing, through some intermediary, to get our literary and artistic contributions to the press by hook or by crook into the town, turning up a few days later with some unmistakable evidence of their delivery; then the Postmaster-General, as we dubbed Ben Ali, received the promised largess, the same system being made afterwards to apply, as I have said, with equal success elsewhere during such time as we were traversing that wild track of country intervening between Erzeroum and Kars, where we eventually joined the army of Ahmed Muckhtar Pasha.

The revolver they hold in special abhor-



BEN ALI.

rence, as containing the shafts of Sheitan—the devil's bolts—since, from their point of view, it goes off without loading. We never failed to show these easily-deluded creatures the repeating qualities of our weapons, never, of course, letting them see us load them.

I remember one occasion on which for their edification I proposed that a bottle should be put up and smashed by us at a fairly long pistol range, each correspondent firing six shots. I fired first. I emptied my revolver without—I blush to confess it—going within measurable distance of that bottle; it had, indeed, been a most unfortunate suggestion on my part. Utterly disgusted at my failure, *The Manchester Guardian*, an excellent revolver shot as a rule, took up his position. He failed now, as utterly and ignominiously as I had done. *The Scotsman* came next, with no better result. At this moment a lanky Circassian, who had been looking on, inquired mildly what the great white pashas were trying to do; and, when it was explained that they had intended hitting that bottle, he expressed himself as wonderstruck, picked up a stone, and, certainly with a force and precision I never witnessed before, or since, he smashed that bottle to smithereens.

We did no more revolver practice in that village. Small matters have sometimes weighty significance, as instanced on another occasion, a delightfully calm evening, when we were steaming from Constantinople across the placid waters of the Sea of Marmora towards Brindisi. It was some months after our Anatolian experiences recorded above.

* * *

Did I ever suffer from palpitation of the heart? Why, who could help it who has spent more than a week in Spain. She

certainly "takes a side glance and looks down, beware!" but then, at the same time, to have basked in the sunny smiles of

Spanish beauty is to have enjoyed a glimpse of Paradise and the Peri.

In any other country, war would have crushed, at least for the moment, the spirit of love; not so, however, during the Spanish campaign. I assure you that in San Sebastian, where I was during the siege of that place by the Carlists, the Alemada, or chief boulevard, was the scene every evening of the wildest gaiety. Staid duennas with patronising air enjoying the gambols of their younger sisters to the full, as much as those accomplished fan-flirters did themselves, while the wild Fandango, the graceful Bolero, and seductive waltz won over by turns the hearts of



"FLIRTING THAT FAN OF HERS."

all the male on-lookers.

Night after night have I watched my own particular Dulcinea del Toboso—or rather of San Sebastian in this case—flirt her fan and frolic on the light fantastic toe till I swore solemnly never again to visit the Peninsula, without having learnt to conjugate the verb to love in Spanish.

I recall, too, how I once nearly lost my heart and my balance at one and the same moment when in the Basque frontier town of Irun—it was during the siege of that place also that I happened to be there. It was evening. A typical Spanish damsel was crossing the Plaza, her mantilla gracefully wrapped about her shoulders; she was flirting that fan of hers as Spanish women alone know how, and cast so bewitching a glance in my direction as she passed that I confess I was—well— To continue, she was presently joined by several female friends, who, notwithstanding the fusillade which was going on from the roof of the great square tower of the cathedral, and the occasional bursting of a shell on the out-

skirts (a deadly messenger from the Carlist fort of St. Marcial, on the heights), were as light-hearted and frolicsome as if they were going to a *fête de nuit*—on, on they came again in my direction.

I had eyes only for one—and she evidently knew it. Oh, the exquisite delight of that moment! Twilight was closing in, yet I presently noted that “the queen of my heart” was followed by an uncanny reptile, she was evidently quite unconscious of its pursuit of her; with unwieldy leaps and bounds whichever way she turned it dogged her footsteps.

Now I have the greatest repugnance to anything of the insect or reptile kind, yet I had manifestly only one course to pursue now; besides, what a happy—may I say heroic?—medium for introduction thus presented itself.

I rushed at the grim, black, lizard-like beast. Twice did it dexterously evade the foot which would have crushed it. The third time, however, I was more fortunate, the full force of my heel had come down on the agile creature, and there was at the same time a curious feeling that it had been severed from the skirt to which it had been clinging tooth and nail. The little party stopped, and the lady of my particular choice with a look of amazement exclaimed, “Señor!”

I hastily explained in French, which

happily that lady understood. I pointed to the dead animal at my feet, raised my hat, and smiled triumphantly.

Then, turning to her friends, she pointed at it too, and all united in roars of laughter at my expense, intermingled with loud shouts of “El drap! El drap!”

The fact was it was a well-known Spanish practical joke by which the uninitiated are led to suppose that a cleverly cut piece of cloth attached to a girl's skirts and twitched into action by her as she walks is a reptile of

dangerous proportions. Who shall say that *men* were “gay deceivers ever” after that?

* * * *

It has not been given to many to make pen and pencil notes of the ladies of a Pasha's harem, yet twice when in Asia Minor did I come across them as fugitives hastening on before the Russian advance. On the first occasion the impression conveyed was that of a travelling menagerie, so closely were those fair ones packed in a long gilded diligence-like conveyance, the sides of which were closely latticed, while the Pasha—at other times no doubt “a lion amongst the ladies”—was



HAREM ON THE MARCH.

now at large, riding sedately at the rear.

My second was the experience of which I make a pencil note in this article, and which struck me as far the most characteristic of the two.

A handsome bronzed Asiatic Turk, not having evidently had time to make all necessary arrangements for flight, had accommodated his seven wives as best he could; two had secured the shelter of a latticed sedan chair, while the others, alternating between horse and camel-back, adapted themselves to the situation as best they could; indeed, those in the sedan alighted from time to time when a halt was made, and it was then the distinctive positions of those wives in relation to that Pasha were most noticeable. Of the seven, four were really more or less attendants on the remaining three, while the actual favourite, the wife of wives, the queen of the harem, held amongst these three a distinctive position. She was generally the happy possessor of a French parasol. I don't mean to infer that this is the distinguishing badge of an Oriental favourite, but when, in far-off up-country villages and small townships, the local Kiamakans and others can secure one of those much-coveted Parisian or Viennese sunshades, it becomes as a matter of right the property of her who takes first rôle in the Pasha's household.

When I came across the little group which forms the subject of my illustration, they were halting for refreshment; the Pasha calmly smoking his mid-day nargilé and sipping black coffee, while his wives were refreshing themselves with sweetmeats.

I couldn't help noticing, as far as good taste in personal appearance was concerned, that Pasha's choice of a favourite; her yashmack, much more gauzy than the rest, revealing most charming features, while her figure, judging from the folds of her voluminous draperies, was of perfect contour.

Fate, apparently, had no horrors for this much-married magnate: perhaps, when he looked around, and his wives, with one accord, said, or seemed to suggest: "We are seven, to say nothing of our retainers, together with our dogs, cats, and parrots," he felt that he was beyond its reach. He was the very embodiment of philo-

sophy, as he stood there calmly surveying his surroundings, lazily smoking his sweet-scented nargilé; it takes a good deal to rouse the average Turk to action, but when his blood is up, he's a demon. This Pasha will however retreat leisurely, till he touches the coast, when, with all his impedimenta round about him, he will make his way in the first available ship to Constantinople—at least, so he hopes—Kismet!

* * *

Whistler's butterfly, whose flutterings are represented by the splutterings from that eccentric artist-author's pen, would find happy hunting-grounds on these pages, where incident follows incident regardless of place or period. Thus would I now ask you to return with me for the nonce to Spain, that we may indulge together in more impressions by the way.

Under certain circumstances there is something singularly eloquent about absolute silence. I have, on several occasions in my wandering career, been infinitely



SANCTUARY.

more impressed by it than by noisy demonstration. Look up at that massive Gothic tower, standing out as black as approaching night against a saffron sky; it's the cathedral of Irun, in the erst market-place of which we are standing—shambles had been a better name for it since the commencement of this civil war. Hush! there is an appalling silence over all to-night, which may not be rudely broken.

There is no evidence of movement anywhere. Accustoming one's eyes to the deepening twilight, one certainly sees here and there groups of men, women, and, in some cases, children huddled together in strange attitudes and gloomy corners round about the dark entry to the cathedral—horror depicted on the faces of some, perfect serenity on those of others, yet never a word do they utter. They are "in the garden of sleep." They are dead, all dead, the market-place, after a hard day's fighting, being deserted by the living—all save you and

I, and that spectre-like sentry yonder on the cathedral tower "on guard."

But the gloom is suddenly relieved by a ray of many-coloured light which comes through one of the cathedral windows. This is succeeded by another, and yet another.

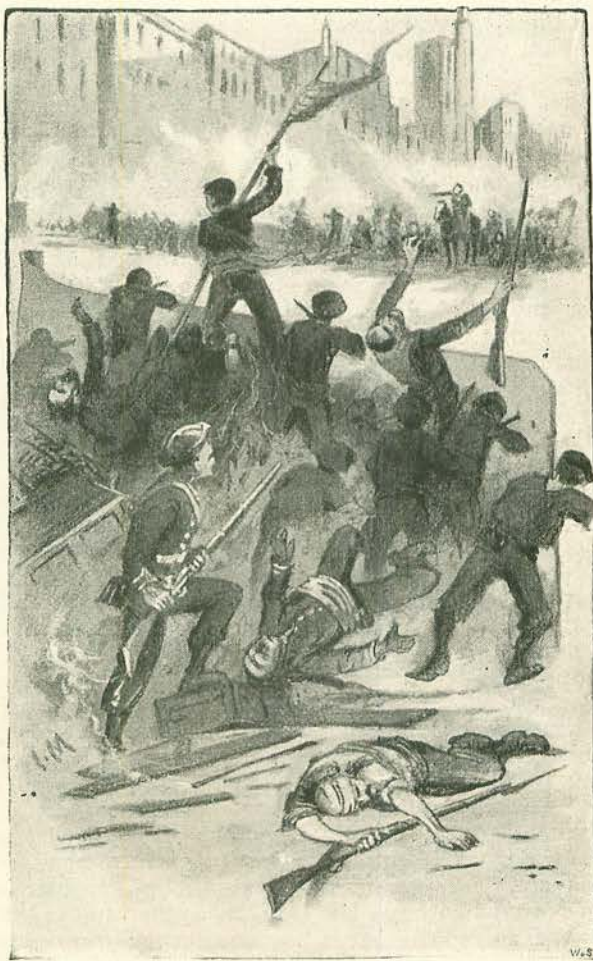
The priests within are lighting up the altar, and a flood of prismatic brilliance mingles with the smoke from burning

embers and the still night air without, save where the old pile faces the Carlist lines, in which direction the windows have been carefully barricaded, so as not to attract the enemy's shell fire. Hark! sweet and low the organ peals forth exquisite strains of music; while, now and again, Dong! and a sonorous metallic voice from the belfry invites the stricken ones to sanctuary. A company of

Migueletes, with slow, measured tread, emerge from a neighbouring street, and, directing their steps towards the cathedral, are followed by a miscellaneous crowd, all hastening for the protection of Mother Church. Dong! Again that bell, so full of solemn warning.

Look! What are they carrying on that splintered door, which serves as a stretcher? Let us reverently lift the cloak which half conceals a human form. It is a young officer, evidently dying, to whom the last rites are about to be administered. Not a word is spoken as the regimental favourite is

tenderly carried by his comrades to the altar. Crucifix in hand, the officiating priest affords this suppliant for pardon the spiritual assurances he most needs. Raising himself on one arm, he looks first this way, then that, as if uncertain as to what is going on around him; and then, realising it all, he sinks back, with a restful, satisfied smile on his young face. He is dead! The regimental surgeon, who happens to be



THE IRON SHIELD.

present, certifies it. "Those whom the gods love die young."

The procession moves on just as another similar one takes its place at the altar steps. And all this to the running accompaniment, now of the clank of arms; the continuous strains, still soft and low, of organ music; the occasional irregular rattle of musketry when the pickets are exchanging shots; and again the measured, muffled, periodical Dong! of that passing bell.

This is no fancy picture: I saw and heard it more than once when on the war-path; but yet, as I have said, the silence which preceded or succeeded events was often more eloquent than events themselves. At Hernani, near Oreamendez, the tolling of sanctuary came across hill and dale with ominous significance, which made the intervening silence doubly terrible; while in remote, unexpected places, up in the hills perhaps, it was not unusual to come across just such a scene as the one I have depicted—a beautiful Gothic setting to a monument of inhuman passion. The eloquence of silence at such times is indeed impressive, and may fitly contrast with the incident on the title-page of this article. A long line of Bedouins, shouting, yelling to their camels, "Ider! Ider! Ider!" have come at a swinging pace between myself and the setting sun. From a certain point of view, the wild devilry of the whole thing cannot be excelled: as a picture of weird activity it stands alone. Yet a few hours later, when under the still, starlit canopy of heaven they are reposing by their exhausted camels, wrapped in the silence of sleep, a crescent moon glimmering over the crest of the distant uplands, one feels infinitely more impressed than before.

* * *

All things are comparative in this world—finding ourselves transported on the wings of fancy—you and I are again in Spain. That Arab encampment was but a dissolving view. We are at the battle of Behobie, on the Franco-Spanish frontier. As will be seen by the illustration, that which at a first glance looks not unlike a huge Gladstone collar is, as a matter of fact, an immense iron shield which the Carlists used on several occasions with signal effect. Oh! the rattle of the musketry against that barrier, which, as the fighting progressed, was moved forward on cross-beams and rollers, while behind it all the securable furniture and débris were piled up, so as to give vantage points to those of

the defending party who had been unable to secure holes for the muzzles of their rifles, apertures with which this novel defence was plentifully studded.

Just as love laughs at locksmiths because he penetrates everywhere, so could the Carlists laugh at the enemy whose bullets in harmless confusion rattled against that iron shield, save when the more adventurous exposed themselves above it.

* * *

It is astonishing what the association of ideas will do. In jotting down my pen and pencil notes for this article I must not omit to refer to a strange Jewish encampment at Zimnitza, the particular attraction of which was a circus of considerable proportions under a huge umbrella tent. Zimnitza, it will be remembered, is situated on the banks of the Danube, just where, in 1877, the Russians threw their magnificent bridge of boats across that river.

Here, just at the rear of the fighting, as it were, were speculative Jews—and Gentiles, too—making hay while the sun shone. Almost everything which money could buy was obtainable in this canvas village. Holes dug deep into the ground were canvassed over and dubbed by such high-sounding titles as the Hôtel de la Reine Hortense, Grand Hôtel de la Guerre, and so on, while that great circular curriculum was an unfailing attraction when night closed in.

Here Mr. Merryman, dressed *à la grand Turk*, was master of the ceremonies; here, too, marvellous feats of horsemanship on piebald and spotted screws were performed; Mademoiselle Elise dancing with exquisite skill on the tight-rope, while tumblers tumbled to the delight of a well-packed audience of those who could afford the exorbitant charges of the speculative proprietors. Indeed, "let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," seemed the spirit which infused those Russian officers as they applauded the antics of the acrobats or the grimaces of Mr. Merryman; in fact, it was difficult to realise that, once across that bridge of boats yonder, glittering when lit up after dark like a chain of diamonds, you would be in touch, as it were, with what was hourly becoming one of the hardest contested military positions of modern warfare.

There is a gaiety about Tommy Atkins at the front, no matter what his nationality be, which is truly marvellous.

"Furnished" and "unfurnished" apartments, too, were obtainable here—at a

price. Their construction was delightfully simple. Unfurnished accommodation was represented by a hole bearing a striking resemblance to a grave covered in at the top with lightly interwoven branches—the snow did the rest. On the other hand, a furnished apartment had boards thrown down at the bottom, on which a quantity of straw was placed, to which, for the convenience of the sleeper, a short ladder was sometimes added, that he might not, like his "unfurnished" neighbour, have to jump too precipitously into bed. There were many such on the Bulgarian side of the river, too. I well remember taking one of these (furnished) myself one night, and when I questioned the price, which was thirty francs, I was assured that on the previous night—true, it was snowing at the time—a brigadier had cheerfully handed over thirty-six francs for the same accommodation.

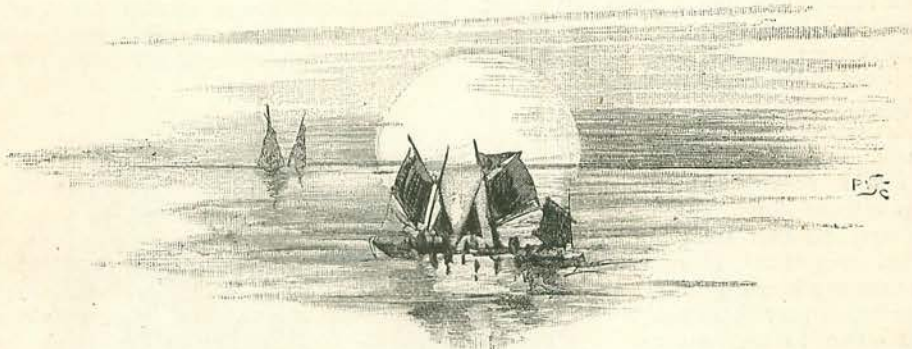
The quick and the dead in turn, in many cases, occupied these queer quarters; since, when there was no further use for

them as far as the living were concerned, they were often used for purposes of interment.

Thus will it be seen from these anecdotes of the war-path that the "special" must be no feather-bed soldier or carpet knight who would represent the Press at the front.

Compared with many, I have been myself most fortunate, yet even I have had fevers, small-pox, and two sunstrokes, to say nothing of imprisonment as a spy, hair-breadth 'scapes, and other such minor matters to contend with.

Of my brethren of the pen and pencil I might say much, not only as far as their services to the Press have been concerned, but their services to humanity as well, when—in quest of incident—they have been at the front with the Red Cross. As I write, such distinguished men as Archibald Forbes, Fred Villiers, O'Donovan, McGahan, Christie Murray, and many others, naturally present themselves as amongst those who have already "left their footprints on the sands of time."



A DEATH'S HEAD,
(Curious effect seen on the Sea of Marmora.)